

## The policy choices that confront the Kremlin

by Criton Zoakos

Since the conclusion of the Democratic convention, the Soviet High Command is engaged in a thorough reevaluation of options available to them for the remainder of the year. The internal parameters that will determine Soviet decisionmaking in the weeks ahead are discussed in this issue by *EIR* Soviet editor Rachel Douglas. We recommend that Mrs. Douglas's evaluation be taken very seriously in the policymaking circles in this country and in Western Europe who have been expressing their apprehension at the flight-forward mode of operation which has been adapted by Zbigniew Brzezinski's National Security Council, by Defense Secretary Harold Brown and by President Carter himself. As the world is sliding into a pre-programmed crisis period in late September-early October, virtually nothing is of greater value for Western policymakers than a competent, down-to-earth comprehension of how the Soviet leadership is making its decisions during this period.

As the Soviet High Command reviews the world map each evening, they focus on four simultaneously evolving military-confrontation situations:

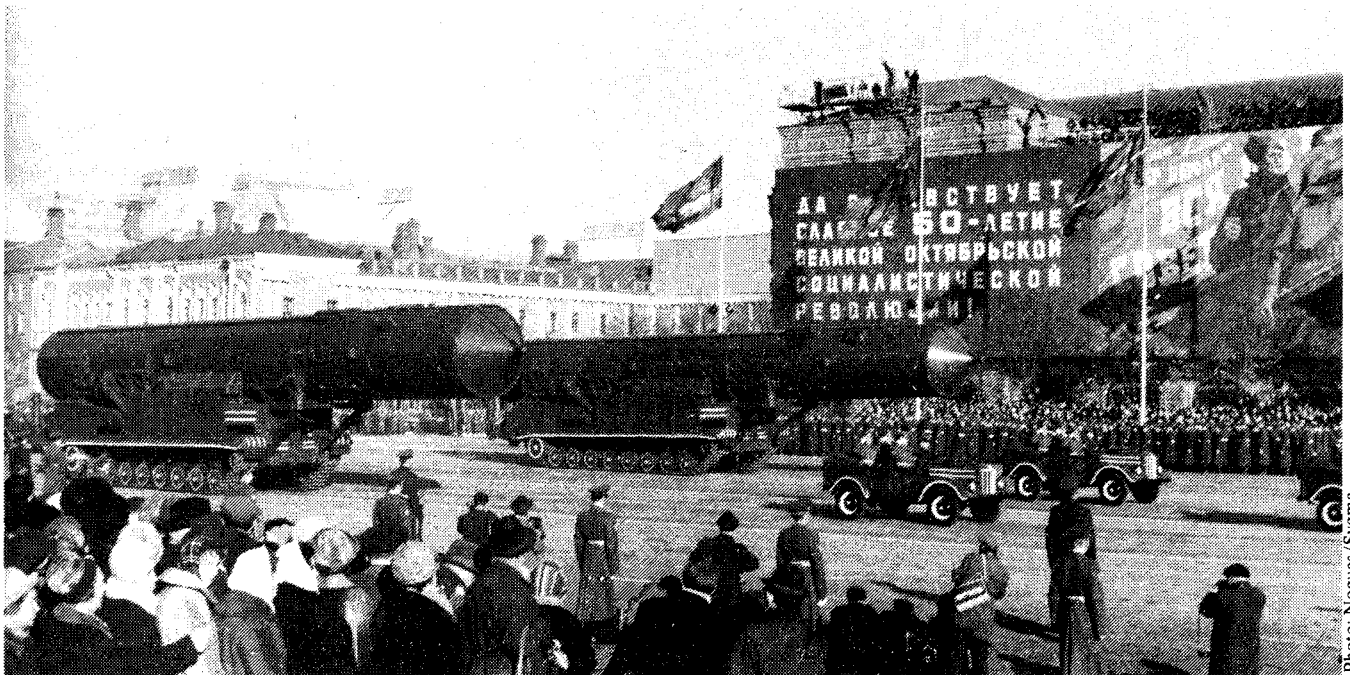
First, the Persian Gulf, where the United States, or, more specifically Defense Undersecretary Robert "Blowtorch" Komer and General Paul X. Kelley, have now completed a three-echelon military deployment (1,800 invasion-ready Marines, 20,000 additional invasion troops on standby, and the tactical nuclear capability of the two aircraft carrier task forces). This force has been organized to invade Iran sometime in late September or early October in the general area of Kuzistan, after a token prearranged popular uprising reinforced by a nominal invasion force of exiled Iranians.

Second, the United States-China arrangement to launch a two-front war against Vietnam, with the Chinese army attacking from the north and Thailand from the west. The principal objective of Chinese diplomacy and of NSC officer Richard Holbrooke in this matter is to compel the United States to honor its treaty obligations to Thailand and introduce American ground troops into Thailand once hostilities begin. The acknowledged timetable for this operation is the end of the monsoon season: late September and early October.

Third, the escalation in India of Muslim fundamentalist rioting, especially in Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, to full-scale civil-war proportions; this is also acknowledged within the international intelligence community to be scheduled for late September-early October, and it is timed to coincide with a massive destabilization of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the traditional period of pilgrimage to Mecca in October. These two commitments account for the fact that the hardline ayatollahs were helped to consolidate their grip within Iran in the last three weeks.

Fourth, Israel's adoption since Aug. 15 of a new ultra-hardline military posture is generally viewed as part of preparations for launching any number of massive military strikes against targets in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and possibly Saudi Arabia. The Soviets view Israel as having shifted to a total "runaway ally" mode in preparation for military action.

The Soviet outlook superimposed over this map-reading is influenced by two additional factors: namely, the ongoing attempted destabilization of Poland, and the proclamation by the Carter administration of the doc-



*At Moscow's 50th anniversary commemoration of the October Revolution.*

trine of "limited nuclear war" in the recently announced "Presidential Directive 59." The public declaration of PD 59 is generally read as a U.S. signal to the Soviet leadership that if the conventional forces favored by the United States in any of the above four situations is threatened with defeat on the conventional level, then the United States will proceed with utilization of "limited tactical nuclear weapons." The destabilization of Poland, despite efforts by Western Europe and Great Britain at this point to cool the situation, is an attempt by the NSC-allied forces to provoke and precipitate an actual Soviet invasion of Poland—for the purpose of severing continental Western Europe from the war-avoidance mechanisms the Brezhnev strategy has put in place since 1978.

Soviet intelligence at this time seems to proceed from the strategic evaluation that all the multiple deployments identified above are the work of an axis centered around the close coordination of the Israeli Mossad, the Keith Joseph wing of the British Tories, Chinese intelligence, and the Brzezinski-Brown coalition in the National Security Council. The Soviets also seem to be aware that the multiple deployments of this coalition are undertaken for an array of purposes, the principal one being to isolate and wreck the emerging self-assurance of continental Western Europe and the European Monetary System. It is also known to the Soviets that if the EMS forces succumb and abandon the war-avoidance mechanisms they have built up with the Brezhnev leadership over the years, then the entire Brezhnev war-avoidance policy outlook will have to be reviewed from top to bottom, and then, if it proves unsalvageable, will be abandoned.

What virtually every Western analyst fails to think through is what the Soviet posture and Soviet moves will be if the U.S.S.R. is forced to abandon their war-avoidance partnership with Western Europe. For instance, if the Polish situation deteriorates to the point of requiring a Soviet armed intervention, it does not necessarily follow that the Soviets will make their move in Poland *per se*. It is possible that after they sound out the Western European reactions to a potential move into Poland, the U.S.S.R. may make its move in another part of the globe, from Manchuria and Sinkiang to Pakistan, Iran or elsewhere.

The point to be made is that the strategists who are preparing the late September-early October confrontation scenarios do not quite know what kind of Soviet reaction they are going to harvest. If the Soviet High Command is cornered into abandoning its current Brezhnev-centered war-avoidance strategy, no ordinary ways of predicting and pre-profiling Soviet reactions can possibly work. For example, very few analysts have understood that the Soviet move into Afghanistan last Christmas was part of the U.S.S.R. war-avoidance posture motivated by NATO's Dec. 12, 1979 "Euromissile" resolution. As the Soviets claimed then, and as demonstrated by the Aug. 8 announcement of Presidential Directive 59, that Euromissile resolution was an important component of Brzezinski's commitment to impose a "limited nuclear war" doctrine on the Western Europeans. This mode of Soviet reaction under a "war-avoidance" commitment should provide food for thought to those who are attempting to fathom how the U.S.S.R. will react to the pre-planned autumn crises.