



"Overcoming Nuclear Danger"
Cambridge (USA), 4-5 December 2007

Rassegna Stampa /Press Review

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Gorbachev urges treaty's preservation

By Denise Lavoie

Associated Press Writer / December 4, 2007

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said Tuesday that it is critically important to preserve the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty he signed with President Ronald Reagan almost 20 years ago to the day.

Gorbachev said he disagrees with some in Russia, including President Vladimir Putin, who have called the treaty outdated and suggested that Russia should consider pulling out of it.

The treaty, which was signed at the White House on Dec. 8, 1987, banned the entire class of medium-range missiles.

Calls for Russia to withdraw from the treaty have been made amid mounting anger in the Kremlin over plans by the United States to build a missile defense system in Eastern Europe. Last week, Putin signed a law suspending Russia's participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty, which limits deployment of tanks, aircraft and other heavy weapons.

"All of these treaties constitute a system, a structure, that maintained a certain stability ... but this is something that should continue to work," he said. "It's not some kind of scrap and it's not some kind of old goods to be sold."

Gorbachev said preserving the INF treaty is a "common duty" shared by the U.S. and Russia.

"Improvements can be made, but the preservation of this treaty is extremely important from a practical and a political standpoint," he said. "If we start ruining treaties like this, this would end very badly."

Gorbachev, who is credited by some in the United States for hastening the collapse of the Soviet Union, has been criticized by many in Russia for the economic problems that occurred after the breakup of the bloc.

Gorbachev, who left office in 1991, said he believes history will praise his reforms, most notably glasnost, openness in the press and political debate, and perestroika, his economic reforms.

"Unfortunately, this is not the first time that it happens that history is being rewritten," he said. "This has happened in Russia and this has happened in world history. As for perestroika -- the whole epic story of perestroika -- I think that these efforts to malign it are really in vain."

Gorbachev was in the Boston area to speak at an international conference dubbed "Overcoming Nuclear Danger" at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

U.S., Russia should keep strong nuke pact: Gorbachev

Tue Dec 4, 2007 10:51pm EST

By Jason Szep

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (Reuters) - Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said on Tuesday a pillar of the arms control system could fall if Washington and Moscow replace the landmark START nuclear arms reduction treaty with a less formal pact.

The START treaty, signed in 1991, set ceilings on the size of the Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals and became a symbol of the end of the Cold War. Washington has indicated it will not extend it in 2009 but wants to replace it with a pact that eliminates strict verification requirements and weapons curbs.

"I don't see a negotiating process actually happening," Gorbachev, who signed the START treaty with then-President George Bush, the father of the current U.S. president, told a Harvard University forum.

Gorbachev commented only briefly on the big majority won by President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party in Sunday's parliamentary election, saying Putin had "really rescued" the party. "Putin came to their help," he said.

Diplomatic analysts have said a U.S. position on START reflects U.S. President George W. Bush's practice of repudiating arms control as a means of curbing nuclear weapons while relying more on measures like export controls, interdiction and sanctions.

Russia has said the treaty should be replaced with a formal, binding pact, and not an informal arrangement.

Gorbachev said verifying and inspecting each country's nuclear arsenals was crucial. "It is totally wrong to declare that this system is obsolete and unnecessary after the end of the Cold War," he said. "It is totally wrong."

Gorbachev also said another milestone arms control pact, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty which he signed with Ronald Reagan in 1987, must be preserved.

(Editing by Patricia Zengerle)

PRESS/ MEDIA ON LINE &
INTERNET

Gorbachev Applauds Putin's Achievements *Ex-Leader Cites Russian 'Resurgence'*

By Doug Struck
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, December 5, 2007; Page A22

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Dec. 4 -- Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said Tuesday that President Vladimir Putin "has pulled Russia out of chaos" and is "assured a place in history," despite Western criticisms that he has throttled democracy. Gorbachev's endorsement of Putin, who won broad support in a parliamentary election Sunday that was criticized by U.S. officials, comes despite Gorbachev's acknowledgment that the news media have been suppressed and that election rules run counter to the democratic ideals he has promoted.

Putin and other Russian leaders are often misunderstood in the West, said Gorbachev, who ruled the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991, overseeing its collapse and the end of the Cold War. He spoke to The Washington Post in an interview Tuesday at Harvard University, where he is attending a conference on nuclear arms.

"Major changes are underway, changes that are moving ahead in Russia. Not everyone understands those complexities," he said in response to a question about U.S. disputes with Moscow over missile defense, Russian troop strengths in Europe and a growing list of other issues.

"Russia needs its Western partners," he said. "But Russia will not be and doesn't want to be a junior partner, a kid brother, that is doing the West's bidding." Dressed casually in an open-collared shirt, Gorbachev was animated in his effort to explain his homeland, speaking rapidly through an interpreter. Gorbachev has tipped his support for Putin before, though he also has criticized some of Putin's moves to consolidate power. Gorbachev said his respect for the former KGB officer has grown, and his comments Tuesday were unusually laudatory.

In Gorbachev's view, Putin salvaged the country from the ravages of Gorbachev's old rival, Boris Yeltsin, whose rule as president of Russia from 1991 to 1999 set the country careening toward capitalism at the cost of great economic and social turmoil.

"Now Russia is having a resurgence, not for the first time in its history," he said. "We need your understanding that we are halfway in our transition to a free and fully democratic state."

Since leaving office, Gorbachev, 76, has played an enigmatic public role. He gets little public notice in Russia: He ran for the Russian presidency in 1996 and got 0.5 percent of the vote. He lectures abroad, where he is hailed as a courageous man for his role in ending the Cold War.

He started the Gorbachev Foundation and embraced environmental concerns in 1993 by starting Green Cross International, a Geneva-based nonprofit organization that promotes action on global warming. He lists threats to the environment as one of the three big challenges facing the world, along with security and the growing poverty gap, which he calls a "time bomb." In a speech Tuesday night at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, Gorbachev lamented the lack of movement toward ridding the world of nuclear weapons since he and President Ronald Reagan signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty 20 years ago.

"In the next decade, thousands of nuclear weapons were destroyed. But most of them were destroyed as a result of previous agreements," Gorbachev said. "There were no new initiatives."

"During the 1990s, we witnessed the regressive movement from trust to mutual misunderstanding and suspicion," he added. The 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty "was cast aside" by President Bush. "We see the remilitarization of thinking in nuclear policy. As of today, all nuclear states are basing their policy on the long-term preservation of nuclear weapons."

That is dangerous, he said.

"I believe that the arrogance of one great power that it is capable alone to solve any problems is something that is very costly. We are paying a big price, and I believe Americans, the U.S., is paying a very big price."

A Veteran Delivers Weapons Warning

Thursday, December 6, 2007. Issue 3801. Page 1.

By Simon Saradzhyan

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts -- The entire architecture of strategic arms control could come tumbling down soon if Moscow and Washington fail to reach agreements on U.S. missile defense plans and adapting Cold War treaties to current realities, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev said.

"If there is no movement forward, then a rollback begins sooner or later," Gorbachev told a nuclear arms control conference at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Gorbachev cautioned that economic ties would start to suffer if the two sides remained at loggerheads, and he painted an apocalyptic picture for the longer term.

"If the processes in the nuclear sphere continue as they are now, 100 years from now humankind will be no more," he said.

The trouble, Gorbachev said, lies with a lack of progress in negotiations over U.S. plans to deploy elements of a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe as well as the extension of the Strategic Arms Control Treaty, or START, which expires in 2009.

Gorbachev said he was concerned that upcoming presidential elections in Russia and the United States "will lead to a pause in negotiations on START, and another pillar of arms control will collapse as a result."

Moscow has been pushing Washington to negotiate the extension of START and to limit its missile defense plans in Europe. START provides the verification regime for the three-page Moscow Treaty, which Presidents Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush signed in 2002 to reduce the number of nuclear warheads on duty. Russian officials say the U.S. administration has been reluctant to start talks, a reflection of Bush's expressed hesitance to constrain decision making by new treaties.

The main bone of contention, however, are U.S. plans to deploy the missile defense system in Eastern Europe, said Gorbachev, whose hour-long speech Tuesday began and ended with a standing ovation.

"A remilitarization of thinking is under way in the nuclear sphere," he told the audience of more than 50 policymakers and scholars from the United States, Russia and other countries.

In Moscow, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused Washington on Wednesday of withdrawing from a plan that would allow the Russians to constantly monitor the planned missile defense sites in Eastern Europe and of rejecting an idea to jointly evaluate threats that would trigger activation of the shield.

"There has been a serious rollback from what we were told," Lavrov said, speaking ahead of a meeting Friday with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Gorbachev said distrust was growing on both sides of the ocean and blamed the U.S. leadership for most of the regress.

"A lot astounds me in U.S. foreign policy," he said, accusing Washington of suffering from "the syndrome of a victor" in the Cold War and carrying out "arrogant" and "unipolar actions" to undermine international institutions, including the United Nations and its Security Council.

Gorbachev said Moscow and Washington should not just agree to extend the treaties that he signed on Moscow's behalf but adapt them to post-Cold War realities. "It is impossible to live on infinitely with the old stock," he said.

Gorbachev also called for the continued meticulous system of verification of how signatories comply with the treaties. In a clear sign of his critical attitude toward the Bush administration's reluctance to negotiate verification regimes, he reminded the audience of how Ronald Reagan's administration had pushed for verification regimes in Cold War-era treaties. Reagan even once cited the Russian proverb of "trust, but verify" during negotiations, Gorbachev noted.

Both U.S. and Russian participants concurred with Gorbachev's bleak assessment of the current state of affairs and the dire consequences of the widening split between the two powers.

"If we remain on our current course, then we are going to go over a cliff," Graham Allison, director of Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, said Wednesday, the last day of the two-day forum.

"There will be not just nuclear arms proliferation, but eventually nuclear terrorism and even nuclear wars," he said.

Allison, who served as assistant defense secretary in the 1990s, expressed doubt that the Bush administration would heed calls to urgently begin a meaningful dialogue on arms control issues. He said he expected the next U.S. administration to be more responsive.

Federation Council International Affairs Committee Chairman Mikhail Margelov, said the strategic arms control architecture was already crumbling. "There is still time, but it is running out very quickly," he said in an interview.

Vladimir Dvorkin, a leading Russian expert on nuclear arms, said the threat of a collapse was very real.

"It will become a reality if the two sides do not begin to negotiate in earnest," he said.

He said negotiations should primarily focus on the U.S. missile defense plans and the extension of START. Like Gorbachev, Dvorkin said the two sides should not negotiate to extend Cold War-era treaties but aim for new ones. "The time of 500-page documents is gone," he said.

Gorbachev to West: give Putin a chance

December 6, 2007

BOSTON: The former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev says Vladimir Putin "has pulled Russia out of chaos" and is "assured a place in history," despite Western criticisms that the President has throttled democracy.

Mr Gorbachev's endorsement of Mr Putin, whose party won broad support in parliamentary elections on Sunday, comes despite his acknowledgement of news media suppression and election rules that run counter to the democracy he promoted.

On Tuesday, the US President, George Bush, said he had called Mr Putin to express his concerns over the alleged election irregularities. He avoided congratulating him on his victory.

Mr Gorbachev, whose rule in the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991 oversaw its dismantling and the end of the Cold War, said Mr Putin and other leaders in Russia were often misunderstood in the West. He spoke in an interview on Tuesday at Harvard University, where he was attending a conference on nuclear arms.

"Russia needs its Western partners," Mr Gorbachev said through a translator. "But Russia will not be and doesn't want to be a junior partner, a kid brother, that is doing the West's bidding."

Mr Gorbachev has tipped his support for Mr Putin before, though he also has been carefully critical of some of Mr Putin's moves to consolidate power. He said his respect for the former KGB officer has grown.

Mr Gorbachev said Mr Putin had salvaged the country from the ravages of Mr Gorbachev's old rival, Boris Yeltsin, whose rule as president from 1991 to 1999 careened the country toward capitalism at the cost of economic and social turmoil.

"Now Russia is having a resurgence," he said. "We need your understanding that we are halfway in our transition to a free and fully democratic state."

Since leaving office, Gorbachev, now 76, has played an enigmatic public role. He gets little public notice in Russia - he ran for the Russian presidency in 1996 and got 0.5 per cent of the vote.

The Washington Post, Agence France-Presse