

Gorbachov prepares South Africa crisis

by Konstantin George

While the eyes of the world are fixed on the Chernobyl disaster, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov is methodically laying the groundwork for future Soviet confrontationist moves in various strategically vital theaters. For over two weeks, the Western media were bombarded with dozens of articles and commentaries speculating on the "silence" of Gorbachov. Until his May 14 twenty-five-minute televised address on the Chernobyl disaster, Gorbachov was indeed "silent"—but only concerning the nuclear power plant disaster.

Otherwise, Gorbachov not only was in high profile in the Soviet media, but also had announced major initiatives in Soviet power projection in the international arena, focusing on southern Africa. Two of his dramatic moves include an announcement he plans to visit Angola, and a Warsaw Pact summit which he will lead in the Hungarian capital of Budapest, June 10 and 11.

From May 6 through May 10, a large Angolan delegation led by Angolan President, Eduardo Dos Santos, visited the Soviet Union. Dos Santos held at least two lengthy meetings with Gorbachov, besides talks with Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze; the new head of the Soviet Central Committee International Department, Anatoli Dobrynin; and Defense Minister Sergei Sokolov.

On May 11, Radio Moscow announced that Gorbachov had "accepted an invitation to visit Angola" from Dos Santos. In March, while visiting Moscow, the leader of Mozambique, Samora Machel, had also extended an invitation to Gorbachov to visit Mozambique; he accepted.

In short, later this year or in 1987, for the first time in history, a general secretary of the Soviet Union will stage a grand tour of the "Front Line States" of southern Africa. Both Gorbachov's grand tour initiative and disturbing phrases from the Soviet-Angolan joint communiqué broadcast by the Soviet media on May 11, portend an upcoming Soviet-backed offensive by the Cubans and Angolans against Jonas Savimbi's pro-Western UNITA. This would be designed to force a military counter-offensive by South Africa to bail out UNITA, and thus set the stage for a Soviet move against South Africa, which could escalate into a superpower showdown.

The joint communiqué declared: "Both sides analyzed the situation in the south of Africa, characterizing it as 'ex-

plosive.' partite Soviet-Cuban-Angolan consultations as occurred in Moscow during January of this year." This refers to the upgraded military assistance pact worked out in the January meetings in Moscow of the Soviet, Cuban, and Angolan defense ministers. After the meetings, a Soviet general and counterinsurgency specialist named Petrov, was sent to Angola to lay the groundwork for an all-out offensive against UNITA.

The joint communiqué also made explicit that Moscow is preparing an escalation in SWAPO guerrilla attacks in Namibia and African National Congress terrorism in South Africa: "The Pretoria racists are illegally occupying Namibia. . . . The United States is encouraging an undeclared war against Angola and Mozambique. . . . The Soviet Union and Angola call upon all governments and forces to mobilize aid for the peoples of Angola, Namibia, and South Africa."

Raising the heat on Norway

A historical "first" of a different sort—with ominous implications for NATO's a front-page announcement in the Soviet military newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) of May 9. Announced was the promotion of Col.-Gen. Boris Vasilyevich Snetkov to the rank of army general. Snetkov is the commander of the Leningrad Military District, which extends from south of Leningrad, through Karelia opposite Finland, to the Kola Peninsula and Soviet territory bordering on Norway. In time of war, Snetkov would be the commander of the Soviet forces earmarked for the invasion and seizure of northern Norway.

The promotion provides an irrefutable signal of a major buildup among the Soviet forces assigned to the Leningrad Military District. Most Soviet Military Districts are commanded by colonel generals. Those commanded by army generals are Category I priority districts, with large forces, and crucial invasion tasks, such as: The "Group of Soviet Forces in Germany," as the Russian forces in East Germany are called, who are the spearhead invasion forces deployed against West Germany; the Far East Military District, facing Japan and Manchuria; the Belorussian Military District, which contains the bulk of the second echelon invasion troops against Western Europe.

Snetkov's large-scale Soviet maneuvers 13 kilometers (8 miles) from the Norwegian border—maneuvers which rehearsed the wartime seizure of northern Norway by the Red Army on the first day of war. Snetkov was identified in the March 28 *EIR* as an officer marked for promotion, following his appointment as a candidate Central Committee member at the 27th Party Congress. The promotion of Snetkov is yet another dramatic signal from Moscow that an offensive, beginning with the murder of Swedish Premier Olof Palme, has been geared up against the entire northern flank.