

## Thousands protest at Soviet May Day parade

MOSCOW - Tens of thousands of protesters in Red Square unleashed their fury at Mikhail Gorbachev on Tuesday, turning the traditional May Day parade into an outpouring of complaints about the economy and the blockade of Lithuania.

The Soviet president has allowed free debate in the press and politics and endured public criticism. But never before has he had to personally face such an outburst of discontent over his policies, from both right and left. The criticism included jeers to the faces of Soviet leaders.

Gorbachev, 59, tapped his fingers on the parapet of the red granite reviewing stand during the protest, showing his impatience, but otherwise was impassive. He and the other officials left after enduring the unofficial demonstrators for about 20 minutes.

Neither Gorbachev nor any of the other Communist or government lead-

ers on the reviewing stand spoke to the crowd.

Dozens of the demonstrators carried the yellow, red and green national flags of the breakaway Lithuanian republic and shouted "Shame!" and "Freedom For Lithuania!"

Some waved their fists at the leaders, numbering about two dozen, and shouted "Resign!" over the holiday music blaring from loudspeakers.

One caustic sign likened the Soviet leadership to Nicolae Ceausescu, the Romanian dictator executed in December after a popular uprising. "Kremlin Ceausescu: From Armchairs to Prison Beds," it read.

The leaders clearly expected some criticism. They authorized the unofficial demonstration, and took control of the traditional parade that preceded it from local Communist Party and government officials.

But they likely did not expect the tone to be quite so angry or the scale

quite so large.

Gorbachev's popularity has waned during his five years in office because his reforms have failed to resolve chronic economic problems. Many people believe supplies of food, housing and consumer goods actually are worse under Gorbachev.

He also is under fire for the blockade of oil, raw materials and other goods he imposed on Lithuania to force the Baltic republic to back off its March 11 declaration of independence.

For decades, the Red Square rally on May Day has been an orchestrated show of support for official policies. Entry onto Red Square was rigidly controlled. This year, there was little of the usual polite praise. Just about anyone could join the march on the gray cobblestone stretching from the Historical Museum to the multi-colored St. Basil's Cathedral.

"We are all so very tired of these formal galas, when long before the holiday the lists of demonstration participants were put out," said the official news agency Tass.

Soviet leaders went on record this year as preferring a parade like those before the 1917 revolution, when May Day was marked with smaller, spontaneous affairs aimed at voicing workers' grievances about the czarist regime.

What they got instead were posters that declared, "Down with the Empire of Red Fascism," and "Today a Blockade of Lithuania, Tomorrow a Blockade of Moscow." The black flags of an anarchist group stood out in the sea of colors.

The wave of protesters continued to file through Red Square, which holds about 50,000 marchers, for more than an hour after the leaders left. Police gradually, and apparently gently,

moved them along. A few thousand trekked almost a mile to a square across from Gorky Park to renew their demonstration.

The nightly newscast "Vremya" noted briefly the raucous nature of the unofficial protest and showed some of the marchers, including a woman who appeared to be shaking her fist at the Soviet leaders.

"The last minutes of the celebration were somewhat marred by the actions of certain people, actions which were dissonant with the general mood," the newscast said.

There were also protests in Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second-largest city and birthplace of the revolution. Marchers on Palace Square waved banners that read, "Communism is a Universal Shame" and "Freedom for Lithuania," according to Leningrad journalist Maxim Korzhov. They also demanded Gorbachev's resignation.

## Ethiopian rebels have upper hand

MASSAWA, Ethiopia - Day and night, heavy artillery and tank barges thunder along a 90-mile front, in what might be the decisive battle of the nearly 30-year-old Eritrean civil war, Africa's longest-running conflict.

The battle raging between Ethiopian government troops and Eritrean rebels in Ethiopia's northernmost province is possibly the most destructive conflict in the world today, resulting in thousands of casualties on both sides.

The rebels appear to have the upper hand in the fighting along what is called the Ghinda front. So fierce are the artillery and tank exchanges that their distant rumble can be heard clearly in the strategic Red Sea port of Massawa, about 37 miles away.

Massawa, now in rebel hands, was the target of six Ethiopian air raids in April by Soviet-built MiG fighters. Rebel spokesmen say at least 110

people, many of them civilians, have been killed in the cluster bomb attacks.

The antagonists in the fight are the Marxist government of President Mengistu Haile Mariam and rebel forces dominated by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, which seek independence for the province of 3.5 million people. The Eritrean Front is considered left-leaning, but its leaders say they reject any political identification tag.

The government forces' immediate objective is to recapture Massawa, one of only two Ethiopian Red Sea harbors that have traditionally handled most of the country's trade and international relief supplies for millions of famine victims.

The port was captured by the Eritreans on Feb. 11, three days after they launched a major new offensive in their 29-year-old war of secession.

The rebels have their sights set on

a bigger objective -- the capture of their ancient, hallowed provincial capital of Asmara and the end to a conflict that has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

The Ghinda front straddles the only road from Asmara to Massawa, a two-lane ribbon of asphalt stretching 62 miles.

The Addis Ababa government has issued few war communiques, but in a rare pronouncement acknowledged last Friday that the battle had "reached a decisive final stage."

The last previous government statement on the conflict came in mid-February, shortly after the fall of Massawa to the rebels.

At that time, Mengistu told parliament that failure to recapture Massawa would mean the loss of his 2nd Revolutionary Army, Asmara, and Eritrea itself.

That now seems likely.

Mengistu's 2nd Army, more than 100,000 strong, representing almost a third of Ethiopia's military strength, is virtually surrounded in the highlands around Asmara. Its only remaining supply route is a tenuous air link from government-held territory far to the south and east.

## Government to restart South Carolina reactor

WASHINGTON - The government will restart in December the first of three nuclear weapons reactors shut down for two years over safety concerns, Energy Secretary James Watkins said Tuesday in announcing resumed production for the nation's atomic arsenal.

Watkins said the Energy Department will also resume building atomic warhead triggers this July at the Rocky Flats plant in Colorado.

Watkins said the K reactor at the Savannah River plant in South Carolina will be restarted in December and, after a period of low-power testing, begin producing tritium for nuclear weapons in January.

The P and L reactors at Savannah River will be restarted in March and September of 1991, respectively, Watkins told a subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

He said facilities at the Rocky Flats plant, shut down since last November because of safety concerns, will reopen in June and July to resume production of plutonium triggers for atomic warheads.

"At this time, there does not seem to be any alternative for the nation other than keeping Rocky Flats on line to deal with warhead management," Watkins said.

With the shutdown of the three Savannah River reactors in 1988 and a suspension of operations at Rocky Flats last fall, restocking the nation's atomic weapons arsenal has ground to a halt for several months.

In the past three years, Watkins said, the government has spent \$7.5 billion modernizing the aging plants to bring them up to current environmental and safety standards.

Environmentalists and antinuclear activists -- particularly those living near the plants -- have called for a continued moratorium and vowed to fight reopening the plants in court. But Watkins expressed confidence his department can now defeat any legal challenges.

"A month ago, for the first time, I began to feel comfortable about Savannah River," he told members of the Senate's strategic forces and nuclear deterrence subcommittee. "I hadn't felt that way before. Everything has turned around down there."

Watkins said that this Friday his department will release a draft environmental impact statement on the Savannah River reactors. And he predicted the government will overcome any challenges that would prevent issuing a final environmental

report before the units are restarted.

Despite the environmental concerns, members of the Senate panel at Tuesday's hearing all agreed the United States cannot afford to continue forestalling a resumption of weapons production.

"I wish I could say we don't need any production of weapons material," said the subcommittee's chairman, Sen. J. James Exon, D-Neb. "That is not the case. The Soviet Union is going to be relying on its nuclear deterrent as a strategy more than ever before."

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said the Soviets have 11 weapons production reactors in operation, including three for making plutonium, despite a "marginally greater" stockpile of plutonium than the United States.

"They have the capability to turn a switch on and make more. We don't," he said.

Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., said it is "intolerable" that environmental objections continue to delay the resumption of nuclear weapons production at what he said was the expense of the nation's military security.

"I think it's a risk, but I think we can meld the two things together," Watkins said of the environmental and weapons production goals.

Watkins declined to discuss in detail the state of the nation's tritium stockpile, other than to say it is deteriorating at a rate of 5.5 percent a year with the Savannah River reactors shut down.

"We're going through a very dramatic period now," he said before the hearing went behind closed doors for a classified briefing on the state of the stockpile. "In the near term, we can meet the majority of our national security requirements."

With the modernization, Watkins said the Rocky Flats plant can meet the need for plutonium warhead triggers until a new facility there is completed. He also estimated the remaining life of the aging Savannah River reactors at 15 years following their renovation the past two years.

In the meantime, he said, the department is on schedule for designing two new weapons production reactors, one at Savannah River and the other to be built in Idaho, for completion by the end of the decade.

"We believe we can get both reactors at power generating the material by the year 2005," he said.

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