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Soviet bloc offers peace plan; negotiations on military action

PRAGUE, Czechoslovakia (AP) — The Soviet bloc unveiled an encyclopedic package of peace proposals Thursday calling for an East-West non-aggression treaty and negotiations on virtually every phase of military activity.

Warning that the threat of nuclear war is increasing and that mankind would not survive one, the 24-page declaration adopted by the Warsaw Pact's biennial summit conference Wednesday said:

"The Warsaw Treaty member states are not seeking military superiority over the NATO states and have no intention to attack these states or any other country in or outside Europe.

"NATO member states also declare that they have no aggressive intentions. In these conditions there should be no reasons preventing the member states of either alliance to undertake corresponding mutual commitments of the international law character."

The declaration appeared to contain no proposals that had not been made at one time or another in the past. But it wrapped up a comprehensive package of Communist ideas for lowering military tension.

Its keystone proposal for a non-aggression pact, first made by the Warsaw group in 1958 and

rejected then by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, called for the two rival alliances to "conclude a treaty on the mutual non-use of military force and on the maintenance of relations of peace."

"The core of the treaty," the declaration continued, "could be the mutual commitment of the member states of both alliances not to be the first to use either nuclear or conventional weapons against each other and therefore not to be the first to use against each other any military force at all."

It said the treaty should also include a commitment not to use force against countries outside the two alliances, that other "interested" European nations could participate in the drafting and could sign it, and that all other nations of the world could adhere as equal parties.

The first reaction from the United States was cautious.

Pres. Ronald Reagan, speaking to a news conference Wednesday night before the full declaration was made public, said the proposal for a mutual renunciation of force deserved consideration. But State Department spokesman John Hughes said, "At first glance, it does not seem to represent anything new."

Government predicts slow recovery

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an uncommonly pessimistic outlook for 1983, the Reagan administration is predicting the slowest recovery from a recession since World War II, with unemployment remaining above 10 percent.

The still-internal forecast, confirmed Thursday by administration sources, is more bearish than nearly all the major private forecasting firms and marks a complete reversal from the administration's decidedly optimistic — but wrong — economic predictions of the prior two years.

In 1981 and 1982, the Reagan administration had been ridiculed by private economists and the financial community for making rosy predictions beyond the range of reasonable expectation. This time, Pres. Ronald Reagan's new chief economist,

Martin Feldstein, has insisted that the administration issue an honest forecast to regain its economic credibility.

The new forecast, prepared as part of the fiscal 1984 budget plan Reagan will send Congress Jan. 31, predicts the economy — after adjusting for inflation — will grow at an anemic rate of only 1.4 percent on average for all of 1983, compared with 1982.

First-year recoveries from the previous seven post-war recessions typically have shown growth rates of 4 percent or more.

Because economic growth is expected to be so slow, unemployment is predicted to decline only slightly from its current level, now at a 42-year high of 10.8 percent.

At his news conference Wednesday night, Reagan said the economy "is getting better, not

getting worse," but he conceded unemployment would be slow to recede.

According to the forecast, the jobless rate will remain above 10 percent by the fall of 1983 and above 9 percent in the fall of 1984, when Reagan will be facing re-election should he decide to seek a second term.

Reagan, who took office when the unemployment rate was 7.4 percent, had campaigned for the presidency promising to create jobs. Instead, the country has been in a severe recession throughout most of his presidency.

The economic outlook suggests the administration has abandoned its promise that it can promote strong economic growth, lower unemployment, keep inflation down and balance the budget at the same time, as its 1981-82 forecasts.

AFL-CIO against state sales tax

COOS BAY (AP) — The Oregon AFL-CIO adamantly opposes a state sales tax as helping businesses at the expense of working people, the state president of the labor group says.

In an interview with The World newspaper in Coos Bay, Irv Fletcher said, "Business and industry are pushing the sales tax because it would shift their tax burden (of property taxes) to working people (through purchases)."

"We won't support it," Fletcher also discussed other issues during the interview Monday. He said the AFL-CIO would like to see the income tax rate made "more progressive" by taxing higher-income people at a higher rate.

He indicated some support for a plan by House Speaker-elect Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, which would use the governor's \$459 million in Homeowners and Renters Relief to balance all 1983-85 spending.

"We established property tax relief when there was a \$500 million surplus in the state budget," Fletcher said. "The surplus is gone. It only makes sense to us that you can't spend money you don't have."

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