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Gromyko warns against deploying NATO missiles; proposes new offer

From Wire Services

Bonn—Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko said last night that West Germany will be caught in a sharpened nuclear confrontation if a new generation of American medium-range missiles is stationed in Western Europe.

On the second day of his visit to West Germany, Mr. Gromyko repeated the offer of Yuri V. Andropov, the new Soviet leader, for a reduction of Soviet medium-range weapons to the level of the existing independent nuclear forces of Britain and France.

But he brought a new element to the standing Soviet proposal by saying Moscow was prepared to negotiate a reduction of its shorter-range SS-21, SS-22 and SS-23 nuclear weapons systems targeted on Western Europe on the basis of "mutuality" with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

According to disarmament experts, it was the first time that Moscow had publicly offered to consider negotiations about its short-range ballistic missile systems. The comparable American weapons stationed in Western Europe are the Pershing 1A and Lance missiles.

On his first visit to Western Europe

since the death of Leonid I. Brezhnev in November, Mr. Gromyko said in a toast at a dinner given in his honor, "In the nuclear age the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union are, figuratively speaking, in one boat."

Apparently alluding to the Reagan administration, the 73-year-old foreign minister said the danger of nuclear war could be overlooked only by "people who are not capable of seeing things as they are."

"If there are gamblers and con men who state that they are ready to plunge humanity into a nuclear catastrophe for the sake of their ambition," Mr. Gromyko said, "then the question is allowed: Why do they want to, and who gave them the right to pull all of the people who want to live down the abyss with them?"

His four-day visit, coming just as an election campaign gets under way in West Germany, is from a Soviet viewpoint an important opportunity to urge the West German public to reject the deployment of 572 cruise and Pershing 2 missiles.

"One would like to give expression to the hope that the federal government, the political parties, independent of their current role in governing the state, and the entire West German public would soberly

judge the present situation and do everything to avert the danger of a nuclear arms race in Europe," Mr. Gromyko said.

He said carrying out the NATO plan would mean "for the whole world an extended nuclear confrontation with all its consequences."

He added pointedly, "We cannot ignore the fact that the Federal Republic [West Germany] is the only state due for the deployment of Pershing 2 rockets that can reach strategic targets deep inside the Soviet Union in a few minutes."

The Kremlin sees the 108 Pershing missiles, which can hit Soviet targets in less than 10 minutes, as a possible first-strike weapon. The cruise missiles, by contrast, hug the contours of the Earth to evade radar and rank among the slowest of missiles.

West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher told West German television in an interview that the first of three days of talks with Mr. Gromyko had clarified aspects of Soviet arms policy.

He said Mr. Gromyko had explained details of new Communist Party General Secretary Andropov's December offer to cut Moscow's arsenal of 600 medium-range missiles to match British and French combined strength.

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Sen. Hart Used to Explore Proposal

Nitze's Role Limited in Arms Talks

By Walter Pincus
Washington Post Staff Writer

The recent Soviet offer to limit the number of its intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe had its roots in informal discussions last summer between American negotiator Paul H. Nitze and his Soviet counterpart, Yuli A. Kvitsinsky, at the Geneva arms control talks, according to informed sources.

After Moscow and Washington rejected a new negotiating framework put together by Nitze and Kvitsinsky to try to achieve a compromise limit on the number of Soviet and U.S. nuclear missiles based in Europe, Kvitsinsky in November informally discussed a new Soviet proposal since made public by Soviet leader Yuri V. Andropov.

But Nitze, who was sent back to Geneva in September with instructions sharply limiting his freedom to bargain informally with Kvitsinsky, had to use a visiting senator, Gary Hart (D-Colo.), to help explore some of the details of the new Soviet plan and was not given the authority to follow up.

Nitze has decided that he does not want to be placed in the same awkward position when the talks resume next week, the sources said, and intended to ask President Reagan at a meeting this week for greater flexibility in responding to the Soviets when he returns to Geneva. The White House said yesterday that Reagan may meet with Nitze later this week.

A State Department spokesman

said yesterday that Nitze "has always been authorized to explore any flexibility in the Soviet position." But the spokesman, when questioned, refused to say whether Nitze could indicate any flexibility in the American position.

The first official confirmation of the informal talks between Nitze and Kvitsinsky last summer was published in *The Washington Post* on Dec. 23, after Andropov made public the new Soviet proposal.

Eugene V. Rostow, then the Reagan administration's arms control director, said in an interview that the Geneva negotiators had discussed "a generally promising compromise initiative developed during last summer ... an initiative the United States

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