

U.S.S.R. scientists back Andropov's rejection of Reagan defense doctrine

by Rachel Douglas

Leaders from the Soviet military, party, and Academy of Sciences joined forces at a May 17-18 event billed as a conference "for ridding mankind of the threat of nuclear war." The principal message communicated by these Russians, however, was that practically nothing can prevent the United States and the Soviet Union from skidding into a missile crisis, like the Cuban crisis of 1962 or worse, a few months from now. Their speeches demonstrated that the U.S.S.R. is working against the only way out of this crisis.

As *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly warned, the growing precision and speed of new nuclear weapons will increasingly push the superpowers to a "launch on warning" posture, as long as the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction is retained. On March 23, President Reagan offered the U.S.S.R. an opportunity to move away from that doctrine and replace it with Mutually Assured Survival, by building anti-missile beam weapons that give both sides a strategic defensive capability.

The Soviet leadership is rejecting this offer in the most violent terms, even though the Soviet Union's own beam weapons program is hardly a secret. Having banked on the prospect of the United States collapsing into economic and cultural decay, Moscow is now going to the brink of war, to force Reagan to back down from the policy that changes that prospect.

U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences President Anatolii Aleksandrov, who opened the conference, said flatly that the Soviets will shift to a "launch-on-warning" posture, if new Pershing missiles are deployed in Europe this fall.

It is clear that an exchange of nuclear strikes by strategic forces still leaves some interval of time, around 30 minutes from the moment a missile is launched until it hits its target. Thirty minutes is not a long time. However, during that time, some steps could be taken to avert the unleashing of total war, and a total response to the attack that has been launched. How-

ever, the deployment of missiles in Western Europe—missiles that can reach their target in about five to seven minutes—of course excludes the possibility of taking any sort of decision, any sort of action that might stop the unleashing of war. *The only possibility in this event is an automatic response, using all available forces against all possible opponents* [emphasis added].

Aleksandrov was a co-signer in April of an "appeal" against Reagan's anti-missile weapons policy, which claimed that defensive beam weapons are both "technically impossible" and "a component of a first-strike potential."

In the 1970s, the Academy president was a spokesman for nuclear energy cooperation between East and West and used to attack the environmentalists for "being paid by the oil multitis" and to warn that if the United States did not develop its nuclear power industry, it would be less stable and war would be more likely. Now, according to reports on Radio Moscow, Aleksandrov has lent his backing to arguments used by the fascist "green" movement in the West, by saying that a nuclear war would devastate the United States much more than the Soviet Union, because of the greater number of atomic power plants in the United States.

Beams, what beams?

The Moscow conference presented the spectacle of Soviet generals and high-technology scientists, like Aleksandrov, denouncing the kind of weapons development they themselves are engaged in. The chairman of the conference organizing committee was Academician Ye. P. Velikhov, head of the Soviets' national program for industrial applications of lasers, which interfaces the Soviet beam weapons effort. Velikhov performed an ancillary function for Yuri Andropov's offensive against the Reagan strategic doctrine shift, by reporting to the conference on the program as merely another round of the "arms race."

Now, in connection with the discussion of the military budget, a debate has developed in the United States on plans for the further improvement of U.S. strategic forces in the next decade. These plans have deeply perturbed all people of good will. Soviet scientists have issued a special appeal [against it] to all scientists in the world. A number of scientists in the United States and other Western countries have also condemned this "concept" announced by U.S. President Reagan on March 23 and enshrined in a corresponding presidential directive.

First Deputy Chief of Staff Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, whose boss Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov specified May 9 how the U.S.S.R. would pursue "modernization and improvement" of its armed forces, geared towards "the initial period of war under modern conditions," addressed the conference. He claimed that Washington is out to "liquidate" the Soviet Union.

TASS reported:

"The military doctrine of the United States in the post-war years had an anti-Soviet direction. Its aim was to attain military superiority and on this basis to dictate its will to the U.S.S.R. and the socialist world as a whole," said Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergei Akhromeyev. . . . Sergei Akhromeyev said that the U.S. Administration and the Pentagon were making plans to unleash a war, with the aim of defeating the Soviet Union and liquidating socialism as a social system. The present U.S. Administration conducts this doctrine most openly.

Politburo alternate member Boris Ponomaryov revealed the rage of the Soviet leadership since Reagan called Moscow's disarmament bluff with his beam-weapons revolution in doctrine. Former Communist International bureaucrat Ponomaryov, known for interminable attacks on "imperialism" and "dark forces," in which names are never mentioned, delivered to the May 17 conference a tirade against the pro-beam weapons American scientist Edward Teller. Ponomaryov tried to tell the audience that there was no such thing as a "military-industrial complex" in the Soviet Union.

Pravda excerpted from Ponomaryov's speech:

The alliance of the military-industrial monopolies and militarist cliques is exerting a pernicious influence on the development of science, diverting it for the purpose of annihilating people. . . . Unfortunately, there are scientists like the U.S. nuclear scientist Teller, who are integrated into the military-industrial system. . . . Some three-fourths of all U.S. federal scientific expenditures are earmarked for research for the military and for the militarization of space. Approximately one-third of all American scientists and design engineers are employed in this research. The present U.S.

administration is accelerating the process of the militarization of space with particular rapidity. . . .

The noisily advertised "Reagan concept" providing for the creation of so-called ground- and space-based total "anti-missile defense" is essentially a program to make it possible to inflict a first strike with impunity. In fact, it pursues goals that are by no means defensive, and is extremely aggressive and extraordinarily dangerous. . . .

We in the Soviet Union do not, and cannot have any military-industrial and scientific complex interested in obtaining profits from producing weapons of any type. There are no social forces in the Soviet Union interested in the arms race. . . . Mention must be made of the great response encountered by the Soviet scientists' appeal to the peace-loving public, on the U.S. President's statement on the development of anti-missile weapons.

A Middle East trigger

On May 15, one of Moscow's top propagandists released a scenario for how a confrontation in the Middle East would lead to just such a European-theater confrontation and an "automatic response," as Aleksandrov forecasts. The mechanism for such a Soviet-American showdown would not have to be one single crisis. Rather, Moscow would present Reagan with multiple crises, hoping for a profiled response of panic and backdown.

In the May 15-22 issue of the internationally circulated *Moscow News*, Central Committee staffer Nikolai Portugalov told how the Soviets envision that a Mideast crisis would trigger a strategic missile crisis. His article was subtitled, "What Would Have Happened If, During the American Rangers' Iranian Gamble, the U.S.A. Had Had Pershing II Missiles in Europe!" Portugalov's answer: probably World War III.

During the Carter administration's ill-fated raid to free American hostages in Iran, Portugalov recalled, "a stand-by alert was sounded at the American Lakenheath air base in Britain" and a hundred F-111s there, carrying atomic bombs, were put on the runways. "In the epoch of satellites, a combat alert at Lakenheath will not go unnoticed by the Soviet side." And if there had been Pershing IIs instead of F-111s alerted, Portugalov suggested, the response would have been Academician Aleksandrov's "automatic response" against U.S. territory:

"It is altogether horrifying to think what a gamble like the 'Iranian raid' can lead to, if new American medium-range missiles are deployed in the European NATO countries."

Adding insult to threat, Portugalov concluded that, "As compared to Reagan's rangers with their impudence in questions of life and death for states and nations, the Carter administration's actions could, paradoxical as may sound, be taken as an example of reasonable prudence."