

Europe is not an exception. The U.S. military presence in Japan is being stepped up. NATO is considering the possibility of supplying modern weapons to China and is helping the military preparations of Peking which are directed against neighboring states. In the Middle East, there are efforts under the U.S. aegis to put together a new aggressive alliance involving Israel, Egypt and several other countries. The formation of a hundred thousand-strong "rapid response force" is in full swing; it is intended for carrying out "punitive functions". The U.S. is developing a permanent fleet in the Indian Ocean, despite the protests of states in this region. Thus the facts show that NATO and the U.S., covering themselves with a non-existent "Soviet military threat," are unflaggingly building up arms aimed against the Soviet Union.

At the base of the decisions which the U.S. is forcing upon the NATO bloc lies reliance on force as the main means of carrying out an imperialist policy. The result of such a development would be not only the destabilization of relations between the U.S. and the USSR, but also general instability in the world and the absence of a clear perspective for peace.

NATO 'in the grips of inertia'

In these excerpts from an Aleksandr Bovin article in Izvestia, Oct. 20, a top Soviet political commentator assesses the "Euromissile" debate.

The main reasoning of the Americans (with respect to the deployment of 600 Pershing-II and cruise missiles in Europe—ed.) rests on their conception of "limited" war in Europe. Washington supposes that a hypothetical conflict in Europe could be localized through an exchange of nuclear missile strikes in the so-called European theater of military action. In this war, the territory of the U.S. would be spared destruction. The Americans may of course console themselves with such suppositions. But why this should satisfy their European allies, who are deliberately put in the position of a target, is not at all clear to me. Nevertheless, NATO experts recommended to their governments in early October to accept the American plan....

Strategic or, if you will, Eurostrategic equality, which has come to be on the continent some time ago, is a very delicate thing. The armed forces of the two military-political groupings have different structures. One side may have more of one thing and less of another. ... And only consideration of the situation as a whole makes it possible to see the overall equality and balance of forces....

Furthermore, the balance of forces in Europe cannot

be separated from the overall balance of strategic forces. Our medium range rockets cannot strike targets on U.S. territory and therefore they are not taken into account in SALT II. The American missiles slated for stationing in Western Europe are not counted in the established limits either, although they can strike targets on our territory and are intended to do just that....

London is marching in step with Washington. The reaction of the Tory government is the same: give the new rockets!...

In the reaction in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), it seems to me, there are more nuances and more concern about the consequences of the proposed decision. ... (In an interview to the London Economist) the FRG Chancellor rejects the myth of the "Soviet threat".... True, it seems to him that we have "overdone it" in regard to the firmness of our defense; but each has his own experience and a representative of the FRG should understand this perhaps better than others. ... It would seem that there is a full basis for mutual understanding. And yet the responses to L.I. Brezhnev's speech show that the inertia of traditional NATO representatives keeps the FRG from seeing the world without bias....

Politicians are stressing that the decision on "modernization" will not be isolated ... that simultaneously NATO will call on the East to open talks on reducing the corresponding nuclear missile systems.

But insofar as the natural framework for discussing "Eurostrategic arms" is considered to be SALT III, a curious relationship exists between the ratification of the SALT II treaty and the proposed NATO decision on "modernization." FRG Defense Minister Hans Apel expressed this dependency: "The SALT II treaty should not be defeated. This would cause a political crisis in NATO. ... If SALT II is not adopted, then NATO will not make any resolution." One of course cannot fail to welcome Western Europe's support for SALT II. But at the same time, in the given political context this reference to SALT II and SALT III serves as a sort of shock absorber to soften negative reactions to NATO's dangerous plans.

In an October 16 radio commentary, the same commentator said:

(In) another example of what one might call these shock absorbing lines of reasoning, Egon Bahr, the secretary general of the Social Democratic Party of Germany said. ... "At the NATO session the question to be resolved will not be one of deployment, but of the manufacture of medium range weapons. The manufacture of these weapons is not contained in Brezhnev's remarks." ... Such an interpretation of Comrade Brezhnev's words is pure sophistry. ... If the weapons are produced, they are in effect begging to be deployed on site.