

HENRY TROFIMENKO: AN INTERVIEW

A Soviet academic who makes his living studying the foreign policies of Western countries, has strong opinions on everything from Canadian submarines to the state of Kremlinology in America.

Henry A. Trofimenko is the head of the foreign policy department of the Institute of US and Canadian Studies, Academy of Sciences of the USSR. He specializes in analysis of Western and more specifically US arms control policy. The interview was conducted by *Peace&Security* in May of this year during a visit to Ottawa by Professor Trofimenko. His visit was part of a Soviet-Canadian round table organized by the Canadian Institute for International Affairs and the Institute of US and Canadian Studies. The wide-ranging interview — an edited version of which is presented below — was conducted by Nancy Gordon, Director of Public Programmes and Michael Bryans, Editor of *Peace&Security*.

P&S: What are the problems outstanding in the START [Strategic Arms Reduction] negotiations.

TROFIMENKO: First of all, the problem of the START treaty itself — it will probably be tackled again by the Soviet Union and the United States after a new President has been installed in the United States and a new Congress convenes. Whoever might be the US President I expect that they would be positive towards continuing this process. But probably any new president who would come to the White House in January 1989 would say that he wanted a better deal than has been outlined in the previous negotiations. And some of these problems that have been obstacles to the negotiations throughout 1988 will still be outstanding.

One of those problems is verification. The INF Treaty deals with control of weaponry that has been totally eliminated as a class. In the START treaty you will have some missilery that is left and some missilery that has been eliminated.... We have to have some control over the weapons that are left over. The second thing is the very well known problem of sea-based cruise missiles. My understanding is that the United States stressed the problems of verifying sea-based cruise missiles exactly because they were hoping to leave them totally out of control. Now they have agreed to have a ceiling on these weapons, but the methods of verification have not been decided.

P&S: Perhaps we could switch to the question of conventional arms. What was the cause of the log jam in the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction [MBFR] talks?

TROFIMENKO: The MBFR talks are dead.... There was no log jam; it was simply a device that was useful to both sides.

P&S: What did the Soviet Union get out of them?

TROFIMENKO: It was a prerequisite of the American side to start these negotiations, before they would start dealing with the Soviet Union on a wider basis, before they would start summit talks, before they would start negotiating a general memoranda of understanding ... before they would start detente ... Both sides had some interest in starting and though the talks continued to have some interest, they boiled down to an absolutely unprofitable discussion of numbers. They are going on now for how long.... for fifteen years?

... the only profitable thing that we got from MBFR, is that we polished our methods of discussion. People know, more or less, about the other side, about its preferences and interests and so on....

I remember how many Americans would come and tell us, "let's stop haggling about the numbers, let's do it another way, let's agree on a 900,000 ceiling." We balked at accepting this idea. But in a year or two we accepted and said all right we will come to two ceilings for numbers of general troops and for ground troops. And the moment we accepted this brilliant American idea, which was sold to us unofficially as the possible way to untie the knot, the West ceased to be interested in it.

To cut a long story short, MBFR is a vivid example of un-

productive negotiations from the point of view of arriving at essential solutions.

P&S: But is the Soviet Government prepared to address the widespread perception in the West that the Soviet Union has more conventional arms in Europe?

TROFIMENKO: The Soviet Union is prepared to accept that there are asymmetries in the balance. You asked me why it is that these negotiations dragged on for so long, and I guess one of the reasons is that while NATO is claiming that the Soviet Union has some preponderance in Europe, the sixteen nations of NATO cannot agree what the preponderance is. They understand that for a public relations purpose, or as the Russians would call it, a propaganda purpose, it's good to claim that Russians have a six-to-one or a five-to-one ratio in their favour; that is not actually the case.

... If the West says you have to cut your forces six times more than we do, it is non-negotiable because it's sheer nonsense.... So you can't be that outrageous to say six-to-one. You, of course, cannot say one-to-one. So I guess NATO is negotiating between itself about what would be a more realistic position to adopt vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Of course there are asymmetries, we recognize that the Warsaw Pact has more tanks than the other side has. Though this statistic is also not very clear because NATO doesn't count all the American tanks in storage. It doesn't count the quality of the tanks.... In order to come to some realistic agreement, we