# SOVIET FRIENDSHIP--A POLITICAL WEAPON

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It was Maréchal Claude Louis Hector de Villars (1653-1734) who, in a conversation with Louis XIV of France, exclaimed: "Defend me from my friends; I can defend myself from my enemies." The Maréchal was not a cynic, as this remark would seem to suggest, but rather a thorough realist who well understood that an avowed enemy is never as dangerous as one masquerading as a friend who waits only an opportune moment to stab his unsuspecting companion in the back. This truth is succinctly stated in the aphorism coined by an unknown epigrammatist of de Villars' own day: "Better an open enemy than a false friend."

These observations today have special pertinence for the neutralist countries of the world, which are finding themselves wooed impassionately by the Soviet Union. Soviet expressions of friendship towards these countries are unending in number and extravagant in wording. To the unwary they are indeed enticing. In actuality, however, they are but a mirage, for one essential ingredient is lacking: sincerity. These Soviet protestations are but a tactic, a political expedient, which will quickly be discarded once the Soviet Union has attained its objective or realizes that the tactic is not succeeding.

It must never be forgotten that the inflexible goal of the Soviet Union and Communism--a goal enunciated repeatedly by the highest Soviet leaders themselves--is world domination. Any Soviet policy which appears to imply a change in that goal reflects merely a shift in tactics, which may--and do--change as often and as quickly as a chameleon changes its color. Those whom the Soviets today hail as their dearest friends were yesterday denounced as the vilest blackguards, as they will be again tomorrow when the Soviet chameleon once again changes its color.

Even among themselves the Soviets are strangers to truth and sincerity. Consider, for example, the fate of such men as Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Radek and Rykov--all of them leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution who, in the power struggles which followed, were disgraced and condemned as traitors. More recent was the example of Stalin, adulated as a god while alive but the target of the most biting condemnations after his death. The old Bolshevik, Molotov, and Stalin's successors

as Premier, Malenkov and Bulganin, have also, without warning, found themselves targets of calumny and revilement after having been ejected from their seats of power.

This state of affairs should really not be a cause of wonder. How can there be sincerity in a system whose creed preaches that the end justifies the means? How can there be truth in a system in which the rewriting of history to make it accord with the latest shift in the party line is for many writers not an occasional chore but a lifetime career?

The meaningless and transient nature of Soviet pledges of friendship is well illustrated by the shifts over the years, and especially during recent months, in Soviet attitudes toward General Charles de Gaulle of France.

It will be recalled that during the General's first term as Premier in the immediate post-war years, his moderate foreign policy and his initial acceptance of Communists into his cabinet led the Kremlin to view the General with extreme friendliness. By 1951-1952, however, the Soviet chameleon had changed its color and decided that de Gaulle was a "warmonger" and that his political following, Rassemblement du Peuple Francaise, was a "party of open fascist reaction."

As the passing years revealed more and more clearly the basic weaknesses of the Fourth Republic and there was increasing speculation of a de Gaullist solution, the Kremlin, with an eye to the future, decided that it would be expedient to alter its public evaluation of the General. In 1957 the Moscow military publishing house, in the preface to the Russian edition of de Gaulle's memoirs, bestowed high praise on him. "An analysis of de Gaulle's life and activities," read the preface, "shows that he has proven himself a realistic statesman choosing the right direction while standing on the position of bourgeois nationalism. At the critical period of World War II he showed perserverance and persistence in the struggle for the independence of his country and he was, in this regard, supported by the French people as the only true protector of the national interests of the sovereignty and greatness of France." Another passage even forgave de Gaulle for his critical attitude towards the Communist system, declaring that this did not prevent him from appreciating the real significance of the Soviet Union.

In the spring of 1958, when it was becoming increasingly apparent that de Gaulle's return to power was imminent, the Soviets began a "friendship" campaign in the pages of Literaturnaya Gazeta, which they frequently use to launch their trial

balloons in problems of foreign policy. On 17 April, one month before the Algerian crisis which catapulted de Gaulle into the premiership, Molchanov, the well-known Soviet foreign policy commentator, wrote that "there is more and more talk of the accession to power of General de Gaulle, who has no small authority in the country. Many people cannot fail to be influenced by the fact that de Gaulle stands for more independence in foreign relations and for a reasonable attitude towards colonial problems."

For the first several months after de Gaulle assumed the premiership, the Soviets refrained from any criticism. Radio Moscow, in fact, in its domestic and foreign broadcasts, praised the cultural, economic and technical achievements of France in extravagant superlatives, pledged the Soviet Union's unflinching friendship for France, and declared that the Soviet Union was sincerely interested in seeing France play an increasingly important role in international affairs.

Although the French Communist Party and its leaders, Maurice Thorez and Jacques Duclos, were allowed to castigate the General as a fascist, the Kremlin itself and its domestic propaganda media scrupulously refrained from any hint of criticism. Even a sharp reference to the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact which de Gaulle included in his reply of 23 July to Khrushchev's letter of 19 July, failed to evoke any angry response from Moscow. At that point it appeared as if the Soviet leaders had resolved on friendship with France at any cost and were not to be moved from that course even it it meant, as it seemingly did, leaving the French Communists in the lurch and withdrawing all diplomatic and moral support from the Algerian rebels.

The Soviet posture was, of course, not an unchangeable resolve but merely a tactic of the moment. It is now clear that the Soviet leaders had hoped by this tactic to induce de Gaulle to be more friendly towards the Soviet Union and, perhaps, even to agree to a revival of the one-time Franco-Russian alliance. Memories of de Gaulle's wartime differences with Allied leaders, his frequent declarations that a re-armed Germany would be an intolerable "deadly peril" for France, and his reputed hostility towards French participation in Western Europe integration activities appear to have convinced the Kremlin that to lure de Gaulle away from the West and, if not into the Soviet orbit, at least into the ranks of the neutralists was entirely within the realm of possibility.

The abandonment of the French Communists was, in Soviet eyes, a small price to pay for the attainment of this objective, which would have meant the scuttling of the Western alliance, thus opening up all Europe to Soviet domination. It was, of course, a vain dream. De Gaulle was not so naive as to fall into the trap, to fail to perceive the insincerity of the Soviet tactic. In the first place, the Kremlin, in its effort to induce de Gaulle to adopt an anti-American, anti-German policy, was not in a position to offer any reasonable quid pro quo. This was especially true since the Soviet Union basically envisages France as an eventual "people's democracy." Secondly, neither de Gaulle nor the French people are likely ever to forget the congratulatory telegram which Molotov sent to Ribbentrop, the Nazi Foreign Minister, in 1940 after the entry of German troops into Paris--a lasting testimonial of the basically anti-French attitudes of the Soviet Union--nor the fact that since the end of the war the USSR has totally eliminated not only the political but also the cultural influence of France throughout the new Soviet empire in Eastern Europe.

As the weeks and months passed without de Gaulle giving any indication that the Soviet "friendship" campaign was having a positive effect, that he was prepared to trust the quicksand of alleged Soviet friendship, Khrushchev came to realize that his tactics were doomed to failure. And with that realization the Soviet chameleon once again changed its color. In mid-August, soon after the meeting of Khrushchev and Mao Tse-tung in Peiping, Soviet propaganda media began to indulge in criticisms of the de Gaulle regime, even if in less vitriolic terms than those being used by their lackies, the French Communists.

The initial Soviet attacks were not aimed directly at de Gaulle but at his closest counsellors and associates. French Socialist leader and Gaullist cabinet member Guy Mollet, the Soviet press suddenly discovered, was a traitor, and Minister of Information Jacques Soustelle was the "worst enemy of the liberty of France." Paul Reynaud, who as late as the beginning of July had been warmly greeted by Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan, has been described by the Soviet press since 10 September as the "grave-digger of the Third Republic" and a "plotter against the Fourth."

The Kremlin also suddenly remembered its self-proclaimed status as the leading enemy of colonialism and declared itself appalled by the injustice of the French position in Algeria.

Despite its oft proclaimed love for the Arabs--a fruit of the Soviet "friendship" campaign in the Middle East--the Soviets, during the period in which they were wooing de Gaulle, had carefully refrained from criticizing France on this issue. Now, however, Soviet propaganda media were again permitted to exploit the Algerian issue. On 15 September, for example, a Radio Moscow commentator dwelled at length on the position of the French overseas territories, including Algeria, under the new de Gaulle constitution, which he described as the work of colonizers who sought to tighten rather than loosen French rule in Africa.

A special target for attacks was the new constitution, and these attacks became more intense as the day of the referendum approached. On 9 September, for example, a Moscow commentator openly urged the French people to reject the constitution, declaring that it was designed to substitute the personal dictatorship of the president (de Gaulle) for republican traditions and lamenting that "the rights of the parliament are curtailed to the utmost. The existence of the opposition parties is jeopardized." These criticisms are strange indeed coming from a country where personal dictators (Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev) have been the governmental system for the last 41 years, where parliament has no rights except that of saying "Yes" to Communist Party decisions, and where no opposition party has been permitted to exist since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

Until 22 September the new Soviet campaign of slander against France and de Gaulle was carried on by newspaper and radio commentators and hence was only semi-official in nature, so that the Soviet Government could, if it choose, disclaim responsibility for it at any time. On the 22nd, however, it was given an official character when Khrushchev himself, in the guise of answers to letters to the editor of Pravda (the official organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and therefore also of the Soviet Government), vented his resentment over the failure of his courtship of de Gaulle by using such vulgarities as "cutthroats" and "thugs" in referring to de Gaulle and his associates.

Khrushchev clearly revealed the insincerity, the element of political expediency in the previous official friendliness towards de Gaulle when he wrote that "three or four months ago some people in Europe could still hope that the new government headed by de Gaulle intended and was capable of restraining the fascist rebellion, ending the unjust colonial war against the Algerian people, and maintaining republican order in France."

Similarly, the fact that the Kremlin had hoped to use de Gaulle's reputed hostility towards Germany to its own advantage was made clear when Khrushchev bitterly attacked de Gaulle for having found "a common language and a common foreign policy platform with the West German militarists."

While the changing Soviet attitudes towards de Gaulle exhibit in sharp outline the insincerity of Soviet policy, it should not be imagined that this is the only example that might be cited. On the contrary, this inconstancy is to be found in the record of Soviet relations with every country and nowhere more so than those countries of Asia and Africa, which are today customarily described as uncommitted.

Mahatma Gandhi, the late beloved Indian leader, was so reviled in one edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia (Bolshaia Sovietskaia Entsiklopedia) that the Indian Government felt compelled to lodge an official protest. Today, when India is the target of a Soviet "friendship" campaign and the Kremlin is exerting every possible effort to keep India out of the Western camp, these objectionable passages have been excised, and Soviet propagandists are careful to use only the most flattering terms in referring to Gandhi and his foremost disciple, Prime Minister Nehru. One need not be an oracle, however, to know that the Kremlin would immediately order a reversion to the former slanders if ever it decides that its courtship of India is unlikely to produce results. Fortunately, Nehru has apparently not been deceived by the new color of the Soviet chameleon, as is evidenced by his recent article, published in his party's official organ, in which he points out the inherent evils of Communism and the Soviet system and emphatically declares them to be contrary to the most fundamental principles of humanity.

It is the Middle East, however, which seems most in danger of being deceived by the mirage of Soviet friendship. Since 1955, when the current Soviet friendship campaign was initiated by the arms pact with Egypt, the Kremlin has endlessly proclaimed itself the greatest friend of all Arabs and, indeed, of all Muslims, and as the world's chief bulwark against colonialism and imperialism. These themes have been particularly effective since they appeal to the emotions uppermost in the Arab-Muslim mind.

These targets of Soviet propaganda, however, would be well advised to examine the record. The Soviets may castigate Western imperialism and proclaim themselves the champion of

subject peoples everywhere, but the record shows the falsity of such claims. The truth is that it is the Soviet Union which today is the world's greatest colonialist-imperialist power and, in the post-war era, the only expanding one. Since the end of World War II the colonial empires of the Western nations have steadily and extensively dwindled as nation after nation--India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Laos, Cambodia, South Vietnam, Guinea--has been given its freedom. In contrast the Soviet Union has not only hung on to its colonial subjects in Central Asia and the Caucasus but has also annexed Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Carpatho-Ruthenia and Bessarabia and has extended over the countries of Eastern Europe--Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria--a protectorate which is equivalent to annexation. The brutal Soviet repressions in Hungary in 1956 made clear to the entire world the colonial status of these European satellites.

The Soviet Union today declares itself the steadfast champion of Muslims everywhere, but again the record shows the opposite to be true. During their 41 years of power the Communists have consistently and systematically oppressed their Muslim subjects and denied them not only their freedom but even the right to practice their religion. The destruction or desecration of mosques has been a favorite sport of the Communists, who boast of their atheism and hostility to all religions. In European Russia alone there were more than 7,000 mosques at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, and Muslim Central Asia, the Caucasus regions and Crimea possessed thousands more. But by 1942, according to the Communists themselves, there were only 1,312 mosques in the entire Soviet Union.

Not only has the Soviet Union eliminated the religious buildings of its Muslim subjects and made it impossible for them to perform their religious obligations (prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, ...) but it has delighted in slandering the Islamic religion. One Communist writer, S. P. Tolstov, described Islam as "a primitive and fanatical religion,...a chaotic mixture of Christian, Jewish and pagan doctrines." Bagirov, then First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party, in a speech printed in the 14 July 1950 issue of Bolinski Rabotchi (Baku), called the Prophet Muhammad (May God bless and keep him!) "a representative of the feudal-mercantile aristocracy of Mecca who utilized Islam for the unification of the Arabs and for the maintenance of their own power."

The 1940 issue of the Soviet Political Dictionary describes the holy Shariah as "a means for keeping the workers in economic and political subordination by the rich. It legalizes domination, exploitation and slavery of the workers, the enslavement of women." The newspaper Kizil Uzbekstan, on 29 May 1949, described it as "a collection of laws which are among the most ignoble and unjust in the world." The Soviet Political Dictionary boasts that "in the USSR, now, the Shariah is eradicated," and the same boast is to be found in the January 1950 issue of the Soviet periodical Sovetskoye Gosudarstvo i Pravo. Yet in the face of this record the Soviets today are trying to convince Muslims that the Soviet Union is their champion!

The Soviets also claim to be the supporters of Arab aspirations in contrast to the West which, according to the Communists, seeks only to re-impose colonial rule. It is a queer claim. The Soviets today proclaim their recognition of the justice of the Arab hostility towards Israel, yet it was the Soviet Union which, in the United Nations in 1947, insisted on partition for Palestine and which, upon the proclamation of the state of Israel in May 1948, was one of the first states to extend it diplomatic recognition. The Arabs would do well to remember also that the Jewish military successes in the fighting which followed were due in large part to the arms, ammunition and other armament which the Jewish armed forces received by air from the Soviet satellite, Czechoslovakia.

In considering the value of the Soviet claim to be a bulwark against any encroachment on Arab independence and territorial integrity, the Arabs should remember that on 26 November 1940, Schulenberg, the Nazi Ambassador in Moscow, informed Berlin that the Soviet Union was prepared to sign a Four Power Pact with Germany, Italy and Japan "provided that the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the aspirations of the Soviet Union." In other words the Soviet Union (which now proclaims itself an enemy of colonialism and the protector of Arab rights) wanted to annex a large part of Turkey and Iran as well as the greater part of Iraq.

It would also be profitable for the Arabs to recall that just one week before the Nazi attack on Russia on 21 June 1941, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov was in Berlin where, on behalf of the Soviet Government, he offered Germany a full military alliance against England and her allies in return for, among other things, a free hand in Iraq and Iran, and an important

position in Saudi Arabia so as to assure Russian domination of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Aden. In view of this avid desire for Arab territory, it is hardly a coincidence that today the Iraqi Communists are the most vocal opponents of Iraqi union with the United Arab Republic and that they were primarily responsible for the dismissal and subsequent arrest of Colonel Arif, who was the principal advocate of Arab unity among the leaders of the July revolution.

Since late 1955 the Soviets have loudly praised the genius of Egypt's 'Abd-al-Nasir and have pledged him "the eternal and inviolable friendship of the Soviet Union," to use the words voiced by the then Soviet Foreign Minister Dmitri F. Shepilov in June 1956. Yet only as late as 1954 the Soviet Union's leading Egyptian expert, L. Vatolina, had characterized the Nasir regime as "madly reactionary, terrorist, anti-democratic, demagogic." The change in the Soviet attitude is merely one more example of the Soviet chameleon's changing its color.

These examples all point up the need for neutralist countries to examine carefully the protestations of their new self-proclaimed "friends," so that they will not mistake shadow for substance. They should study well the record of past deathless friendships voiced by the Soviet Union, and above all they should never forget that guile and dissimulation are tactics recommended by official Communist doctrine and publicly accepted by Soviet leaders. If the neutralist countries do these things, they should have no difficulty in concluding that the only wise answer to Soviet hypocrisy and insincerity is vigilance and caution.