

AFGHANISTAN

Kremlin hardliners calculate that détente is an easy price to pay for strategic advantage

Russians prepare for freeze in relations with West

From Michael Binyon
Moscow, Jan 8

The Russians are now bracing themselves for a sharp deterioration in their relations with America in the wake of their widely condemned intervention in Afghanistan and the measures announced in retaliation by President Carter.

But though the Soviet press is now mounting a vitriolic counter-attack on American policies around the globe, the reaction to the grain embargo, the postponement in opening an American consulate in Kiev and the American aid to Pakistan has been fairly restrained so far.

The Russians do not want to be seen to accept the idea that their intervention has had wider effects than they foresaw. Détente is still official Soviet policy towards the West, though it is clear that they have no illusions that it can survive in anything other than name for some years to come.

Of the 15 elderly men in the Politburo who make the decisions, that probably does not matter. Over the past two years Moscow has become more likely to get through the Senate however well the Russians believe there is little to be gained by upsetting him again.

The Russians judge their relations with the West by their relations with Washington. Other countries, except perhaps Germany, do not really matter. America is seen as the leader of Nato, and it is the Soviet-American relationship that affects issues of strategy.

security and the overall direction of the Western alliance. But the policy of détente, which is closely identified with President Brezhnev, has not seemed to work. Its trade benefits are marginal as the Americans have removed the restrictions on trade with the Soviet Union.

Increasingly in Soviet circles détente has seemed to hold Moscow hostage to the hardliners in the Politburo and in the Senate. The Russians are publicly warned they should not do this or that for fear of upsetting détente and jeopardizing the ratification of the Salt 2 treaty on the limitation of strategic arms.

Moscow badly needs the Salt 2 treaty, not only for economic reasons, but as an indication of the Soviet military leadership that it is possible to make binding agreements with the Americans on security matters.

But the Russians do not want Salt II if it is to be a restraint on anything which they regard as their vital interests in other parts of the world. In the past year, they came to realize three things.

First, the American leadership has shown itself unable to make its displeasure with Soviet actions felt. Secondly, the American leadership has shown itself unlikely to get through the Senate however well the Russians believe there is little to be gained by upsetting him again.

Thirdly, the main military value of Salt to the Russians—the guarantee that nuclear war would not be fought on their soil—was undermined by Nato's decision to deploy nuclear missiles in Western Europe. The Russians regarded Mr Carter as unpredictable. But they found that floating him did not seem to matter.



They were angered by his human rights campaign and took the risk of rejecting out of hand his Salt proposals in 1977. Mr Carter drew up new proposals and toned down his human rights campaign. They placed dissidents on trial, risking American retaliation. The Americans ordered Soviet troops in Cuba to be withdrawn. The Russians refused, and after a face-saving accommodation the Americans dropped the issue.

The hardliners in the Politburo presumably drew the appropriate lessons, and were also by the example of Iran. At the same time they were intensely angered by the Nato decision last month, which was seen to be a result of American pressure.

posing to slow down the pace of the negotiations, very much such condemnation. The Soviet media have shown the least interest in what they did when the West condemned Western's overthrow of the Shah.

But if Afghanistan signals an effective end to détente as the Russians have liked it, the word to be understood, is Moscow expecting a return to the cold war.

The answer appears to be No—at least, not in the sense of the words in the 1950s. There are too many Western interests in keeping businesslike relations with the Russians. Trade is one, cultural contacts are only reluctantly broken by the West, and the Americans always have to sell their word somewhere.

What Moscow now expects is a longer term freeze. Relations will clearly worsen in the immediate future, and Soviet advocates of close contacts with the West are very pessimistic. In virtually every field, the Russians will now close the doors to the West for a while.

To the Kremlin that does not matter. Indeed it may well be welcome to the ideologists who feared that prolonged contact with the West was weakening the ideological basis of communism, lowering the vigilance against Western influence.

In a few years' time the Soviet leadership will be pre-occupied with its own economic situation, and the rapidly worsening economic situation. The hardliners in the Politburo may have calculated that détente was the easy price to pay for security on the present front, and a strategic advantage that the West for its present threats and counter-measures is unlikely to be able to take away.

OVERSEAS

Mr Mugabe threatens to break ceasefire if Mrs Thatcher lets 'violations' of agreement continue

Maputo, Jan 8.—Mr Robert Mugabe, leader of the Patriotic Front, threatened today to break the Rhodesian ceasefire to position his troops if Mrs Thatcher does not end violations of the peace agreement reached in London.

In a letter to Mrs Thatcher made public here, he blamed the violations on Lord Soames, the British Governor, Bishop of Muzorewa, the former Prime Minister, and the Rhodesian armed forces.

Mr Mugabe, who commands the bulk of the guerrilla forces in the country, said Lord Soames had allowed South African military units to remain in Rhodesia despite the fact that the London agreement stated that they would be withdrawn.

He accused the Governor of allowing General Peter Walls, the commander of the Security Forces, to employ his forces with guerrilla troops were confined to rural areas, constituted a breach of the ceasefire, writes Nicholas Ashford from Salisbury.

He said the Governor was entitled under the Lancaster House agreement to use any forces that had accepted his authority, and the continued presence of Patriotic Front guerrillas who had not reported to the ceasefire was itself a breach of the ceasefire.

Forces were trying to move into Bulawayo, evacuated by the Patriotic Front.

He also protested at Britain's failure to position the return of leaders of the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu) to Rhodesia and the development of the situation posed as a "dangerous threat" to the elections set for next month.

The letter demanded an immediate end to the illegal activities of the agreement and went on: "If they continue, I shall regard my duty as allowing a equally free to dishonour, in a similar way, the ceasefire agreement."

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Lagos protest: Students backed Mrs Mugabe's offer of a self-a breach of the ceasefire.

The British High Commission in the Nigerian capital of Lagos for 12 hours yesterday protesting against Mrs Thatcher's offer of African soldiers in Rhodesia—Agency France-Press.

Commonwealth anger: Strong criticism of Lord Soames' decision to allow South African troops to guard the Beit Bridge was voiced yesterday at a meeting of the Commonwealth Southern Africa Committee in London, writes David Spangler, Our Diplomatic Correspondent.

Four killed in Iran during armed attack on gendarmes

Teheran, Jan 8.—Four Government security officers were killed in an armed attack by insurgents in the tense Kurdistan region of Western Iran today.

A Government column was ambushed as it withdrew from a gendarme base near the town of Mahabad, the official Paris news agency reported, quoting Mr Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolutionary leader, as saying the attack was a strategic advantage that the West for its present threats and counter-measures is unlikely to be able to take away.

wounded and the rest dispersed. "At the same time as the attack, four gendarmes were killed by a car bomb which had been a gendarme truck being stopped on the road, the Farz report said.

Anti-Government crowds rioted in the north-western city of Tabriz today as sporadic unrest continued in Iran's troubled north.

Officials at the East Zaire province governor's office said at least 20,000 people rallied in support of Ayatollah Shariat-Adabi.

Members of the opposition party (MPRP), supporters of Ayatollah Shariat-Adabi, estimated the crowd to be 100,000 strong and said some protesters tore down portraits of Ayatollah Khomeini, the revolutionary leader.—AP and Reuter.

Greek forces chief asks to be replaced

From Our Correspondent Athens, Jan 8

General Ioannis Davos, who has been head of the Greek armed forces since September, has asked to be replaced in his duties in order, as an announcement by the Defence Ministry put it, to guarantee the renewal of the country's military leadership.

The Defence Ministry said Mr Constantinos Karamanlis, Prime Minister, had asked the general to stay as Chief of the National Defence General Staff last summer when he asked to be replaced.

Chiefly the Prime Minister was keen that General Davos, aged 61, should continue the defence of the country, but again conducting with the Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in the Middle East, the military re-integration of Greece in Nato.

Afghan headmen ask ex-king to come back

From Ian Murray
Azakhel, Afghan headmen

Refugee Afghan headmen today issued an invitation to King Zahir Shah to return from exile in Italy and lead them in their fight to expel Soviet troops from the country.

"Please let our King know" one of the headmen said, "that he would lead us to the fight for him and free our country." A hundred turbaned men in the mountains of Azakhel, a field beyond the railway tracks some 23 miles south-east of Peshawar, it has been set up by the Pakistan Government as one of a series of camps along the Pakistan border to accommodate the thousands of Afghan refugees pouring across from Afghanistan. Tents and food are provided and the refugees are issued with identity papers by the authorities.

But although the Pakistan law runs there, the camp is really ruled by the five chosen headmen and it is they who keep real order among the 14,000 people on the scattered campsite.

The youngest of the headmen is Hukam Khan, who thinks he is "about 40" and says that he has "been in the trenches" since as young as age, because all the other elders of his tribe have been killed or jailed by the Russians.

With the four other headmen he has one duty to further the war inside the camp. They meet regularly to decide which of the men in the camp should be sent to join the fighting.

He says: "We have only one gun for each 20 men. The rest of us are sitting here because we have no weapons. If we had weapons we would go and fight."

So the camp has only about 500 men actually in the field. At regular intervals requests are sent in and the tired men are sent back to the camp. The guns themselves never leave Afghanistan.

Some of the men come back wounded. The most recent casualty here was hit in the side six days ago somewhere in the Duhadi region of Lower Province. According to him, fighting was intense and there were many deaths of other Afghans there than those actually joining in the guerrilla warfare.

Other men came up to show their wounds, stripping their sleeves and rolling up their shirts and revealing vivid scars. One man was still wearing the green corduroy waistcoat he had on when a bullet went right through his side. The neatly fitted jacket in it fitted right over the scar.

The camp has been here for about a month. But it seemed that everyone who had left the country because of the fighting with Soviet soldiers, which was going on since long before the invasion, on Boxing Day, with Soviet helicopters and tanks, machine cannon and napalm.

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Afghan soldiers man a checkpoint on the Jalalabad-Kabul road.

Angry Soviet reaction to Security Council debate

From Our Own Correspondent Moscow, Jan 8

Russia today reacted angrily and sharply to the Security Council debate on Afghanistan and Western moves against the Soviet Union, saying the West was trying to go back to the cold war.

"The Security Council resolution, vetoed yesterday by the Soviet delegate, constituted a call for a change in the existing order in Afghanistan," the agency said.

"The children are given no schooling because their imams have been killed or jailed or have stayed to fight."

"The men say they want to do nothing but fight. The Russians and their allies against the will of the Afghan Government. The clamour raised about it was being used as a pretext by the West to justify a return to the cold war."

The smear campaign unleashed by the United States was designed to disguise its sinister plans of expansion and hegemony. Meanwhile, Russia was increasing its military expenditure and intensifying its military preparations in the Middle East, the Indian Ocean and elsewhere.

The agency today accused America, Britain, China and other countries of trying to stop the Afghan revolution at its birth.

War training in Egypt for guerrillas

From Christopher Walker Aswan, Jan 8

In a concerted effort to promote armed resistance in Afghanistan, the Egyptian Government has already sent a number of special camps to provide military training facilities for guerrilla forces.

The existence of the new military camps, whose exact locations inside Egypt were kept a close secret, was revealed here for the first time by General Kamal Hassan Ali, the Egyptian Defence Minister.

He also disclosed that the Egyptian and American air forces have been carrying out joint training exercises somewhere in Egypt over recent weeks.

Speaking to correspondents covering the ninth summit meeting between Egyptian President Sadat and Menachem Begin, the Israeli Prime Minister, he said the Egyptian Government was providing military training facilities for guerrilla forces in the Sinai Peninsula.

Details of the extent to which the Egyptian air force prepared to support the guerrillas in Afghanistan was also disclosed.

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Labour Party will protest to Soviet ambassador

By Michael Hatfield (Liverpool, Walton) stating:

This National Executive Committee, believing as it does in peace and friendship between nations, in détente in Europe, and the right of all nations to self-determination, condemns the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and urges the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops forthwith in the interests

Joy Adamson's ashes to be strewn in Kenya

From Charles Harrison Nairobi, Jan 8

Mr Joy Adamson, the naturalist, author and artist who was murdered last week at her remote safari camp in the Serengeti National Park, was cremated here today.

She had left instructions in her will for her ashes to be scattered over the plains where she and her husband George had raised the orphaned lioness, cub, Elsa, more than 20 years ago.

About 50 mourners attended the funeral service in an open-sided chapel only yards from the Serengeti National Park.

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US to sell satellite ground station to Chinese

From Fox Butterfield Peking, Jan 8

Mr Harold Brown, the American Defence Secretary, announced today that the United States was now prepared to sell a ground station capable of receiving satellite information from Earth resources satellite (Landsat), with possible military applications.

The ground station has computers and taping equipment which would be used to process anything the United States has sold to the Soviet Union, a State Department official said.

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Lord Carrington on mission to confirm British support

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent London, Jan 8

Lord Carrington, the Foreign Secretary, leaves London today for a tour of five west and south Asian countries, with the objective of confirming British support and help in the aftermath of the Soviet action of Afghanistan.

His first stop will be Ankara, where he will have talks with the Foreign Minister today and with the Prime Minister. As a Nato country, Turkey is closely involved in the allies' talks meeting in the crisis.

Tomorrow he flies to Oman, where the implications of the changed situation in Iran for the Gulf are being discussed.

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