

## The Kremlin talks, and the media and Congress grovel

by Kathleen Klenetsky

The Kremlin's battle to bend the Reagan administration to its will and force concessions on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)

September, with the open connivance and support of the U.S. media and key members of Congress.

*Time* magazine, edited by longstanding Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) free publicity to the Kremlin's anti-Reagan hate campaign, when it published an interview with Mikhail Gorbachov in its Sept. 9 issue, tailored to convince Americans that Moscow wants nothing more than to ease tensions between the two superpowers.

Gorbachov used the opportunity to issue new threats against the West—charging that Washington's "shortage of responsibility" has caused superpower relations to become "explosive," and "the war threat is not subsiding." But *Time*'s writers went overboard to portray the Gucci-shod barbarian as a man of sweet reason.

Gorbachov "conveys an image of robust health and naturally controlled energy. . . . He laughs easily. He dominates a meeting with three extraordinary tools: eyes, hands and voice." His voice is also "extraordinary," "deep but also soft." He arrives "resplendent in a well-tailored blue pinstripe suit," and offers his guests "sweet pirozki . . . mineral water, lemon soda, and cut-glass vases filled with colored pencils."

Not since Andropov crony Fyodor Burlatskii indulged in fantasies about Walter Mondale's lips in the pages of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* last year, has political writing about U.S.-Soviet relations so closely approached the quality of a cheap romantic novel.

By painting Gorbachov in this light, *Time* deliberately tried to convey the idea that he and his policies are eminently reasonable. That specifically applies to Gorbachov's statements about the SDI. The Soviet chief used the interview to float the idea that Moscow would be willing to permit the United States a limited amount of research on the SDI;

exchange, the Soviets would reduce their offensive nuclear weapons.

This is precisely the rotten deal which the U.S. State Department and its collaborators in the CFR and the Trilateral Commission, have been trying to convince Reagan to accept. *Time* was quick to claim that Gorbachov was "significantly more flexible on the issue of defensive research than his negotiators have been."

Gorbachov backed up his new "offer" with abundant threats that made it quite clear to less starry-eyed readers that the Soviet proposal is pure P.R. The SDI is "very dangerous," Gorbachov asserted. "This project will no doubt whip up the arms race in all areas, which means that the threat of war will increase. We are prepared to negotiate, but not about space weapons or about what specific types of space weapons could be deployed into space. Research is something we regard as part of the overall program for the development of space weapons."

Furthermore, insisted Gorbachov, without an agreement by the United States to abandon the SDI, "it will not be possible to reach an agreement on the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons, either."

### Senators fall for Gorbachov

Gorbachov repeated his carrot-and-stick approach on the SDI during his three-and-a-half hour meeting with a Senate delegation Sept. 3. According to TASS, Gorbachov scolded the group, led by Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.), repeated well-known arguments which boil down to justification of the U.S. administration's course of whipping up the arms race, including in space," said TASS. "Mikhail Gorbachov stressed in this context the need for a responsible and serious approach from statesmen, including parliamentarians, to questions of vital importance. . . ."

But almost to a man, the Senators emerged from the meeting acting like smitten schoolgirls—and conveying the

clear message that it is the Reagan administration, not Moscow, which is being stubborn and inflexible.

Byrd asserted that he is now "optimistic" about the summit, since Gorbachov "showed movement. We didn't get the stonewalling that unless you banned [nuclear testing], agree to ban SDI research, we're not having a meeting," he said, adding that while Gorbachov had "attacked Star Wars as some sort of first strike weapon, I think he's ready . . . once we can reach some kind of understanding about Star Wars, to propose radical proposals for reductions in strategic systems."

Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.) we can do business with," while Sen. John Warner (R-Va.) gushed that he believes "it's going to be give and take" at the summit. Gorbachov is "going to give, and he's going to take, as long as he's accepted as an equal."

But what did Gorbachov actually give? According to Byrd, he said only that he will table proposals for cuts in offensive nuclear missiles "the day after" the U.S. agrees to discuss steps "to limit the militarization of space." That violates the conditions for negotiation agreed upon by the Soviet and American government last January, namely, that there would be no preconditions for discussions on either defensive or offensive weapons.

Gorbachov further stipulated that anything outside a laboratory, or "pure research," was a violation of the 1972 ABM treaty and forbidden. Even Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), of the SDI, pointed out that this definition of "research" was extremely "narrow" and would limit the SDI to "essentially what you do in a lab . . . we will allow you to think, but not much more."

In effect, Gorbachov's wonderful new proposal would simply institutionalize Soviet superiority in strategic defense, depriving the West of the one military system which could deter a Soviet nuclear attack.

Yet, that proposal is getting wide backing from Western circles, not least from the Council on Foreign Relations. On Sept. 1, the day *Time's* interview with Gorbachov appeared, William Hyland, editor of the CFR's journal, *Foreign Affairs*, went on national television to deliver the CFR's line for the Geneva summit: Reagan must accept sharp restraints on the SDI—or else accept responsibility for the collapse of U.S.-Soviet relations.

A U.S.-Soviet agreement "would have to include something on Star Wars," said Hyland, appearing on ABC-TV. "I don't think we'd give up *all* Star Wars research. I don't think Gorbachov is so unrealistic as to think he can get Reagan to give up the SDI *completely*. But I also don't think Gorbachov would have agreed to a summit, if he wasn't prepared to compromise."

The same day, *Foreign Affairs* published a piece by Richard Nixon advising Reagan to "agree to limit our deployment of defensive weapons . . . if the Soviets significantly reduce and limit their offensive weapons." This would be the only way to "prevent otherwise inevitable Soviet [nuclear] supe-

riority," wrote Nixon.

To bring further pressure on the President, a high-level Soviet delegation, headed by Georgii Arbatov, head of the U.S.A. and Canada Institute, arrived in the United States Sept. 2 for a 20-day tour aimed at gearing up the anti-SDI campaign. Co-sponsored by the Institute for Policy Studies and the Soviet Academy of Sciences, the tour will be highlighted by a four-day closed-door conference in San Francisco devoted to the SDI, and another private meeting in Philadelphia, sponsored by the Foreign Policy Research Institute.

## ASAT threats

Nixon's wishful thinking to the contrary, Russia's rulers don't give a hoot about incentives. They are committed to ruling the world, and will gladly feed Western fantasies about Soviet "flexibility" if that brings them closer to their ultimate goal. Anyone not in a totally deluded state would have discerned that fact of life Sept. 4, when TASS issued a Politburo-ordered release threatening to deploy Soviet ASATs, should the U.S. even test its ASAT capability.

"TASS is authorized to state," said the dispatch, "that if the U.S. holds tests of anti-satellite weapons against a target in outer space, the Soviet Union will consider itself free of its unilateral commitment not to place anti-satellite weapons in space. The entire responsibility for the further development of events rests entirely on the American side."

Coming as it did on the very day that the Air Force had planned to conduct the first test of a U.S. ASAT in space, the timing of the TASS release raises grave questions about possible Congressional collusion with the Kremlin. Did a member of the Senate delegation to Moscow—Senator Pell, perhaps, a rabid foe of both the ASAT and SDI programs—suggest to Gorbachov that the threat be issued in order to derail the ASAT test?

We may never know. But we do know that the threat was immediately seized upon by Moscow's admirers on Capitol Hill to try to throw the ASAT program into jeopardy. Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, among others, hinted they might try a last-minute effort to delay the ASAT test indefinitely. Indeed, the test, originally scheduled for late on Sept. 4, was postponed at the last minute on the advice of Air Force lawyers who feared Congress might not have been properly informed.

President Reagan is so far sticking to his guns. In response to the *Time* interview, the White House issued a statement saying that the SDI will not be a bargaining chip. The Pentagon announced that, despite Soviet threats, the ASAT test will occur later this month, pointing out, "The Soviets already have an operational, land-based ASAT system and have had it since 1977."

But well-placed sources report that the State Department is about to launch a full-fledged offensive to con Reagan into accepting Gorbachov's bogus offer at the summit. If it succeeds, Americans will soon be seeing a lot more of the "charming" Gorbachov's true character.