

# Soviet Central Committee Plenum backs Gorbachov's war-economy drive

by Konstantin George and Luba George

The Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party met in plenary session on Oct. 15, two weeks after the announcement that 80-year-old Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov had been replaced by Nikolai Ryzhkov, an engineer who hails from the heavy-industry center of Sverdlovsk, and was formerly First Deputy Minister of Heavy and Transport Machine-Building, then deputy chairman of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan). The CC Plenum approved the draft documents for the upcoming Party Congress and Gorbachov's new Five-Year Plan, and ousted the 20-year head of Gosplan, replacing him with a telecommunications specialist who played a key role in the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

These events confirm *EIR's* evaluation that a decisive shift has occurred in the Soviet war-economy mobilization. Under the regime of Mikhail Gorbachov, Moscow has launched a drive to accelerate the rate of introduction of advanced technology into industrial production, and to increase labor productivity and automated production.

This program, identified as "Plan B" in *EIR's Global Showdown Special Report* (see *EIR*, Aug. 2, 1985, "The two qualitative facets of the Ogarkov war plan"), signifies that economic bottlenecks and inefficiency are now seen as jeopardizing the capability of the Soviet empire to achieve the strategic superiority required to win a first-strike assault against the United States by 1988. The continued commitment of President Reagan to the Strategic Defense Initiative, in particular, has convinced Moscow that such a high-technology shift is now indispensable for global strategic victory.

Every principal policy statement by Gorbachov since his assumption of power has emphasized this course (see *EIR*, Sept. 13, 1985, "Gorbachov orders science drive to upgrade war industry"). The mastermind of the war-economy buildup is Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the Warsaw Pact commander, whose latest book was published in May, just a month after Gorbachov came to power. Titled *History Teaches Us Vigilance*, it specifies that Soviet economic development is what allows the creation "in a short period of time" of "technically complex" weapons—a reference especially to the Soviet equivalent of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative.

Gorbachov's speech at the October Plenum underlined the need for "accelerating economic growth and fulfilling

such strategic tasks as maintaining the country's defense might at a proper level." The new Communist Party program, he said, is aimed at "technically restructuring the Soviet economy to double its potential in the next 15 years." Industrial growth during that period will have to "equal what has been achieved since Communist power was established in 1917." Gorbachov demanded an increase of 130% to 150% over current productivity by the year 2000.

"In enriching and developing the content of the program," Gorbachov said, "we have at the same time critically reassessed those of its formulations which have not stood the test of time." Referring to the ongoing purges of officials at all levels of the Soviet bureaucracy, he explained that "not all the cadres" had freed themselves from inertia, the old schemes, and *extensive* (rather than *capital-intensive*) economic planning. Not everybody was "psychologically capable" of working under the new conditions. "These tendencies we have to overcome, and we are overcoming them," he said.

Speaking three weeks before the Geneva summit meeting with President Reagan, Gorbachov warned of the "very dangerous tilt" in U.S. policy and denounced "the practical actions of the American imperialists" who seek "social revenge through the attainment of military superiority over the Soviet Union" and "maintaining a state of tension in the world at such a level that it would justify the creation and development of ever new types of mass destructive weapons and the militarization of space." This, he explained, was the reason for the urgent war-economy measures currently under way.

## A rubber-stamp Plenum

The Central Committee Plenum, which did not even occupy a full day, was a *pro forma* gathering of the 300-member body to "approve" what had already been decided by the inner circle of the Politburo and the military. It confirmed Gorbachov's complete hold on the ruling Politburo, thanks to his swift and ruthless moves in recent months to place his own men in key positions throughout the Soviet *apparat*. The Plenum rubber-stamped all the draft documents which are to be presented to the 27th Communist Party Congress on Feb. 25, 1986—the first Congress of the post-Brezhnev era.

The key documents include:

1) A new Party program to replace the current one, which dates from the 22nd Party Congress held under Nikita Khrushchov in 1961.

2) The Five-Year Plan for the period 1986-90, and accompanying economic policy guidelines through the year 2000. Under General-Secretary Konstantin Chernenko, the preparation of the Five-Year Plan had been entrusted to Gosplan chief Nikolai Baibakov.

But in June of this year, Gorbachov delivered a speech on economic policy at a specially convened Central Committee Conference on the need to accelerate the introduction of advanced technology into the economy. At that time, he announced that the Gosplan's draft Five-Year Plan submitted to the Politburo had been rejected, and would have to be thoroughly rewritten to conform to the new war-economy guidelines. That speech marked the "writing on the wall" for both Baibakov and Tikhonov. It was only a question of *when* they would be formally ousted, and thus complete the process begun by Gorbachov at the April 1985 Central Committee Plenum, when he began stacking the Politburo with his hatchmen.

At the April Plenum, Gorbachov promoted both Igor Ligachov and Nikolai Ryzhkov from Central Committee members to full Politburo members, skipping over the rank of candidate Politburo member. Andropov's hand-picked successor as KGB chief, Vitali Chebrikov, was promoted from candidate member to full member of the Politburo.

Then in July, Gorbachov dumped former Leningrad Party head and personal rival Grigory Romanov from the Politburo. Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko was removed from the post which he had held since 1957, though he remained on the Politburo and was named to the largely ceremonial job of

President. Gromyko's replacement as foreign minister was Eduard Shevardnadze, the Georgian Party chief, who was also appointed to the Politburo.

At the same time, Gorbachov stacked the Secretariat, dumping Romanov, and appointing B.N. Yeltsin, former first secretary of the Sverdlovsk heavy-industry region, to CC secretary in charge of construction, and Lev Zaikov, head of the Leningrad Party since June 1983, to the Secretariat. Gorbachov had already named Viktor Nikonov, minister of agriculture for the Russian Republic, as CC secretary in charge of agriculture. This makes for a hard-core Andropov/Gorbachov-mafia majority of 6 in the 10-man Secretariat, by the most conservative estimate.

The October Plenum finalized the ouster of the last remaining intimate of Leonid Brezhnev from the Politburo, Nikolai Tikhonov. On Sept. 27, Gorbachov had removed Tikhonov from the post of prime minister, replacing him with Nikolai Ryzhkov, 56, a protégé of former KGB head and Soviet General Secretary Yuri Andropov. Ryzhkov was transferred from the Gosplan and placed on the Central Committee Secretariat at Andropov's first Central Committee Plenum, in November 1982—the same Plenum which brought Geidar Aliyev, former KGB head and Party boss in Moslem Azerbaijan, onto the Politburo.

The Plenum also named Nikolai Talyzin to succeed Baibakov, a move underlining the importance accorded to the high-technology war-economy push by Gorbachov. Baibakov had been installed as Gosplan head in 1965, soon after Brezhnev came to power. Talyzin, a veteran of 25 years of service to the Soviet war economy in the telecommunications field, was appointed a candidate member of the Politburo, an honor never accorded to his predecessor.

## Gorbachov names Talyzin to head the Gosplan

The Central Committee Plenum dumped Nikolai Baibakov, head of the State Planning Commission (Gosplan) for 20 years, in favor of a Gorbachov man, Nikolai Talyzin, 56, who was also promoted to first deputy prime minister and made a candidate member of the Politburo.

From 1955 to 1980, Talyzin had served in the Ministry of Telecommunications. In 1965 he was appointed by Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin to the post of deputy minister for telecommunications, and in 1975 he was named to head the ministry. West German defense sources have confirmed that he accompanied the Soviet troops which invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, was seen in Kabul, where he oversaw the setting

up of military communications lines between the Turkestan Military District HQ in Tashkent and the various Soviet ground and air bases in occupied Afghanistan.

In 1980, Talyzin was named deputy prime minister and Soviet representative to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA, or Comecon). In the latter capacity, he oversaw the mammoth Comecon economic integration programs then in full swing. These involved implementation of the Soviet demand for vast increases in East European exports of machinery, industrial goods, transportation equipment, and machine tools, and investments in Soviet raw material projects, and massive improvement of transport and communications infrastructure in all the Warsaw Pact countries. Only through these forced exports and investments would these satellites get Soviet oil and gas. In short, Talyzin oversaw the qualitative leap in the exploitation of the East European satellites, to serve the Soviet war economy.