

Moscow goes public with massive strategic build-up

by Konstantin George

At the Warsaw Pact Summit held in Budapest, Hungary the week of June 6, a call for "large-scale force reductions" in the European Theater, drafted by the Soviet Union, was formally presented in the form of an "appeal" to all the states of Europe. The appeal included a call for holding "without delay" a special conference involving all European States, East, West, and neutral, plus the United States and Canada, to negotiate a two-phase troop withdrawal. In the first phase, each side would reduce its forces by between 100,000 and 150,000 ground troops and tactical air units. Phase two would envision a reduction of over 500,000 troops each, spread over five years into the early 1990s.

The proposals are serious only in that they are meant to provide an excuse for the U.S. Liberal Establishment to accelerate its plans for massive reductions in U.S. troop strength in Europe. Otherwise, the proposals are a farce.

American troops, once across the Atlantic, are gone for good. Soviet troops, on the contrary, if pulled back several hundred kilometers into the Western Soviet Union, are back in invasion position facing West Germany within a matter of hours. Moscow's insistence that cuts be made in equal numbers on both sides, simply maintains overwhelming Soviet superiority at temporarily lower force levels.

The farce of the Soviet offer was amply documented during a June 11 Budapest press conference, given by newly appointed Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Petrovskii and Maj. Gen. Nikolai Chervov, attached to the Soviet General Staff. Chervov pointedly stated that Moscow rejects Western demands for on-site inspection of eight Russian Military Districts, located inside the U.S.S.R. between its Western borders and the Ural Mountains, in the course of the

proposed withdrawal process. Chervov said: "If Western negotiators renounce this absurd demand, the talks can be resolved. The verification must be restricted to Central Europe."

Chervov attacked President Reagan's announcement that the United States will no longer adhere to the SALT restrictions, adding: "To want to overtake us in strategic weapons is a dream which can never become reality. . . . To give but one example, it would be possible for us to equip over 300 ICBMs [the monster SS-18s], which now have 10 warheads each, with 14 warheads each, if not with more."

Dropping the pretenses

Exactly one week earlier, on June 4, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, Soviet Chief of Staff, held a press conference at the foreign ministry in Moscow. He announced:

"If the United States withdraws from the SALT I and SALT II accords, the limitations on strategic offensive armaments will become void. The first [limitations] to be canceled will be the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles under the SALT I Interim Accords. The next will be the number of submarines carrying ballistic missiles, and the restrictions on the number of warheads for both ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and the number of warheads for submarine-launched ballistic missiles. . . .

"The Soviet Union will find a sufficient and adequate response. We have the right to, and will take such measures."

In other words, Moscow is about to make public what it has been doing all along. Long before Reagan ever spoke out on abandoning SALT II, Moscow's pre-war build-up of strategic offensive forces had vastly exceeded the SALT limita-

tions. We can list these according to Akhromeyev's own categories:

1) Land-based ICBMs. Russia has already deployed the SS-24 and SS-25 mobile ICBMs. By these deployments alone, it tore up SALT I and SALT II. Moscow now has at least 75 SS-25s operational (according to the Pentagon), and when the deployment is completed, in about a year, will have 460 operational SS-25 launchers. With the added deployment of over 100 SS-24s, Moscow relatively soon will have well over 550 additional land-based ICBM launchers.

The SS-24 can carry up to 30 warheads, and the SS-25, 3 warheads. This will represent a minimum addition of some 4,400 nuclear warheads to the Soviet land-based ICBM force. Before the end of the decade, the Soviets will produce and deploy the monster missile, the SS-27, now in the testing phase, designated as the "successor" to the SS-18. Soviet missiles have all been built to accommodate more warheads than the "limits" prescribed in SALT II. Thus, as Chervov stated in the case of the SS-18, Moscow can instantaneously add at least 4 additional warheads per missile, thereby adding at one stroke a minimum of 1,200 additional nuclear warheads.

2) Nuclear Submarine Ballistic Missile Force. Here, Akhromeyev's announcement signifies that, from now on, no Soviet nuclear ballistic missile submarines will be removed. Unlike the United States, Moscow never scraps or dismantles nuclear missile submarines. For the past four years, Russia has been converting "retired" ballistic missile submarines into nuclear cruise-missile submarines. Under the crash program inaugurated by Andropov and Marshall Nikolai Ogarkov in 1983, the Soviet Union has already converted more than two dozen submarines (both missile submarines and attack submarines) into cruise-missile submarines, each outfitted with 20 nuclear cruise missiles with a range of 3,000 km. A substantial portion of them are stationed in permanent rotation off the U.S. coast, and the remainder within range of targets in Europe, Scandinavia, and the United Kingdom. Thus, while "technically" keeping within the submarine-launched ballistic missile restrictions imposed by SALT II, Russia has added, in four years time, well over 500 nuclear cruise missiles to its first strike capability against the United States and Western Europe.

The Eastern Establishment media has been hysterical over the American announcement that the United States will exceed the SALT limit by equipping the B-52 strategic bomber force with long-range Air Launched Cruise Missiles (ALCMs). By contrast, Soviet strategic bombers such as the Backfire and the new Blackjack don't count under the SALT treaty limitations, but, starting last year, Russia began a crash program to equip these bombers (numbering several hundred) with 3,000 km range As-15 nuclear ALCMs. This program makes it possible to use the Soviet bomber force as a component in a first strike against the United States.

The Soviets have also deployed 441 SS-20 launchers. These are officially classified as IRBMs, but, if equipped

with only one warhead, they have an intercontinental range. Then there is the mass deployment of hundreds of short- and medium-range SS-21s, SS-22s, and SS-23s against Western Europe and Japan.

One final note on the Soviet offensive missile build-up. Soviet missiles, unlike American missiles, have what is called "cold-launch" capability: that is, within one half-hour to one hour after the first missile is fired from its launcher, a second missile can be fired from the same launcher. SALT, even were it adhered to, never counted missiles, merely launchers. Therefore, Moscow—even had it played by the SALT rules—was always above the SALT limit by a factor of two or greater.

U.S. Troop cuts

Reagan's decision to abandon SALT is correct, but the United States remains extraordinarily weak militarily. The Soviet Union never adhered to SALT, conducting a massive build up of its strategic nuclear forces, and simultaneously its general-purpose—commonly called "conventional"—forces to perfect an overall war-fighting capability.

By contrast, President Reagan is fighting for the SDI, an additional handful of 50 more MX missiles (a trifle compared with the SS-24, SS-25, etc.), and more cruise missiles. A treasonous Congress is at best willing to meet a few of the President's "strategic" hardware priorities, in exchange for the virtual destruction of the Army's general purpose forces. This would entail, among other things, a drastic unilateral reduction by the United States of its troop commitments for the defense of Europe.

The danger of destroying the military capabilities of the NATO Alliance is compounded by the prospect of either a Social Democratic (SPD) victory in the January 1987 West German federal elections, or a deadlock result, where the Christian Democratic Union of Chancellor Helmut Kohl could only rule through SPD "toleration," i.e., at the expense of major, fatal compromises on defense and foreign policy.

Through channels in Bonn, *EIR* has procured a copy of the draft of the defense policy document to be adopted by the SPD as its electoral platform. That document states unequivocally that an SPD-led government shall: ". . . establish force structures to render the Bundeswehr incapable of mounting offensive operations." As a starter, the SPD would unilaterally disband the Bundeswehr's Panzer (armored) divisions. The drastic reductions policy is stated with no less clarity: "To serve this purpose, large sections of the armed forces will have to be reduced to skeletonized units."

If Secretary of State George Shultz, White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan, the congressional "neo-isolationists," and the SPD prevail, a 50% reduction of U.S. troop strength in Europe within the next year to 18 months is an imminent danger. If that occurs, regardless of whether a formal SDI program continues in existence and regardless of how many MX missiles are deployed, the United States is finished as a superpower.