

Gorbachev in 'excellent shape' after Central Committee clash

MOSCOW -- An infuriated Mikhail S. Gorbachev clashed with Communist Party conservatives at a tense, 10-hour Central Committee meeting that included an especially harsh personal attack, according to accounts surfacing Monday.

When the doors opened Saturday, however, the 58-year-old Kremlin leader emerged "in excellent shape," a participant said, with his stature reinforced with yet another party post, and even the conservatives conceded that there were no alternatives to his reforms.

There was high drama at the plenary session of the party's 250-member Central Committee, with party officials reportedly objecting to everything from the excesses of glasnost to Gorbachev's kowtowing to the West. At one point, Gorbachev even threatened to resign.

"Nobody argued against perestroika as the only policy capable of leading the country and society out of the difficult situation where they are now," said one Central Committee member, who on condition of not being identified by name gave a richly detailed account of the strife at the Kremlin.

Despite glasnost, the openness policy instituted under Gorbachev, proceedings in the Central Commit-

tee are cloaked in secrecy. But some members did talk about the session, which even by party ideologue Vadim A. Medvedev's account was peppered with "dogmatic and conservative" criticism.

The critics' argument was that "foreign countries are praising us for perestroika, consequently, our way is wrong." Estonian Premier Indrik Toome, a reformer, told his Baltic republic's youth daily Noorte Haal.

The policy-making body convened at a time of unprecedented pressure on the party, with Lithuania two days earlier revoking its constitutional monopoly on power. Gorbachev warned Communists their comrades' ouster in Eastern Europe shows they must act quickly to solve Soviet woes.

"The truth, about which we spoke so often in the past years, has been reaffirmed once again -- where there is a delay in dealing with overripe problems, excesses are inevitable," Gorbachev said in remarks reported by Tass.

But the Central Committee member, an avowed conservative, said high-ranking party officials criticized a purported surge of pacifism and the Soviet leader's foreign trips

aimed at reducing East-West tensions.

The source said that at one point, the balding 59-year-old party leader from the Siberian region of Kemerovo, Alexander G. Melnikov, "carried away by emotions, said something like this: 'Is it a proper thing to go bowing to the capitalists? To go asking for a blessing from the pope?'"

Visibly infuriated, the Soviet leader interrupted Melnikov and reportedly said: "Just a minute. We in the Politburo think our policy is justified. But if the Central Committee has another opinion, you are welcome to express it, and then we'll decide if we should resign or not."

Immediately, the source said, speakers took the floor in favor of Gorbachev and the 12-member Politburo "and the incident was exhausted." Later, he said, Melnikov apologized for "a slip of the tongue."

Gorbachev ally Ivan T. Frolov, editor of Pravda and a newly appointed secretary of the Central Committee, said the Soviet leader did not make a serious offer to resign, but merely employed "an oratorical method."

Czechs plan presidential contest, possible referendum

PRAGUE, Czechoslovakia -- A joyous cacophony of bells and whistles on Monday heralded a popular victory over the Communists, and Czechoslovaks settled down to choosing a president from among heroes the old order once called villains.

A presidential contest appeared to be developing, and the choice may be thrown open to a popular vote.

"This is the end of communism!" exulted Jana Navara, an actress in pink mukluks, adding the sound of a brass chime to the bells of Prague's Tyn Church on Old Town Square. Her 3-year-old daughter made a triumphant "V" with two tiny fingers.

The brief blast of noise replaced a threatened general strike, canceled after a flurry of events brought to power the first government in 41 years not dominated by Communists and drove President Gustav Husak from office.

Soldiers began removing barbed wire from the border with neutral Austria and Prague radio reported plans to disband Pacem in Terris, a state-controlled organization of Roman Catholic clergy. Priests outside the group often were persecuted as the state tried to impose its will.

Parliament, which meets today, has two weeks to elect a president.

But the Club of Communist Deputies, equivalent to a majority party caucus, said Monday it will support a popular referendum on the president, the state news agency CTK reported.

The club said in a communique that it would "recommend to the Federal Assembly to adopt the necessary measures for an all-people's vote (a referendum)," CTK said. "The authority of the head of state is so important that only the people can decide."

It was not clear whether all Communist deputies would support the club's position.

Earlier, Politburo member Ondrej Saling said Communist and opposition forces had agreed the president should be a Czech with no party affiliation.

"In my view, the president must be someone who enjoys broad support and guarantees stability," he added.

His statement seemed to suggest Vaclav Havel, the playwright who was jailed for opposing communism and is now the driving force behind Civic Forum, the main opposition.

World War II Allies stress need for E. German stability

WEST BERLIN -- The four Allies of World War II held their first meeting in 18 years Monday and stressed the need for stability at a time of convulsive change in East Germany, where the Communist Party has lost its grip.

The Soviet Union requested the "Four Power" meeting of ambassadors last week because of its concern about the rapid pace of events in the Communist nation it created after the war.

A joint statement issued afterward said: "There was a common understanding of the importance of stability, and confidence was expressed that the United States, United King-

dom, France and Soviet Union could contribute to that on the basis of the quadrinartite agreement of 1971."

It was the first meeting since 1971 sessions that produced the agreement on improving the links between West Germany and Berlin, which was isolated within East Germany.

After World War II, the four victorious Allies divided Berlin into four sectors. They still have the final say in its affairs.

A Soviet diplomat in East Berlin said privately after Monday's 2 1/2-hour conference: "In principle, for all the four powers, it was a very important meeting. We (the Soviets) underlined the need for stability."

Those attending were Vernon Walters, Christopher Mallaby and Serge Boidevaix, the U.S., British and French ambassadors to West Germany, and Vyacheslav Kochemasov, the Soviet ambassador to East Germany.

They made no comment, but posed for cameras under the flags of their countries, which hung side by side from a balcony of the ornate former courthouse that serves at the Allied Control Authority.

In their statement, the ambassadors said the Soviet Union had "expressed favorable interest" in an initiative on Berlin former President Ronald Reagan outlined in 1987.

Reagan invited President Mikhail

S. Gorbachev of the Soviet Union to "work to bring the Eastern and West parts of the city closer together."

His proposal also called for improved air service to Berlin, making the city the site of youth exchanges and international conferences, and holding a future Olympics there.

Further meetings of the four powers may be held, the statement said. A French diplomat would not give a timetable, but said the level of future sessions would depend on the issues to be addressed.

East Germany opened the Berlin Wall and its other borders a month ago to halt a flood of emigration and huge pro-democracy protests at

home. Since then, public demand for reform has become so great the entire Communist Party leadership resigned.

Such West German politicians as Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Willy Brandt, former chancellor and West Berlin mayor, have made a point of visiting the city.

Kohl says Germany will be reunited one day, but not now.

He was attending a meeting of his Christian Democratic Party in West Berlin on Monday, and told reporters: "We do not know when the day will come when this vision will become reality, but I am convinced that it will come."

Bush says U.S. looking to find 'common ground' with Chinese

WASHINGTON -- President Bush on Monday defended his decision to renew contacts with China, saying relations with Beijing are still strained by the Tiananmen Square crackdown but "I don't want to make it any worse."

He pledged to "keep looking for ways to find common ground" despite the Chinese army's killing of hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators last June.

"I don't want to see that China remains totally isolated," the president said. However, he said his initiative toward China was "not a signal of total normalization" of relations.

Acknowledging that China remains unapologetic for the crackdown, Bush said, "We have contacts with countries that have egregious records on human rights."

Even as Bush spoke, congressional Democrats stepped up their criticism of his actions. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell condemned the U.S. overture as "embar-

rassing kowtowing to the Chinese government."

Bush made his comments in a question and answer session with editorial page editors from around the country after the return to Washington of Brent Scowcroft, the White House national security adviser, and Lawrence Eagleburger, deputy secretary of state, from their surprise trip to Beijing.

The president hailed an announcement from Beijing that it would not sell missiles in the Middle East. Bush called that "a very sound development," though he had received the same assurances during a trip to China last February.

Even so, he said that U.S. sanctions imposed against China after the crackdown remain in place and that the administration was still unhappy with Beijing's human rights record.

Bush talked in guarded terms, refusing to say precisely what steps China would have to take to normalize relations with Washington.



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

Wolves of Isle Royale dying

ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK, Mich. -- For 40 years, the wolves and moose of Isle Royale have engaged in a macabre dance of predator and prey before a fascinated audience of scientists and summer campers.

This island has been the site of one of the world's most intense wildlife studies, neatly confined to an 8-by-45 mile laboratory isolated in Lake Superior.

Now the wolves are dying. No one knows why.

Dr. Rolf Peterson, who for the past 19 years has been chief researcher for the 31-year-old Isle Royale project, fears there will soon be a winter when he cannot find a single wolf on the island, where more than 50 roamed a few years ago.

Until 1988, the National Park Service dictated a policy of non-interference with the wolves. While researchers elsewhere captured the animals for blood tests and to attach radio collars, on Isle

Royale scientists learned what they could from aerial surveys and by examining moose carcasses. Nobody under any circumstances touched a wolf.

"This was one of the last really unmanipulated wolf populations in the world," former park superintendent Jack Morehead said from his office in Washington, D.C., where he is now in chief of operations for the Park Service. "These wolves were really a museum test specimen of wolves in the wild."

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