

East Europe follows Gorbachov's orders

by Luba George

Since the June 10-11 special conference of the Soviet Central Committee on the role of science and technology in the Soviet economy, the leaders of the East bloc have lined up to deliver speeches echoing the theme sounded in the keynote to that meeting by Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov: that the entire economy must be "switched to intensive methods . . . and rapid progress achieved in the strategically important directions." The reason? The economy has been placed on a war footing: "External circumstances" mandate that "we are forced to invest the necessary funds into the country's defense."

Czechoslovak Communist Party leader Gustav Husak, a week after Gorbachov spoke, addressed a Central Committee session convened to prepare for the March 1986 Czech party conference. He stressed that the party would adopt a policy document for "accelerating technological progress . . . and economic development through the Year 2000." A few days earlier, the same theme was expressed in a speech by Polish Prime Minister Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski.

The Soviet campaign has now gone into high gear. Starting June 25, Gorbachov began a tour of the Ukraine, one of the key industrial regions of the Soviet Union. Soviet radio and TV described the tour's purpose as promoting "the acceleration of science and technological progress." Arriving in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, he "toured research establishments, design bureaus, and factories," reported Radio Moscow on June 26.

Gorbachov visited the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Electric Welding, reknowned for its laser technology metal-welding and development of robots for welding tasks. The head of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Dr. Boris Paton, swore to Gorbachov the Institute's readiness "to accelerate the country's economic and scientific progress," and the Ukrainian Academy announced its plans "to greatly increase fundamental research and development."

The highlight of the day, however, was Gorbachov's appearance at the huge Antonov aircraft factory in Kiev, one of the largest defense plants in the Soviet Union. Serial production has just begun there of the world's largest military transport plane, the Antonov-124 (An-124), capable of transporting not only huge loads of men and all sizes of vehicles and equipment, but also entire SS-20 missiles and their mo-

bile launchers, over great distances in a matter of hours.

The visit was the first highly publicized appearance at a war production facility by a Soviet leader in many years. Radio Moscow officially announced that Antonov produces "the Antonov-28 (AN-28), a light multi-purpose plane, whose serial production has been started in the Polish People's Republic."

Comecon 'integration'

The next day, in the heavy industry center of Dnepropetrovsk in the Ukraine, in the presence of workers, scientists, and engineers, Gorbachov delivered a sabre-rattling speech, accusing the United States of bad faith at the Geneva arms control talks: "We simply cannot allow the talks again to be used to distract attention, as a cover for military preparations, whose aim is to guarantee the strategic superiority of the U.S.A. . . . The American program of the militarization of space is . . . barring the way to the achievement of any relevant accords in Geneva."

"We live in a time of great tension, life or death of hundreds of millions of people depends on whether the war mongers are stopped in their tracks," he said. Gorbachov also stressed the need to promote the position of socialist countries in the world, facilitating cooperation among them, saying "cooperation and integration" will make the community stronger and each of its members, too. "It will strengthen their defenses," he added.

The same week, Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov, in his keynote speech at the meeting of Comecon prime ministers in Warsaw, stressed "joint action" by the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) "in the key areas of scientific and technological progress" through the year 2000. Tikhonov declared that the United States and its allies were pursuing an "aggressive policy," and denounced Washington's plans for the "militarization of space." Therefore, "to preserve strategic parity," said Tikhonov, the CMEA will have to follow the policy dictated by the April plenum of the Soviet Central Committee: "a detailed program to speed up the country's economic and social development," whose key is "rapid scientific and technological progress" and "rapid advances in the strategically important avenues."

One June 21, the Soviet daily *Pravda* laid down "Gorbachov's law" to the Comecon countries: The East bloc countries, the editorial said, must operate under the Russian thumb even more than they already do. Given the "complexity of the international situation," said *Pravda*, "the Socialist community must form the monolithic Marxist-Leninist core of world socialism," and its policies must function as a "unified protective shield." Second, *Pravda* called for the reining in of those groups in the Comecon countries who are "against central planning and for strengthening of market relationships, as well as for allowing private sectors in the economy." Finally, the editorial called for an end to "revisionist-nationalistic viewpoints" in Eastern Europe.