

Brezhnev hits China war threat

Offers West cooperation, pact against nuclear first strike

Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev topped off a series of speeches by the Soviet leadership March 2, with a nationally televised survey of his domestic and foreign policy. With respect to the United States, Brezhnev offered a carrot and brandished a stick, as he warned China and its Anglo-American supporters to halt a course of action which could plunge the world into thermonuclear war. He countered with the Soviet policy-alternative to war, an offer to the West, including America, of broad initiatives for trade and disarmament.

Most U.S. news media, their editorial decisions under the sway of State Department attempts to black out the war danger, misrepresented both the "carrot" and the "stick" of Brezhnev's speech. The Soviet leader was reported to have issued a conciliatory perspective that was a "drastic departure from the recent Soviet propaganda line" of attacking Washington's connivance with Peking's invasion of Vietnam. Most press followed the lead of the *New York Times*, whose Moscow correspondent wrote that the aging Soviet leadership is "less vigorous and decisive than necessary in a fast-paced world," and that Brezhnev's health "has forced him to let important decisions drift It would be out of character for him to approve risky, extensive action against China."

On the contrary, Brezhnev's warnings to China were decisive. We excerpt the speech below.

The "conciliatory" side of his speech was also different than represented. Both Brezhnev and Prime Minister Kosygin, who spoke the preceding day, defined economic development as the fundamental goal of Soviet policy for the Third World as well as in East-West relations.

Brezhnev cited the existing 25-year economic cooperation agreements of the USSR with France, West Germany and Finland, which are broadly recognized as measures for political stability as well as economic growth, and offered to negotiate one with Italy. Soviet officials told the *Journal of Commerce* that they would like to see the same arrangement with the United States, if Washington will remove the legal and political obstacles already thrown up against trade.

Brezhnev concentrated much of his speech on an appeal to the Carter Administration to drop its confronta-

tion policies and work with the USSR and Western Europe for global peace and development. His words, amplified by the continuing official Soviet warnings about Southeast Asia, demonstrate that Moscow considers the danger of war very imminent. But Brezhnev, in predicting that he will be able to meet President Jimmy Carter "in the not distant future" to sign a SALT agreement and open discussions in other areas, has held the door open for the U.S. not only to salvage detente, but to join East and Western Europe in forging an alliance for industrial growth and strategic security.

Brezhnev's further disarmament proposals are under consideration at high levels of European governments.

— Rachel Berthoff

Brezhnev: 'the task is to prevent war'

In his March 2 election speech, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev dealt with China before relations with the major Western nations. Following are excerpts translated from the Soviet daily, Pravda:

With its unprecedented, naked, and murderous attack on the small neighboring country of socialist Vietnam, the present Peking rulers have revealed to the entire world once and for all the sneaky, aggressive essence of their great-power hegemonistic policy. Now everybody sees that this policy is now the most serious threat to peace in the world. It is now clearer than ever how dangerous are any forms of complicity with this policy.

The Soviet people, together with peaceful peoples of the entire world, demands the immediate cessation of the Chinese aggression against Vietnam, the withdrawal of all troops to the last soldier Today, in this difficult hour, we are fully and totally in solidarity with the Vietnamese people. And no one should have any doubt: the Soviet Union is faithful to the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that binds our countries The aggressor's plans are doomed to fail.