

# Carter Renews Confrontation With Soviets, Sparks Controversy In U.S.

At a press conference June 30 Jimmy Carter stunned friend and foe alike with his decision to replace the controversial and costly B-1 bomber program with the even more controversial deployment of the cruise missile. As even diehard opponents of the B-1 were quick to observe, Carter's "frugal" decision to renovate the Fifties-era B-52 bomber force and equip it with the cruise missile will have a far more destabilizing effect on U.S.-Soviet relations than the production of the B-1, and will make an arms control agreement a near-certain impossibility. For two years Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) have been stalled over the cruise missile issue. The July 1 *Washington Post* identified National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, Defense Secretary Harold Brown, and Office of Management and Budget Director Bert Lance as the architects of the B-1-cruise decision.

Leaving little doubt that Carter's endorsement of the cruise option was a reaffirmation of his headlong rush to confrontation with the Soviet Union, the President simultaneously announced his intention to pursue a "one China policy," whose aim is to conclude an alliance with Peking against the USSR.

Although liberal Democrats opposed to big defense spending were initially delighted by the President's decision to junk the B-1, second thoughts quickly set in. Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) ominously warned after the Carter press conference that "the cruise missile is cheap, but it can destabilize the delicate balance between our nation and the Soviet Union and make it more difficult, if not impossible, to reach a meaningful arms agreement."

Conservatives, who had been assured a scant twelve hours before Carter's announcement that he would opt for full production of the B-1 bomber, were outraged. Senate and House Minority Leaders Howard Baker (Tenn.) and Rhodes (Ohio) called a press conference the same day to denounce Carter's B-1 decision as "rank amateurism." Convinced that Carter's decision was part of a larger Administration destabilization plan leading to war, the two Republican leaders rebuked Carter for his Mideast policy pronouncements earlier last week. "We believe the Administration has escalated rhetoric in a way to further harden the lines" of both Arabs and Israelis, they said. It is "an astonishing example of diplomacy by publicity in which the Administration took still another step toward escalating tensions in one of the world's most dangerous places." Former President Ford echoed their concerns and characterized his successor as "a risky gambler."

Carter attempted to mollify the credulous among his critics by ordering a moratorium on further comments about the details of a Mideast peace settlement before Israeli Prime Minister Begin visits Washington, D.C. July 18. U.S. policy is to establish a situation where the "U.S. can be trusted by both sides," Carter moralized to the press. Nobody was fooled by this sanctimonious blather. At the conclusion of the European Economic Community (EEC) heads of state summit the day of Carter's press conference, the Europeans issued a statement on the Mideast, a first step toward adopting an independent policy posture from the U.S. Pledging that it is "ready to consider participating in guarantees" of a Mideast peace settlement, the EEC called for a Geneva conference, a return by Israel to its 1967 borders, and the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians to a national homeland.

Carter's reckless provocations, necessitated by David Rockefeller's insistence on an international debt collection drive to rescue his lower Manhattan holdings, has transformed the political climate in the United States. Political commentators have described Carter's course as a political minefield, in which each new step may be the last. Informed high-level sources in Washington, D.C. report that late last week influential business leaders and political powerbrokers secretly met to review the failures of the Carter Administration, and concluded that the President has become an unaffordable liability.

The backroom discussions have reached such a feverish pitch that their content has begun to make its way into the pages of leading Wall Street press, such as the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. One day after the Presidential press conference *Washington Post* editorialist Stephen Rosenfeld accused Carter of "taking us on a roller coaster ride" which will end in disaster. Commenting on the President's continued provocations of the Soviet leadership, Rosenfeld wrote: "'Human rights' is not just a matter of personal moralism and propaganda. It's shorthand for a policy of profound if subtle poking into the most sensitive sectors of Soviet society, the Soviet bloc and the would-be Soviet orbit. It's at once the key lever and the time bomb of his overall approach." Appalled by the "arbitrary" character of Carter's "big-stakes bargaining," the *Post* columnist faulted National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, Defense Secretary Harold Brown, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, "the firm's lawyer" CIA Director Stanfield Turner, and "African branch manager" Andy Young for inciting the President to recklessness. The

entire editorial board of the paper made its own sentiments known by placing Rosenfeld's comments next to an Evans and Novak column arguing that in the event of a nuclear war, the Soviet Union would lose 4 million people and the United States 70 million.

The same day, *New York Times* correspondent Drew Middleton reported that Carter's B-1 decision "represents a basic shift in the United States strategic doctrine," which has Air Force brass in an uproar over the "trend away from development of sophisticated military technology."

Even before the Carter press conference, Middleton had reported that U.S. allies, particularly in Western Europe, strenuously objected to Carter's willingness "to rattle the cage and arouse the bear.... Allied military opinion is that there has been an overall shift in the power balance...in favor of the Soviet Union," Middleton observed June 29, at a time when Carter's continued provocations threaten to ignite armed hostilities in which Europe and the United States would perish. This is occasioning some serious reappraisals of the Atlantic Alliance in European capitals, the writer concluded.

The same day, the *Washington Post* nervously elaborated Middleton's fears. In an article datelined Bonn, Michael Getler predicted that badly strained relations between the White House and Kremlin had motivated Soviet President Brezhnev "to win friends and influence governments among Washington's allies" in order "to isolate the United States from its allies." Brezhnev's visit to West Germany this fall "could introduce pressure between the two Western capitals," Getler noted, particularly in light of the already tense relations between Bonn and Washington over the issues of nuclear power, monetary policy, human rights, and defense capability. Brezhnev and West German Chancellor have reportedly already agreed that their discussions should include the subject of mutual East-West troop reductions in Central Europe, even if no SALT agreement has been concluded by that time.

Syndicated columnist Marquis Childs privately confided this week that Carter's human rights offensive has profoundly disturbed our European allies. Just back from a month in Europe, Childs reported that most European leaders believe that Carter deliberately wrecked the SALT negotiations by interfering in the

internal affairs of the East Bloc via his human rights campaign. "Carter must have known this would wreck SALT," Childs agreed.

— Barbara Barré

## State Department: Europe Is Always Nervous

*The following interview was made with a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff:*

*Q:* Drew Middleton had an article today in the *New York Times* warning that Europe is very upset over the Carter Administration's policy of confronting the Soviets in every hot spot. What do you think of this?

*A:* Middleton is oversimplifying things. There is a strand of nervousness in Europe about our approach to the Soviets. Any approach to the Soviets by the Administration makes the Europeans nervous. They were nervous about Kissinger. Beyond that there is a great deal of nervousness about the human rights issue, especially Germany. On the Horn of Africa and the Middle East they question our tactics. They also oppose reflating their economies.

*Q:* The Soviets are apparently pushing hard on expanding trade with Europe and vice versa. The Soviets have begun discussing the use of the transfer ruble for this.

*A:* Well, the Europeans are eager for trade and they badly need it. If the Soviets did something about the ruble, it will help, but there is a growing East European debt, although the Soviets are careful about their creditworthiness.

*Q:* Kissinger said today that trade with the East bloc should be linked to political concessions. What do you think?

*A:* He doesn't speak for this Administration. His precious linkage was not usable. My own view is you cannot bargain trade with politics.