

Bagnall, commanding general of the British Army on the Rhine, have warned of Soviet plans for a surprise attack on Germany.

For the moment, however, the government of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher remains under the control of the faction best identified with NATO Secretary-General Lord Peter Carrington, who took office in June. This is the grouping responsible for the disgustingly warm reception given to the Soviet delegation to London this December, even as the visit was used to issue ultimatums and threats of war to the United States. Thatcher went so far as to willingly undertake the role of coming to the United States to relay the Soviet threats herself.

A word must be said in conclusion about the dangerous if still undecided situation of Italy. With Greece effectively gone over to the Warsaw Pact, Italy remains, with Turkey, NATO's indispensable strategic asset in the Mediterranean, the guardian of the southern flank.

The government of Premier Bettino Craxi is currently besieged by the combined forces of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the enormously powerful Italian, particularly Venetian, "black" oligarchy. The PCI has formed an open alliance with the leading representative of the Venetian oligarchs, Finance Minister Bruno Visentini, the purpose of which is to use the country's rapid economic collapse to destroy what remains of Italian constituency politics. As Communist trade union leader Luciano Lama told the Dec. 16 issue of *l'Espresso* magazine, the PCI has become a "reformist" party allied to the Republican (Visentini's) Party. The Craxi government must be replaced with a "technocratic" regime of financial experts.

This is the so-called Visentini plan which, with PCI backing, would put Italy under "receivership" much like any bankrupt corporation. The country would cease to exist as even a semblance of a nation. Constituency politics thus destroyed, Italy would be the personally-managed fiefdom of the oligarchical elite, which is quite willing to ally itself to a Soviet regime that has more in common with it ideologically than a republic-based West. Symbolic of the rapid convergence of "left" and "right" anti-Western forces in Italian society is the fact that the Communist Mayor of Rome, Ugo Vetere, sent a telegram of greetings to the party congress of the MSI, Italy's notorious neo-fascist party, which is making a bid for mass support, particularly from the social layers Visentini's "tax reforms" have immediately targeted.

The Communists and the spokesmen of the oligarchy, such as Visentini or Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, are attempting to provoke a collapse of the present government. It was Andreotti who had the ignominy, on April 23, of being the first Western government leader to visit Moscow in order to sign a joint document with the Soviets denouncing the SDI. "The two sides," the document read, "agree on the necessity . . . of the prevention of an arms race in outer space."

# Russia goes back to

by Criton Zoakos

Whereas 1983 was the year in which the leading policy-making bodies of the Russian state shed their last pretensions of "Soviet," i.e., communist-ideological, rationales for policy, and surfaced fully as the executive instruments of the idea of "Moscow, the Third and Final Rome," during the year which followed, 1984, the leading elite of the Russian state was observed undergoing a dramatic change in the style in which it conducts its business of empire building. Moscow's "new style" is consciously akin to that of the old Court of Catherine the Great with strong echoes of Nesselrode, Shuvarov, and Gorchakov—figures associated with the previous periods of territorial expansion of the Russian Empire.

A student of history, in reviewing the dramatic changes of Russian society during 1984, would be struck by the similarity of "instruments of foreign policy" employed by the Russia of today and that of Catherine, and the late-19th century Romanovs: ethnic conflicts, supranational ideological movements, "national liberation movements," religious fanaticism, financial warfare, economic and resource warfare, promotion to power of foreign political pawns, dependents and petty controlled satraps and, lastly, raw military power.

Were one to compare Ogarkov's 1984 with Shuvarov's 1875, or Alexei Orlov's 1774, one would be struck by one alarming difference: the sheer, awesome military might backing up Russian imperial objectives. The imperial ambition, having been planted by Philotheos of Pskov during the 15th century had remained alive but dormant during the 16th century; during the 17th century, the settlement of certain Venetian families in Russia helped form a sophisticated imperial policy-making center which viewed itself as the rival of Peter the Great's nation building designs. After Peter the Great's death, this Venetian-shaped imperial tradition of the Third Rome came fully in control in the court of Catherine the Great and her heirs. It was during this era of the 18th century that the great imperial design began moving. It was also the period of the Russian Empire's most breathtaking territorial expansion, and the period in which Russia's imperial intelligentsia learned the art of managing and manipulating the many nationalities and religions populating its empire—let us say the period in which Josef Stalin's "nationalities policy" was born.

The brief slowdown in expansion during the Napoleonic Wars was followed by the era of the Holy Alliance after the Congress of Vienna. During the 1850s, the then expanding British Empire checkmated Russian imperial expansion by

# imperial diplomacy

means primarily of a) the Crimean War and b) the so-called "Great Game" in Southern Central Asia, the Persia-Afghanistan-Sind area. When the Russian strategists attempted to break out of the stalemate with the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, they bitterly discovered that they had been outclassed by their Western imperial rivals primarily because Russia had "missed the train" of the industrial revolution. The Third Rome could not field modern, industrial-based armies from 1876, the year of the Treaty of San Stefano, onward.

Russia's internal political and social convulsions from San Stefano onwards reflected the inner struggles within the Third Rome imperial policy-making circles around the effort to find a solution to the empire's main predicament, its economic and technological backwardness.

In the Congress of Berlin of 1878, after San Stefano, the Third Rome strategists were made to "eat crow" by Bismarck because Russia was an industrial and logistical failure. The events of 1917 and afterward began to address this problem and to gradually remedy its disastrous consequences on imperial military power. Through a succession of ruthless industrialization drives alternating with heavy foreign importation of capital goods, Russia succeeded by the late 1950s and early 1960s in eliminating the military shortcomings which normally flow out of an intrinsically shoddy civilian economy. During the 1970s, through a combination of arms-control diplomacy, strategic deception, and ever accelerating strategic and tactical military buildup, Russia succeeded in becoming the world's most formidable military power.

As portrayed elsewhere in this issue, during 1984, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, considered by many the most formidable strategic mind of the world still serving in uniform, executed inside the Soviet Union a sweeping reorganization of commands and reordering of national priorities which have made the formidable Russian military machine able to simultaneously fight a protracted general war on all fronts even after a retaliatory strike has wiped out its main administrative centers such as Moscow or Leningrad. The Ogarkov Plan was put into effect in 1984. Through appropriate channels, Moscow has allowed this crucial fact to become known to its strategic adversaries and rivals in the West.

Marshal Ogarkov in 1984 has brought the Russian Imperial command to a position it had been dreaming of attaining since 1878, the year in which it ate crow at Berlin: on top of a military force capable of simultaneously challenging all

possible combinations of adversaries globally!

It has been amazing to watch in the course of the year which just passed, how this single strategic development—and the appropriate dissemination of the news in foreign capitals—has dramatically reinvigorated every other, secondary foreign policy-making instrument employed globally by Russian policy makers.

The most striking such revived policy instrument during this year is the emergence of Western government leaders who are acting as virtual satraps of the Russian empire. In addition to the miserable titular heads of such governments as Afghanistan and the Eastern European states, persons such as Papandreou of Greece, Palme of Sweden, and Mitterrand of France are no more heads of sovereign governments than was the 1764 King of Poland, Stanislaus Poniatowski, whom Catherine the Great appointed King of Poland by making him sit, not on a throne, but on a toilet bowl from her palace apartments.

Similarly, the enforcement of the Ogarkov Plan has given Russia sufficient leverage to allow it to assume the role of a major player and manipulator in the world capital markets, as reported elsewhere in this issue.

Apart from the upsurge in worldwide Moscow-controlled terrorist activities, which properly are an integral part of the simply military aspects of the Ogarkov Plan, Russian diplomacy's utilization of the ethnic issue worldwide registered impressive, qualitative growth by leaps and bounds. Russian diplomacy, secret services, and various quasi-academic ethnological institutes have displayed impressive versatility in manipulating Inca Indians in Peru, Bedouin tribes in the Sahara, desert tribes in Black Africa, Baluchis on the Indian Ocean littoral, Sikh separatists and Pakistani oppositionists in the Indian subcontinent, Muslim and Christian insurgents in the Philippines, Breton, Corsican, Basque and other separatists in Western Europe, and so forth down the map.

Russia's ethnic game is much older than modern "national liberation movements," much older than the events of 1917, much older in fact than Karl Marx, the grandfather of "anti-imperialist struggle." It was the principal policy instrument of Russian territorial expansion into Asia beginning in the 17th century, Catherine's principal instrument against her Ottoman imperial rival, and Nicholas I's and his successors' principal instrument against the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century. The Russian imperial experience in this matter is both older and more extensive than that of the British Empire. In certain respects, it is also more effective. As of 1984, it is backed by something the British Empire of old never enjoyed as extensively: the Ogarkov Plan and what hangs on it. The potential of this Russian capability, just as the capability to turn sovereign heads of government into satraps, has not been fully played out yet. Much of this is bound to unfold in the coming year—unless outflanked by America's Strategic Defense Initiative.