

# China overshadows Atlantic Council East-West love fest

by Kathleen Klenetsky

Although the full impact of the Chinese revolution on the Washington-Moscow condominium has yet to be felt, the explosive events that have erupted in the People's Republic of China have already started to cast a shadow over New Yalta factions, both East and West.

The first shock effects of the China developments were much in evidence at a June 6 conference on "East-West Relations in Transition" sponsored by the Washington-based Atlantic Council and held at the State Department.

The meeting, part of the Atlantic Council's ongoing "U.S.-Soviet Dialogue," brought together Bush administration figures, European and Asian observers, members of the Soviet Union's U.S.A.-Canada Institute, and the usual cast of "inside the Beltway" think-tankers and lobbyists, to discuss such subjects as "The Impact of 'New Thinking' on Soviet Policy Toward Europe," and "Possible Areas for East-West Cooperation."

Leading speakers included Henry Trofimenko, Andrei Kokoshin, and Yuri Davydov of the U.S.A.-Canada Institute, Kissinger sidekick Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Undersecretary of State Reginald Bartholomew, Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway, Atlantic Council Chairman Gen. Andrew Goodpaster (ret.), Sovietologist Richard Pipes, Sen. Timothy Wirth (D-Colo.), and Vladimir Shustov of the Soviet Foreign Ministry.

But what was originally intended to be a high-level meeting of U.S. and Soviet insiders, which would both celebrate the supposed end of the Cold War, while mapping out new measures to further the military, economic, and political convergence of the two blocs, found itself upstaged, and unsettled, by the Chinese situation.

## China: the unwanted guest

The effects of the Chinese developments made themselves felt in two principal ways: First of all, some of the major figures who had been scheduled to participate—notably Soviet Marshal Akhromeyev, Secretary of State James Baker, and President George Bush—canceled at the last moment. While none of their excuses specifically mentioned China, there was no other reason which could reasonably explain their sudden non-appearance. Akhromeyev supposedly couldn't attend because he had to help Mikhail Gorbachov

prepare for his mid-June trip to West Germany. The excuse rang hollow, given that Gorbachov's trip had been planned long before Akhromeyev signed on for the Atlantic Council conference.

Secondly, although it was quite apparent that both conference organizers and the bulk of the speakers looked on the China developments as an unwanted guest, the subject nevertheless kept inserting itself into both the public sessions and private discussions. For example, when, during one of the question and answer sessions, a reporter asked Ron Lehman, the Bush administration's chief of ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency), if he would comment on the hypothesis that the Chinese upsurge was due in part to Chinese rejection of the Washington-Moscow condominium, he replied with a flat "No"—causing no little consternation in sections of the audience.

During the lunch break a few hours earlier, Lehman had privately confided to close associates at the conference that the administration was "scared out of its pants" by the events in China, had "no idea what was going on," and feared that the situation was spiraling out of control.

The Soviet participants exhibited little more willingness than their U.S. counterparts to talk about the situation. Repeatedly pressed for a reaction, Davydov and Kokoshin initially insisted that they couldn't even give their personal opinion, because they weren't "experts," although Davydov did bring himself to deny vociferously that China was moving toward a civil war.

Trofimenko, chief of the U.S.A.-Canada Institute's department of foreign affairs, was slightly more forthcoming in a private discussion. Questioned about the impact that Chinese events would likely have on the U.S.-Soviet condominium, Trofimenko suggested that the condominium be extended to handle the Chinese revolution. Rather than derail the Washington-Moscow rapprochement, "Maybe the condominium can discuss developments in China," he said.

Trofimenko proceeded to insist that what was going on in China was "not a people's war," and wouldn't become one "until the second or third major clash," but eventually admitted: "The situation is totally unpredictable. We do not now who will come out on top."

Asked what he thought about Henry Kissinger's "China

card," Trofimenko burst out laughing: "That was idiotic!" he exclaimed. "We knew the Chinese would never support the United States in a war. We weren't scared by that."

## Gorbymania

An almost eerie atmosphere prevailed, as though the participants had been caught in a time warp, and were solidly enmired in the policies which have been rendered irrelevant by the Chinese revolution. The bulk of the presentations were geared toward lauding the allegedly great progress that has been made over the past few years in U.S.-Soviet relations, and detailing areas for more such "progress" in the future.

During one of the early panels, the U.S.A.-Canada Institute's Davydov struck a theme that was sounded repeatedly during the day: "The Cold War has exhausted itself," he announced, unchallenged, adding gleefully that there is a "growing perception that socialism and capitalism are not alternative societies, but share common values."

The Soviet speakers extolled the virtues of glasnost and perestroika, and propagandized for Gorbachov's vision of a "European common home." They declared that the threat of war in Europe had been eliminated, promised a huge reduction in the Soviet military presence in Eastern Europe, and, as Trofimenko put it, vowed that "There will be no meddling in Poland" by Moscow.

Propaganda of this sort is exactly what one would expect from a Soviet delegation under the present circumstances, especially one from the U.S.A.-Canada Institute, which is explicitly charged with devising methods to shape the perceptions of the U.S. government about the Soviet Union's intentions.

It was the behavior of the American participants that was truly appalling. The bulk of the U.S. speakers made a disgusting display of themselves, as they vied with each other to see who could lavish the most praise on Gorbachov's "reforms," and the Soviet Union's "new thinking."

When the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Shustov, for example, opened his speech on prospects for U.S.-Soviet cooperation on environmentalism, by declaring that, "If the Green Party existed in our country, I'd join it," not one American participant rose to point out that the West German Greens have been among Moscow's most effective weapons in its drive to neutralize Western Europe. But perhaps that's not so surprising, given the fact that the Bush administration has shown itself to be perfectly content with the prospects that a coalition of the Greens and the Social Democrats may come to power in Germany in the next federal elections. Nor did anyone from the U.S. side object, when Trofimenko brazenly lied that the Soviets had "inadvertently dragged ourselves" into Third World conflicts.

In fact, U.S. willingness to swallow every slice of baloney the Soviets served was so blatant that a panel moderator observed, not entirely happily, that the public sessions had been free from any dissension whatever between the Soviets

and the Americans. (It's worth pointing out that the Atlantic Council is no left-wing think-tank, but a leading elite policy-making institution. Its directors include such stars in the Establishment's firmament as ex-Secretaries of State Alexander Haig and Henry Kissinger, ex-President Gerald Ford, and Senate Armed Services Committee chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga.); its current chairman, retired general Andrew J. Goodpaster, formerly served as Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. Goodpaster authored a recent Council report, which recommended a 50% reduction in the U.S. military commitment to Western Europe. Thus, the outrageously pro-Soviet posture which it has recently been exhibiting directly reflects the consensus among the American Establishment.)

The Bush administration, in its embarrassing haste to sell out U.S. strategic interests to Moscow, provided some of the most rabid Gorbymaniacs present at the conference. Undersecretary of State Bartholomew talked glowingly about the prospects for reaching a U.S.-Soviet agreement on conventional forces in Europe within 6 to 12 months, while ACDA director Ron Lehman gushed that "This is the most significant transition period" of the postwar era." Not only can we "legitimately ask whether we are in a transition out of the Cold War," said Lehman, but we must ask the "ultimate philosophical question: If there are even more fundamental changes in the East, will we even need to discuss disarmament?"

The only publicly dissenting voices were raised by Richard Pipes, and, to a lesser degree, William Odom, former director of the National Security Agency. In an otherwise low-key presentation, Odom threw a devastating monkey wrench into the whole arms-control process, when he asserted that on-site verification—the great Soviet "concession" which was used to ram through the INF treaty, and is now being used to justify future arms agreements—will actually "complicate, not solve, the problem of verification."

Pipes, who served on the National Security Council in the first Reagan administration, also threw some cold water on the love fest, referencing the China developments as indicative of the overall volatility of the communist world, and implying that a similar situation could easily arise in the Soviet bloc. Already "There are signs of a reaction" in the Soviet empire, he said, citing the "suppression of the Georgian uprising," and warning of the "danger of a crackdown in Poland." Pipes said that he had "hoped it would have been possible" for the Soviets to have moved to "controlled democracy," but "events of the last few months have left me skeptical."

"It behooves us and our government to be extremely cautious" in our relations with the Soviets, Pipes told the conference. "We must not be euphoric. There are many obstacles and pitfalls" ahead. Privately, Pipes told a journalist that the Soviets have not changed their strategy from the Ogarkov Doctrine, for winning a war against the West, one bit, despite recent deceptive lines from Moscow about "defense sufficiency" and defense budget cuts.