

Editorial

Why Moscow is in a hurry

Washington, D.C. was still asleep in early December. Those entrusted with safeguarding the survival of the United States have not faced up to the threat before us. The fact is that the Soviet government is committed to an early strategic confrontation with the United States, risking war in the expectation that the United States will back down, and in backing down will provide Moscow such extensive concessions that Soviet military superiority will be unchallengeable for the decades ahead. What is in progress now is a rapid escalation toward a brutish test of national wills.

The factors which make Soviet acceptance of such horrifying risk possible now are chiefly five.

1) **Relative Soviet military superiority:** The Soviet Union presently possesses a significant margin of military advantage over the United States. On condition that the U.S. nuclear missile submarine force is successfully tracked and targeted by SS-20s, a simultaneous counterforce first strike by Soviet forces against the United States would provide the Soviet Union a possible margin of war-winning potential, unless the U.S. missile-forces were on full alert and deployed under launch-on-warning status. Meanwhile, new generations of Soviet missiles are being deployed massively, with strong indications that new ABM-treaty-violating antiballistic missile systems are being put into place.

2) **The economic depression in the West:** Although U.S. goods output collapsed by only 4 percent during 1983, the rate of collapse in the United States was slowed by inflationary measures which accelerated the collapse in Western Europe and in world trade. This reduces the willingness of the West to rebuild its defenses, and the economic collapse of Europe and developing nations has grave political and social effects advantageous to the Soviet leadership's intended confrontation.

3) **The imminent international financial collapse:** Since the summer of 1982, the Bretton Woods monetary system has been at the brink of a 1931-style international financial collapse which will probably wipe

out \$1 to \$2 trillion of paper values and banking assets. Although desperate measures have postponed the official collapse of nearly \$300 billion of Ibero-American debt, these measures are merely temporary, and do not address the threat of a chain reaction of bankruptcies in Western Europe or the United States. This threat of financial collapse has the U.S. government pinned down.

4) **The crumbling of the Atlantic Alliance:** The Soviet-coordinated international nuclear freeze movement and the political effects of the economic depression threaten to tear apart the Atlantic Alliance. Large Soviet-linked forces in Germany are committed to a scale of disruptions intended to make that nation ungovernable during the weeks ahead. Greece has already pulled out of NATO in effect; such tendencies are spreading throughout Europe. In the United States, the nearly monolithic support for nuclear freeze candidate Walter Mondale in the Democratic Party, plus some soft liberals among Republicans, is weakening the government's political will.

5) **1984 is an election year:** Even among the President's supporters, Nervous Nellies among political advisers are cautioning that no divisive issues, especially no abrupt decisions be made between now and the November 1984 elections.

There is little time to persuade Moscow to call off its lunacy; a Manhattan Project-scale beam-weapons program is the only way to do it.

There is little doubt that were he re-elected in November 1984, President Reagan would immediately launch the equivalent of a war-emergency powers order, and a full-scale World War II-style economic mobilization. At that point the calculable margin of Soviet advantage in launching a global confrontation would begin to disappear. Therefore, we must estimate that Moscow will escalate to full-scale thermonuclear confrontation before the end of the first six months of 1984—unless something happens very quickly to persuade Moscow to call off this lunacy.