

New 'KAL' atrocity: Berlin crisis in the making?

by Konstantin George

The circumstances, both immediate and strategic, of the Sunday, March 24 murder of Major Arthur D. Nicholson, an American officer attached to the U.S. Military Mission in Potsdam, East Germany, leave no doubt that the crime was an act not of a lone sentry, but of Soviet state policy. The killing is a clear signal that the Soviet Union is now moving toward a new Berlin crisis or general crisis atmosphere in Central Europe. Soviet state policy for Central Europe is now immediately centered on ripping up the Four-Power Agreements governing Occupation and post-Occupation Germany.

The murder of the American officer, while he was conducting a legal ground reconnaissance operation inside East Germany, was followed four days later by Mikhail Gorbachov, the new general secretary, delivering the strongest attack on West Germany by a Soviet party leader in decades.

The guideline-orders indicating to local Soviet commanders that an American in uniform was to be killed came from the same High Command figure who boasted of ordering the Sept. 1, 1983 shoot-down of Korean Airliner 007—Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov. Ogarkov, since September 1984, has been commander-in-chief of the Soviet-designated Western Theater of War. The Soviet forces in East Germany are the key forward-area offensive component of the Western Theater forces assigned to Marshal Ogarkov.

The crime itself

Major Nicholson was murdered while conducting routine reconnaissance within the rules of the intelligence game con-

ducted by Allied military missions under terms of the Four-Power Agreements. He was severely wounded in the chest by a Soviet sentry and left on the ground to writhe in agony for more than an hour while he slowly bled to death. Russian soldiers, under orders, stood by watching.

Allied military missions were authorized under the July 1945 Potsdam Agreements, and their conduct was defined in the 1947 Four-Power Agreements. The United States, Great Britain, and France each maintains a military mission in Potsdam, East Germany, the "former" Soviet Occupation Zone just to the west of Berlin.

The Soviet Union maintains three such military missions in West Germany, one for each of the former Western Occupation Zones: Frankfurt, the former American Zone; Buende, the former British Zone, and Baden-Baden, headquarters of the French armed forces in West Germany and the former French Zone.

East and West Germany are divided into non-restricted areas, where military-mission personnel are free to snoop and take photos, and restricted areas, which may neither be entered nor photographed.

The murder occurred near the East German town of Ludwigslust, 85 miles northwest of Berlin and 30 miles from Schleswig-Holstein, recognized as a prime option for a "limited surgical strike" by Soviet forces into West Germany. The area is located between the Soviet garrison towns of Schwerin and Perleberg, each of which house one Soviet division. One of the six divisions of the East German army is

based at Schwerin. The area is honeycombed with Soviet and East German military installations, and often buzzing with military activity.

The murder occurred near *but not within* a restricted area. About 20% of East Germany's land area is off-limits to Western Allied Military Mission personnel. The Soviets announced, only to revoke shortly thereafter, an increase in this percentage to 40% in May 1984—one month before the biggest Soviet military maneuvers in postwar history. Those maneuvers were climaxed by a dress rehearsal invasion of West Germany, staged in close proximity to the West German border.

After Stalin's death, until this occasion, Soviet troops never shot to kill even when restricted areas were entered. However, there have been five previous occasions since January 1980 in which warning shots were fired; two of these incidents, on March 23 and 28, 1983, occurred as a cluster around President Reagan's historic policy speech on the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Officers of the three Soviet military missions have entered restricted areas frequently. In 1984 alone, Soviet officers were caught inside restricted areas 98 times, the last occasion on March 20, when three Soviet officers were apprehended by U.S. troops inside a restricted area close to Hof in northern Bavaria near the East German border.

The day following the murder, President Reagan told journalists: "You can't print what I'm thinking." Secretary of Defense Weinberger was quoted in the American military newspaper *Stars and Stripes* of March 27: "It's just murder. It's the KAL attitude—shoot first and investigate later."

One defense source remarked: "It is inconceivable that a Russian enlisted man would ever dare to shoot at—let alone kill—an American officer in full uniform, without being ordered to do so."

The return of Soviet policy to one of Cold War is perfectly clear to the man on the street in Germany. The return of Major Nicholson's remains to West Berlin by Soviet forces was televised. The remains were delivered via the Glienicke Bridge crosspoint separating West Berlin from Potsdam—for military and exceptional Allied purposes only. The Glienicke Bridge, the middle of which marks the border, site of many a Cold War East-West spy exchange and return of the remains of U.S. and Allied citizens who died in the East bloc, is an image synonymous with the Cold War.

The murder clearly marks the opening of a Soviet drive to undermine the Four-Power Agreements which concern Germany and regulate the status of Berlin. Destroying the Agreements is of the highest priority in the Soviet effort to manipulate and destabilize West Germany, toward the end of forcing a United States withdrawal.

Soviet policy in this connection is to introduce shocks into the German political situation, with the immediate aim of driving Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic-led coalition government out of office. Soviet policy demands that the "neutralist" Social Democrats led by Willy Brandt, Horst

Ehmke, and Egon Bahr assume power in West Germany. Thereupon, West Germany becomes a part of the Soviet sphere of influence, under the policy Bahr labels a "strategic partnership" with the Soviet Union.

The public assault on the Agreements was begun by on March 25, one day after the killing. At 1700 hours Moscow time, Soviet media broke their internal silence on the murder to charge the United States with violating "Article 10 of the 1947 Four-Power Agreements" which governs the Allied Military Missions. The Soviet government "demands that the U.S. side take necessary measures to uphold the 1947 Agreements." The Soviet declaration also stated: "The Soviet sentry acted correctly. The American soldier didn't stop after the warning shot. . . . The entire responsibility lies with the United States."

One day before Gorbachov's declaration, a Western defense analyst commented to *EIR*, Gorbachov "is following the script worked out by Marshal Ogarkov to speed up the process of turning the Soviet civilian economy into a Stalinist wartime command economy." The defense analyst underscored the thematic parallels between Stalin's 1930s war preparations, the forced industrialization and mass purges, and Ogarkov and Gorbachov's repeated calls for "technological revolution" amid a massive purge of the party and the government's economic ministries.

The Andropov dynasty behind the crime

by Rachel Douglas

When Korean Air Lines Flight 007 was shot down in September 1983, and when a Soviet sentry killed Major Arthur Nicholson in East Germany in March 1985, the man at the top of the chain of command was Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov—in the first instance as chief of staff of the Soviet armed forces, and today as commander-in-chief of the newly established "theater of military action," the Western Strategic Direction. As *EIR* has documented in recent months, the continuous upgrading of the Soviet military command has proceeded apace through the terms of three Communist Party leaders: Yuri Andropov (November 1982-February 1984), Konstantin Chernenko (February 1984-March 1985) and now, Mikhail Gorbachov.

The qualifications for party chief begin with the ability to manage the war machine that Soviet society has become under the direction of the political-military command. Gorbachov's every pronouncement to date follows Ogarkov's watchword, that the civilian economy be so integrated with the military that it can be thrown into full war-mobilization