

Moscow enters 1984 on war footing

by Rachel Douglas

The military-controlled Soviet leadership emerged from its end-of-year policy meetings, meetings that were wholly devoted to mobilization for war, breathing fire against the U.S. President. The fascist "1984" of George Orwell's prophecies is here, proclaimed the Moscow weekly *New Times*, and Big Brother is none other than Ronald Reagan. In Havana, Fidel Castro opened the new year with a speech in which he attacked Reagan and members of his administration as "Nazi-fascist barbarians" driving the world toward nuclear holocaust.

These tirades are propaganda back-up to mobilize the Soviet population for the U.S.S.R.'s own war preparations, which include the very live contingency of a strike against West Germany under the pretext of stopping a rebirth of Nazism which the Soviets themselves are in fact promoting.

The latest Soviet activity in Afghanistan points toward military offensives in South and West Asia as well. The Defense Ministry daily *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) announced Jan. 2 that Afghan "anti-aircraft rocket units" are being trained by the Soviets in the use of what Western experts say are SA-3 surface-to-air missiles. Since these rockets are irrelevant to the conduct of the guerrilla war in Afghanistan, their targets lie outside that nation, in Iran and Pakistan, both already the focus of heavy Soviet pressure and asset-building efforts.

Economic mobilization

The escalation in Afghanistan, like the huge shift of Soviet ground and naval forces into the Baltic Sea area on NATO's northern flank in recent weeks, is taking place in the framework of the military dictatorship's current strategy: to force a global showdown in which the United States either backs down decisively or is defeated in all-out thermonuclear

war by the margin of Soviet military superiority.

In their own year-end speeches and in the name of publicly invisible head of state Yuri Andropov, Soviet marshals told the population that they must fight and win World War III before it breaks out.

The speech read for Andropov at the party Central Committee plenum on Dec. 26 demanded to solve the "subjective problems" of the Soviet economy, forcing it into the war economy mode of World War II. "In the present international situation, which has been sharply aggravated through the fault of imperialist circles," said Andropov, "the strict implementation of the [economic] plan becomes not just an obligation, but also the patriotic duty of every Soviet person."

The speech called for running industry at fuller capacity by a return to three shifts, which he complained had virtually "died away." To contend with the U.S.S.R.'s labor shortage, Andropov's speech demanded that managers remember how "in the pre-war years there was an active fight to reduce labor-intensity."

In covering the speech, the party paper *Pravda* again brought up the military context for the economic management experiments Andropov charted earlier in 1983, which were reconfirmed at the plenum. "A wise man once said," according to *Pravda*, "that any reform should be put into practice with the same kind of persistence with which a people wages a liberation struggle."

On Dec. 22 and 23, before the Central Committee convened, a conference in Moscow sponsored by the Defense Ministry, the Main Political Administration of the Army and Fleet, and the Soviet Committee of War Veterans brought together senior officers to discuss the military-economic strategies of World War II and the parallels to the current

situation. Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the first deputy chief of staff, emphasized in his keynote speech that going on the offensive was the crucial shift in winning World War II.

"One of the most important lessons" to be drawn from World War II, said Akhromeyev, "is that one must fight against war before it breaks out. . . . It is necessary to stop the aggressor before it is too late. . . . The Soviet Union is warning that it will not permit military supremacy by the U.S.A. over the U.S.S.R. Aggressive actions against our country, our friends, and allies will meet a most decisive rebuff. Retribution will overtake the aggressor inevitably and without delay." The Soviet Armed Forces are equipped with everything necessary to deliver "an immediate crushing blow."

General-Colonel Golushko of the Soviet Rear Services said that the Soviets' economic mobilization was key to the success of their military offensives against Hitler's armies.

First Deputy Defense Minister Marshal S. L. Sokolov, who chaired this conference, took to the pages of the government daily *Izvestia* the next day to lay down the military's requirements. The party must consider it "its sacred duty, a thing of first-ranking importance especially in the current international situation," to keep the defense capabilities on a level "corresponding to the demands and the character of modern war." The backbone of the Soviet war machine, stressed Sokolov, is the strategic nuclear forces—strategic missile troops, nuclear submarines and bombers. "They are all in permanent combat readiness," he stressed.

Attacks on beam weapons

Repeating the most pernicious Soviet propaganda lie of 1983, Sokolov singled out Reagan's policy of building defensive strategic weapons, actually the door-opener to a doctrine of assured survival for both superpowers, as a warmonger's design. "New systems of anti-missile defense and space militarization" are part of Pentagon plans for a "surprise nuclear strike" against the Soviet Union, he asserted.

Krasnaya Zvezda has taken the lead in vilifying the advocates of defensive beam weapons, while fostering a pre-war atmosphere with recent depictions of total encirclement of the U.S.S.R., American cruise missiles creeping across Soviet borders from all sides, American space-based lasers killing individual Soviet citizens on earth, and the sudden revival of ominous "neo-Nazi" movements.

One Professor Volkov wrote in *Krasnaya Zvezda* that in West Germany, it is only "neo-Nazis" who support the deployment of American Pershing II missiles there. He claims to have seen young people wearing swastikas and SS symbols, who demonstrated with the slogan: "Better a Pershing in your garden than a red flag on the roof." In fact, this slogan has been used by the European Labor Party (ELP), the leading anti-fascist force in West Germany and the continent's chief advocates of beam weapons, in its campaign to prevent the Soviet-sought splintering of NATO over the Pershing issue. The ELP has exposed not only Warsaw Pact funding of the "green-peace movement" in Europe, but the fact that

the leadership of that movement is composed in part of old Nazis.

Volkov's lie is coherent with a campaign of slanders against the ELP in media such as the anarchist-terrorist *Tageszeitung*, a campaign bent on eliminating pro-American influences from West Germany. Volkov naturally omitted to mention that the Bonn interior ministry recently outlawed the neo-Nazi organization of Michael Kuehnen, since he wanted to show that the interior ministry protects neo-Nazis. He also neglected to tell his readers how the Soviets, through "Nazi International" channels, themselves finance and support neo-Nazi groups, to use their existence as a pretext for possible military interventions.

Already in 1976, Soviet and East German forces ran an exercise named "Polarka," whose scenario called for a neo-Nazi threat in West Germany to be crushed by a military surprise attack, followed by rapid withdrawal. A foreign-policy expert in Bonn said this month that the Soviets have their forces ready to repeat this exercise in the spring of 1984, as part of a global war of nerves against the United States.

Politburo expanded

Not only in the speeches, but also in the appointments announced at the plenum, was the war mobilization apparent. When the meeting convened, party General Secretary Andropov had not been seen in public for 130 days, his place in the public eye having been taken by the Soviet marshals. Before his disappearance, however, Andropov was the military's favored candidate to lead the party, and his associates continue to gain ground. At the plenum, the party's highest bodies were expanded by the addition of individuals either personally associated with Andropov, or from the Russian Republic (RSFSR), stronghold of the Russian chauvinism that has run rampant as the Soviet Union built for war.

Two non-voting members of the Politburo were elevated to full membership, bringing the number of full members to 13. These are Vitalii Vorotnikov, the prime minister of the RSFSR, and his predecessor in that post, Mikhail Solomentsev, who in 1983 replaced the late Arvid Pelshe as head of the Party Control Commission. KGB chairman Viktor Chebrikov, who was a KGB deputy chairman for 13 years while Andropov headed the Soviet intelligence organization, became a non-voting member of the Politburo. Yegor Ligachev, brought by Andropov to Moscow from a party position in Tomsk, Siberia just weeks after Leonid Brezhnev died, to head of the cadres department of the Central Committee, received the rank of Central Committee Secretary. From the cadre section of the committee's staff organization, the Secretariat, Ligachev will be a powerful force in purges of the party apparatus.

Solomentsev was appointed prime minister of the Russian Republic in 1971, but was blocked from full membership in the Politburo as long as Brezhnev lived. The Party Control Commission, which he took charge of in June 1983, will also be important in party purges.