

is a "new thinking" abroad—again, on credit from that prime agent of change Mikhail Gorbachev.

## 20. Diplomatic Connivance

At the earliest stages of any deep change in international affairs, there is a time-honored practice that governs the behavior of the great powers of the world. One of the most successful practitioners of that approach—the eighteenth-century French adventurer-statesman, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand—artfully called that secretive process *la connivance diplomatique*. Diplomatic connivance.

Intelligent and farseeing statesmen who contemplate a brusque departure from an established policy, Talleyrand maintained, will keep the public mind and reaction of their nations in view. Consequently, long before they reveal their new policy, they will carry on a private dialogue among themselves, exploring the most sensitive and delicate aspects of their plans.

In the privacy of diplomatic chanceries, in highly classified correspondence, in privileged person-to-person communications, agreements of substance and principle are reached. Agreements about how far each participant is willing to commit itself; about what the overall timing will be; about who other than the main parties should be informed; and about the main steps by which the general public is to be acquainted with the planned change.

Precisely that process had been in operation for more than three years before Mikhail Gorbachev began his tenure as General Secretary of the CPSU in March of 1985, bringing with him changes of a truly shocking nature and extent.

By the time Gorbachev came to the top of the Soviet heap, in fact, knowledge of what was about to come had already begun to filter from

government channels, ministries and diplomatic missions outward to think tanks and paragonovernmental agencies, as well as to the most influential financial, industrial, cultural and media centers. All along the way, minds were disposed and acclimatized by a process of discussions and reactions, agreements and preparations.

The surprise for some was that Gorbachev—an untried leader, after all, with no experience on the world stage—seemed to move so rapidly after his advent as General Secretary; that he seemed to master so much so quickly as to take the world by storm, and never mind learning the ropes of the normal process of diplomatic connivance.

Pope John Paul was not surprised, however. For one thing, Gorbachev was better fitted for his new international role than most Soviet bureaucrats. Even in his Stavropol days, he had shown his geopolitical bent, as well as his avid interest in and talent for international networking, on official visits he made to Belgium, Italy, West Germany, France and Canada. But that was far from the whole of it.

By the opening of the 1980s, Gorbachev was entrenched as the special protégé of KGB head Yuri Andropov. In 1982, when Andropov succeeded Leonid Brezhnev as General Secretary, Gorbachev remained at his side. As the aging Andropov's health declined, it was the young and trusted Gorbachev who functioned as *de facto* General Secretary, shuttling back and forth between Andropov's sickroom and Moscow's General Secretariat. It was Gorbachev who conveyed the wishes and decisions of the master on matters of deepest confidentiality and high state security to Andropov's bureaucratic underlings. On a need-to-know basis, finally Gorbachev became privy to all there was to know. He knew all the executive decisions taken by Andropov. He saw to the transmission of those decisions into the hands of the relevant executive branches of the Soviet government and the Communist Party.

After the General Secretary's death, in February of 1984, Gorbachev performed the same function for Andropov's successor, Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko. Already seventy-three years old and ailing, Chernenko was a dying man at the time of his election to the highest post in the Soviet Union.

When the time came that Chernenko was no longer able to sit with his Politburo colleagues, press photographs showed Mikhail Gorbachev—now highly experienced, uniquely informed and deeply connected to the sinews of Soviet power—sitting symbolically but discreetly behind Chernenko's empty chair. And during the 175 days immediately prior to Chernenko's death, when he was completely hidden from public view, Gorbachev was at his bedside.

As an accredited member of international leadership, Pope John Paul was another of those privy to the changes being planned. But, thanks to his own independent sources of information, John Paul was also able to correct most of the partisan distortions that inevitably pervade the diplomatic connivance process, as each side seeks its own advantage—including some distortions introduced by members of the anti-Church within his own chancery who never miss a chance in their efforts to transform both Church and papacy.

From his vantage point of the Vatican as a window on the entire world around him, and as a man born and bred to genuine geopolitics himself, John Paul saw at the opening of the 1980s unmistakable signs that a geopolitical strategy far superior to any understanding prevailing in the inner councils of the West had masterfully seized the prime initiative in world affairs. The society of nations was becoming locked into a scenario that appeared to be dominated by Moscow and that would be played out by the turn of the second millennium.

Quickly swept up in that millennium endgame were all of the various factions of the West; all of the diverse religious and antireligious globalist movements of the day; the People's Republic of China; that helpless giant we call the Third World; and the Roman Catholic institutional organization of John Paul, together with other forms of Christianity.

For Pope John Paul II, the most obvious sign that a major process of diplomatic connivance was under way—and that therefore a major departure from the world order that had prevailed for nearly half a century was coming—surfaced in a certain change of attitude that became noticeable in the conversation and behavior of high officials and power brokers in the capitalist nations. The consensus among the Internationalist and Transnationalist leaders of the West began to revolve around the notion that the Soviet leadership had finally realized the simple truth: The whole Soviet economic system was about to implode.

It seemed logical enough to anyone with an ounce of real capitalist sense that after seventy years of unrelenting Marxism—with its GNP being swallowed up in armaments, and with its privileged *nomenklatura* resting atop a hopelessly inefficient bureaucracy—the Soviet Union was at least sending signals that economically, financially, socially and psychologically, the USSR was on its last legs. It seemed inevitable that it would signal for help. And it seemed the Internationalist-Transnationalist moment of triumph was at hand.

Accordingly, signals began to flow back to the Soviet Union from the

West. And the process of diplomatic connivance being what it is, some of the signals were discreet—almost private, you would say. The Soviet submarines' behavior around Sweden's coastline was one such signal. For a number of years, Soviet submarines have been penetrating Swedish territorial waters, probing the accuracy of the rings of submarine sensors that protect Sweden's naval bases, thus testing Sweden's defenses. Under Gorbachev, Soviet violations rose to a record level in 1988. Even after one Soviet submarine, a Whiskey-class vessel armed with nuclear torpedoes, grounded itself on the rocks outside Karlskrona in 1981, the penetrations continued unabated. Why hasn't Sweden protested violently? Why has the United States, with its stake in Swedish defenses—even though Sweden is a neutral—not made it an issue with Gorbachev? Why, finally, does he persist in it? The final answer lies in the quest for signals, signals of permissiveness and nonbellicosity on Sweden's part, signals of the U.S. understanding of Soviet touchiness about its coasts in the Baltic. In a word, it is a diplomatic connivance.

Other signals are more overt. The economic condition of the Soviet Union, known accurately in the West, began to receive a great deal of play in European and American media reports. It became fashionable, for want of a better word, to discuss the opportunities for peace that might be implied by the fact that the Soviet Union could not keep up its foreign subsidies. That it could not rebuild its decrepit infrastructure. That it could not compete in the world economy. That it could not supply needed consumer goods to its own people. That it needed at least two decades—and a huge infusion of Western credits and other help—to correct its dangerous posture.

Rather soon, the companion idea began to surface that, while the failed Soviet economy presented an opportunity for a new approach by the West, there would be a downright danger to everybody should the West be too fainthearted or too doctrinaire to cross the bridge of economic cooperation. If the West were to force Moscow to the brink of its own destruction, the argument ran, what would there be any longer to hold the Soviet hand back from the ultimate strike against the West? Veiled though it generally was, the idea seemed to be that Moscow would not go alone into oblivion.

Somewhat less publicly at first, and during the same time period, the process of diplomatic connivance began to fuel some basic financial and trade initiatives. Two mechanisms were set in motion to supply a certain easing of economic pressures in the Soviet Union.

The first mechanism was a rescheduling of Soviet debts to the West. In practice, this mechanism meant that the Soviets were not required to

pay down the principal they already owed. And it meant that interest payments could be finessed by postponement; or financed by new loans rolled from one banking consortium to another, and not listed in the information conveyed to stockholders. Involved here were such major United States banks as First Chicago, Chase Manhattan, Citibank, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, Chemical Bank, Bankers Trust, Marine Midland and the Bank of America.

Surely it was understood that this mechanism would place a heavy economic burden on the West itself. In the United States, for example, the losses sustained by the banks in this operation were deducted as far as law allowed from tax payments. The American taxpayer was thus loaded with about half of the losses.

Nonetheless, for policymakers the gamble of increased public debt was apparently worth taking. No doubt it seemed literally to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to extend at least the first two legs of the capitalist tripod—trade and finance—into the Soviet Union itself. If that much could be accomplished, who could doubt that the third leg of the tripod—the physical security of all nations—would be greatly strengthened?

The second mechanism for easing the economic burdens crushing the Soviet system was convertibility. The Russian ruble was and still is not convertible on world currency markets, nor is it directly convertible even between the Warsaw Pact nations of the East. A new convertibility mechanism was, therefore, devised to facilitate the ruble. An agreement was reached between West German and Japanese banks to support a limited amount of rubles on the market at a pre-agreed level. By this means, the Soviets became eligible for membership in all the international money organizations that function as conduits for American capital.

That this major financial process in favor of the Soviets enjoyed acceptance in important spheres of influence was made clear by William Verity, among other high-level spokesmen. Verity was one of the founders in 1973 of the U.S.-USSR Trade and Economic Commission (USTEC), and he chaired that Commission from 1978 to 1984. "The U.S.," Verity declared in 1987, "is going to have to get used to the idea that the Soviets are good trading partners."

Whatever about their worth as a trading partner, the Soviets did prove themselves to be masters at the game of diplomatic connivance. Even before what came to be called Gorbachevism was felt by the general public, the Soviets had been provided with \$16 billion in credits and unsecured loans by Western European and Japanese trade and financial deals.

By 1988, with Gorbachev at the helm, total Soviet debt to the West came to \$179 billion in low-interest, unsecured loans and was rising at

the rate of \$2 billion a month. Moreover, financial experts in East and West alike were in agreement that the Soviet regime would need \$100 billion more in Western capital over the next five years.

How much Gorbachev may have contributed to the early stages of the Soviet end of diplomatic connivance for the economic salvation of the Soviet Union, and how much it was the brainstorm of KGB head and later General Secretary Andropov and others, may never be known. What is certain for Pope John Paul, however, is that whether Mikhail Gorbachev was the master planner or not, once he reached the pinnacle of power, Gorbachev showed himself to be the aptest genius of all at the process of diplomatic connivance.

With Gorbachev on the scene, a new energy began to heighten the action in the sphere of international affairs claimed by the capitalist nations as their own. During the years between 1985 and 1988, the General Secretary's openness and candor, so stunning to most in the West, was exactly what the financial doctors ordered. Apparently flying in the face of traditional Soviet secrecy in such matters, Gorbachev readily talked about his budget deficits. He publicly deplored the condition of the Soviet infrastructure. He complained about the folly of Soviet efforts to restrain inflation with price controls, which only aggravated the already disastrous shortage of food and consumer goods of every kind.

His experts in the financial field soon joined their ebullient General Secretary in a kind of Greek chorus of Soviet helplessness. The USSR was portrayed to the West in the starkest terms by Soviet economist Victor Belken as "a cannibalistic economy feeding on itself." Not only that, chimed in Belken's fellow economist Vladimir Tekhonov; the Government's ability to print money in the circumstances was "like putting an alcoholic in charge of a liquor shop." Yet a third leading Soviet economist sounded the note that no Internationalist or Transnationalist wanted to hear. There was a real danger of a "rightward swing" in the Soviet Union, warned Leonid Abalkin, unless some rapid economic progress is registered "within two years."

On still another front, arms control and disarmament matters were the subject matter of more connivance, even before the Soviet president reached Washington in December of 1987. Soviet pre-event planning and the seeding of minds among U.S. authorities was admirable. It was done so well that today, in the light of recent occurrences at the opening of 1990, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the demilitarization of Europe—East and West—was already planned by Gorbachev in conjunction with the unification of the two Germanys, three years before Gorbachev would call those shots, numbing U.S. authorities with relief.

Already, in April 1987, ten retired U.S. flag and general officers sat

down with eight of their Soviet counterparts, under the sponsorship of the Center for Defense Information. Up for discussion: Arms reduction on both sides. The Soviet proposal: The U.S. and the USSR should remove all troops from foreign countries. The Americans' question: Wouldn't that mean the Communist governments of Eastern European satellite countries would fall? The Soviet reaction: So what? The next question: Doesn't this revive the whole question of the two Germans—and the Berlin Wall and . . . and . . . and . . . ? The Soviet reaction: Yes.

The meetings were continued in Washington, Moscow and Warsaw. The net effect was a dissipation of the basic reason for the enormous expense and trouble the U.S. had shouldered for forty-five years—a defensive European shield against those Soviet troops garrisoned all over Eastern Europe. That basic reason was fear. Hence, NATO. Hence, a minimum annual U.S. expense of \$150 billion.

By the time Gorbachev reached Washington in December 1987, Washington was ready to receive him, ready to go forward with diplomatic connivance. "Everyone feels just cozy," remarked one prime television news commentator. The best example of just how cozy everyone had become with everyone else, and of just how quickly everything was moving along a very straight track, was provided when Mikhail Gorbachev set foot at last on the pavements of Washington, D.C., that December. His greatest achievement during that visit was not at the White House, or among the excited crowds of Americans who pressed in to shake his hand when he jumped from his motorcade. His chief triumph was at the Soviet Embassy, where he participated in a meeting, organized by USTEC, with the most prominent advocates of easy-credit trade between the USSR and the United States. Among those present at the meeting were Armand Hammer, grain mogul Dwayne Andrews and USTEC President James H. Giffen.

In the best traditions of diplomatic connivance, Giffen was explicit in an interview with NBC about USTEC intentions. "The level of [non-agricultural] trade," he said, "could go from a billion dollars . . . up to four or five billion per year, and maybe even higher, into the ten-to-fifteen-billion range." In response to the implications of such a scenario, Giffen was asked, "Do you really want to make the USSR an economic superpower?"

The reply was to the point. "I think we do."

Subsequent developments confirmed what John Paul already understood to be the case. Giffen was speaking for a broad range of important interests in America and elsewhere in the West.

As early as the following spring, in April 1988, USTEC held its twelfth annual meeting in Moscow. Led by William Verity—not in his role as USTEC founder now but as United States secretary of commerce—five hundred American businessmen set about an unprecedented deal-making process with a corresponding number of Soviet businessmen. In late 1988, another flurry of business deals involved West Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Italy in the extension of a fresh credit line of \$11 billion to the Soviet Union.

On March 30, 1989, the American Trade Consortium, consisting of six major United States corporations—RJR Nabisco, Mercator, Eastman Kodak, Chevron, Archer-Daniels-Midland and Johnson & Johnson—signed a major trade agreement that is expected eventually to inject \$10 billion into the Soviet economy. By the second quarter of 1989, close to two hundred companies from Western Europe and the United States had formed joint ventures with Soviet counterparts; and in May of that year, five European banks and three Soviet banks announced the first joint banking venture in Soviet history: the International Bank of Moscow.

On top of all that, through bond sales, security firms, insurance companies and corporations, the Soviets were granted access to Western financial markets, free of all oversight. That is, they were not required to divulge basic economic data.

From Pope John Paul's point of view, it made little difference at the practical level how much of all this was prearranged theater—diplomatic connivance, in other words—and how much each side was maneuvering in a dead-earnest competition for advantage in its own globalist agenda. Most striking for the Pope were three things. First, the level and the extent of the aid extended to Gorbachev by the West were being consistently heightened. Second, East and West seemed to be most compatible as newlyweds—or anyway, as bedfellows. And third, the truly uncommon geopolitical mind-set, vision and ability of the Soviet General Secretary were evident in every move he made.

There was Mikhail Gorbachev, being courted by the Western suitors until he caught them, finally consenting in blushing innocence to accept Western money, Western credit and Western trade.

And there was the West, consenting to Gorbachev's conditions. Consenting, for one thing, to the disturbing role of the KGB in all business deals. True, the West did require a little prenuptial counseling in that matter. Paul Konney, vice-president of Tambrands—one of the participants in the March 30, 1989, deal—asserted that “there is a very aggressive, hostile intelligent presence in all our deals.” However, Gorbachev's

early nurturing at the breast of the KGB during his Andropov years seemed to present no serious problem. "People need to get used to it" was Konney's opinion. "There will be a KGB representative in the organization of everyone's joint venture."

Listening to such advice, and glancing perhaps, if one got that chance, at the bronze medal of the Kremlin that rested on the desk of Mercator Corporation's James Giffen, one could not help but see something more than the old predominant desire to turn a profit. There was a new element that did not exist in the international mix before Gorbachev's arrival on the world scene. There was a blithe and trusting spirit filtering down from high places to comfort many who might otherwise have been nervous. And that is the central idea and purpose of the whole process of diplomatic connivance.

By the time the way was clear for Italy's Prime Minister Ciriaco de Mita to call, as he did in 1989, for a "Marshall Plan for the Soviet Union," it was beyond any doubting that the most serious process of diplomatic connivance in fifty years was already well along the way.

Within scant months of Mikhail Gorbachev's election in March of 1985 to the post of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, he and President Reagan met at their first summit, in Geneva, Switzerland, on November 19–20, 1985. With that meeting, the first signal was raised for the general public that a profound change in the arrangements among nations was under way.

When President Reagan returned from that summit, he gave a low-key report to the Congress and the American nation. "It was," the President said summarily, "a constructive meeting."

Constructive was hardly an ample description. The depth of agreement reached in that meeting was better gauged by scanning just one of its products.

The *General Agreement on Contacts, Exchanges and Scientific Technical Education and Other Fields*—the *General Agreement*, some Vatican analysts called it for convenience—was drawn up by Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, and was signed by Reagan and Gorbachev at the summit. The canvas covered in its provisions ranged over the entire cultural life of the United States and the Soviet Union. All phases of education and all branches of the arts were dealt with. It authorized mutual exchange programs, the homogenization of curricula, the sharing of facilities and the mutual indoctrination of the two peoples involved.

One portion of the *General Agreement*—Article II, Section 3—provided that both nations were to encourage “cooperation in the fields of science and technology, of humanities and social studies.”

The basic idea of “cooperation,” according to Article IV, Section 1.d., seemed to be “to conduct joint studies on textbooks between appropriate organizations of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” Cooperation would cover all computer-based instruction, instructional hardware and curriculum design for all grades of primary and secondary education, as well as college and university studies.

The obvious goal was a total homogenization not only of the methods of teaching and learning, but of what was to be taught and learned. Ideally, the content of all curricula would become identical. One day soon, one assumes, schoolchildren in Gorbachev’s birthplace of Privolnoye and schoolchildren in Reagan’s birthplace of Tampico, Illinois, will all learn the same materials.

This may have seemed to the Transnationalists a giant preparatory step toward their long-held dream of unbiased, uniform global education. To Pope John Paul, it was a giant step taken into the near future with closed eyes and obliterated memory.

Cooperation, for instance, in the “social sciences” turned a blind eye to the official prostitution of psychiatry and psychology by the Soviet Union as clinical tools for inflicting mental and physical torture as political punishment and for disposing of dissidents. The USSR had been effectively banned from the World Psychiatric Association in 1983 for just such practices. It had not been readmitted at the time of the signing of the *General Agreement*; and in fact, a delegation of American experts reported after their 1989 visit to the Soviet Union that nothing substantial had changed in the field. Diplomatic connivance seemed not to be strained by this factor, however.

Or take cooperation in the humanities. As taught in the Soviet Union, all humanities are marinated in Leninist Marxism as a matter of course. And as a matter of course, history is distorted by a thoroughgoing Marxization of ideas, by the systematic suppression of facts, and by downright lies. One might wonder, therefore, what common curricula might be drawn up between the USSR and the United States, or any other country of the West. Presumably, the same blithe and trusting spirit that reigned in trade and finance assumed that such problems would take care of themselves.

Cooperation in science and technology presented interesting problems of its own, meanwhile. John Paul was hardly alone in seeing all the advantage flowing to the Soviets in these areas. He saw nothing but a

greater hemorrhaging than had already taken place of vital American technology in favor of the USSR.

Without the 1985 *General Agreement*, the Soviets went to great lengths to obtain such technology, chiefly by the subterfuge of espionage, and by the adulterous actions of third-party governments and entrepreneurs. Just how far the *General Agreement* would go in making such irregular activities unnecessary for the Soviets became a fascinating subject of discussion among some in the Vatican.

According to Dr. Stephen D. Bryen, who headed the Pentagon's security program for the Reagan administration, in 1988 over half the technology that makes the weapons systems of the Soviet Union possible already came from the West. And the United States Department of Defense has stated on the basis of actual figures that trade and technology transfers to the Soviet Union have already saved the USSR billions of dollars, have reduced weapons-development time, and have amounted to a gain of \$6.6–\$13.3 billion in military technology.

Apparently, however, there is no such thing as too much technology; and, apparently, the Soviets would rely only so far on the *General Agreement* to acquire it. In 1989, four years after the Geneva summit, the Soviets paid, to the Toshiba Company of Japan, a good chunk of that hard cash the West was providing. In return, and acting in violation of solemn agreements, Toshiba supplied the Soviets with the American machine-tool technology that enabled them to build nearly undetectable submarines. The case made headlines and met with public outrage. But it was hardly an isolated incident; and Japan was not the lone transgressor.

In something of the same vein, the Soviets continued their aid to foreign surrogates, to the tune of some \$127 billion in 1988—\$1 billion to Nicaragua; \$2 billion to Vietnam; \$5 billion to Cuba; more billions to Central Europe, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Angola and Latin American surrogates such as the powerful Shining Path Marxist group so troublesome to Peru.

Without a shadow of a doubt, the aim of the *General Agreement*—at least from the point of view of the Wise Men of the West—was “to transform the shape of the world,” to quote Internationalist George Ball, because “sooner or later we are going to have to face restructuring our institutions so that they are not confined merely to the nation-states. Start first on a regional [U.S.A.-USSR] basis, and ultimately you could move to a world basis.” In that quintessentially Internationalist view, the

*General Agreement* is a blueprint for what is called a "comfortable merger" of the populations of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Taking into consideration not only the sweeping scope of the *General Agreement*, but his own intimate knowledge of the Soviet Union and his equally intimate knowledge of the process of diplomatic connivance, Pope John Paul came to an inescapable conclusion. That *Agreement* was not drawn up specifically for approval at the November 1985 summit. It was not put together in a day, or even in the few months between March, when Gorbachev was elected to the top Soviet post, and November, when he met with Reagan.

Rather, that *Agreement* came from already established drawing boards. It took time, effort and organization to produce that *Agreement*, just as it took time, effort and organization to effect the helter-skelter eastward rush of banking and trading interests.

Without question, the policies visible in both areas reflected the sweeping ambit of Gorbachevism, as well as the equally sweeping intentions of the Wise Men. For both parties intend to create nothing less than a new arrangement in all human affairs—a "new world order," to use a consecrated phrase both Gorbachev and the Wise Men employ.

In John Paul's assessment, however, the early advantage rested with Gorbachev. For those early policies also reflected that blithe and trusting acceptance by the Wise Men of basic Leninist thinking. An acceptance—a continuing connivance—that was becoming the hallmark, if not the battle cry, of the Wise Men, as they took the field with the leader who had been judged—and not by Yuri Andropov alone—as most likely to succeed in fulfilling Vladimir Lenin's ultimate dream of Soviet messianism.