

Andropov Meets With Harriman; Asks Better Ties

Urges Return to Former Good-Neighborliness

By JOHN F. BURNS
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MOSCOW, June 2 — Yuri V. Andropov said today that the Soviet Union had a "sincere and fervent desire" to restore normal relations with the United States and was "ready and interested in seeking joint initiatives" to that end.

At a meeting with W. Averell Harriman, a former American envoy here, Mr. Andropov blamed the Reagan Administration for a situation that, as he put it, "cannot but give rise to alarm."

The Soviet leader appealed for a return to peaceful coexistence.

"In view of the overall strategic situation and the growing number of explosive problems around the world, the U.S.S.R. and the United States cannot allow themselves to be drawn toward military competition," he said.

"The interests of all peoples demand constructive interaction between them. It is clear that each year lost in reaching accords on the limitation of armaments generates new problems and complicates the solution of the task of curbing the arms race."

Tone Is Held More Positive

The tone was seen by Western diplomats as more positive than that of some previous Soviet statements.

Mr. Andropov's remarks were reported partly by Tass, the Government press agency, and partly in a statement by Mr. Harriman, who had come here specifically for the meeting. The former New York Governor, who is 91 years old, has been a frequent visitor since he was in the Soviet Union as President Franklin D. Roosevelt's wartime ambassador from 1943 to 1946.

Mr. Harriman later said at a news conference that the 80-minute meeting in Mr. Andropov's office at Central Committee headquarters had concentrated on the general state of Soviet-American relations and had not touched on arms control or other specific issues.

Although Mr. Harriman met with Secretary of State George P. Shultz before coming, he said he had carried no confidential messages and was not returning with any from Mr. Andropov.

Mr. Harriman was accompanied to the meeting by his wife, Pamela, and by Peter B. Swiers, a State Department official who had come along from Washington. Present on the Soviet side were Andrei M. Aleksandrov, Mr. Andropov's foreign policy adviser, and Viktor M. Sukhodrev, the interpreter.

The occasion received wide coverage on television and on the domestic serv-

Continued on Page A6, Column 3



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Secretary of State George P. Shultz announcing the nomination of Thomas R. Pickering, center, as Ambassador to El Salvador. At left is Thomas O. Enders, who

is being replaced as the State Department's senior official dealing with Latin America. Langhorne A. Motley, right, has been named to succeed Mr. Enders.

HARRIMAN MAKES VISIT TO ANDROPOV

Continued From Page A1

ice of the Tass press agency. The evening television news showed the talks in progress, shots of Mr. and Mrs. Harriman on their way to the session, and Mr. Harriman's news conference.

Mr. Andropov evidently saw the meeting as an opportunity to put over his views. According to Tass, he emphasized the dangers of war inherent in the deterioration of relations. The press agency said he had recalled that Mr. Harriman was envoy here when the two countries were wartime allies against Nazi Germany and had added:

"The Soviet people and the Americans now also have a common enemy, the threat of war, which is incomparable in its devastating consequences with the last one. It would seem that awareness of this common threat should become the common denominator inducing statesmen in the U.S.S.R. and in the United States to display reciprocal restraint. Unfortunately, we do not see the present Administration displaying such a responsible approach."

Andropov Authorized Statement

The reference to the possibility of joint steps to ease tensions came in Mr. Harriman's statement. It said:

"The General Secretary said, and authorized me to say, that it is the most sincere and fervent desire of the Soviet Government to have normal relations with the United States and to develop them in the best tradition of our relations in the past. He added that the Soviet Union was ready and interested in seeking joint initiatives that would make the present situation easier."

Mr. Harriman's statement indicated that he had answered Mr. Andropov's attack on the Reagan Administration with criticism of Soviet policy.

"I was equally frank," he said, "in expressing my view that it was possible for the Soviet Government to take steps which can improve relations."

Mr. Harriman avoided direct criticism of the Reagan Administration, but his remarks implied that efforts should be made to ease confrontation.

He implied that he favored a more pragmatic, issue-by-issue approach than the Administration has taken. In answer to a question, he said that the nature of the two societies made some problems insoluble, but that there were others susceptible of accommodation.

Mr. Harriman, who first visited Russia in 1899, at the age of 7, in the company of his father, E. H. Harriman, the railroad magnate, declined to compare Mr. Andropov with other Soviet leaders he had met — Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev. He said this would be "effrontery" on the basis of a brief meeting, but added: "He seemed well and vigorous, and I was impressed by his grasp of the problems that came up."