

The response of the German government to the Gorbachov offer can be called nothing short of alarming. Bonn, led by its liberal foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, has wholeheartedly endorsed Gorbachov's proposal. The latest expression of this endorsement came in a March 4, Ash Wednesday speech (Ash Wednesday political speeches are an annual ritual in West Germany) by Genscher, in the Lower Bavarian town of Bayerbach. Genscher called Gorbachov's proposal, "the Zero Option we always wanted. . . . The [West German] Federal government must campaign energetically for it, so that this goal is reached." Genscher called for the United States to conduct negotiations "leading to success," so that a treaty can be signed "during Reagan's presidency."

Genscher, in his Ash Wednesday speech, also let a post INF agreement cat out of the bag, in the following passage, which began with a call to support "Gorbachov's policy of openness": "That this policy is successful lies in our own interest as well. Every step taken, which helps overcome the East-West partition, is also a step toward overcoming the partition of Germany."

This is the not-so-behind-the-scenes secret governing the politics of most of the West German elite today. The German elite, faced with the prospect of the Pershing II and cruise missiles being withdrawn, and with the prospects of large-scale U.S. troop withdrawals (U.S. troop withdrawals being "taken for granted" was openly stated by Chancellor Helmut Kohl's national security adviser, Horst Teltschik, in an interview with the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, Feb. 24), are in a frame of mind best characterized by the words hysterical and fatalistic.

Under these conditions, the tendency toward decoupling, and putting out feelers to Moscow on the question of a strategic accommodation with Russia, incorporating some form of "reunification" or "confederation" on the German Question, has been growing. One of the key German elite figures involved in the feelers on the German Question, West German President Richard von Weizsäcker, has been invited by Soviet ambassador Yuli Kvitsinski to Moscow, and will be going sometime this spring.

In the context of the feverish U.S.-Soviet negotiations to conclude an INF deal, before, from Moscow's standpoint, the Washington factional situation goes out of control, von Weizsäcker's pilgrimage to Moscow will be but one of many in the near future. The show starts on March 16-17, when U.S. Undersecretary of State Michael Armacost arrives for talks on "settling regional conflicts" and paving the way for a visit by Secretary of State George Shultz. At the end of March, British Prime Minister Thatcher will arrive for lengthy talks with Gorbachov. Thatcher will be followed in April by Shultz. Shultz, in his talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, will include in the agenda planning for a Reagan-Gorbachov Summit in the autumn, to ratify the "zero option" 1987 agreement. Gorbachov will certainly be available for such an occasion. Will Reagan be available for Munich II?

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## Interview: John Erickson

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# Russification, lies, Soviet strategic aims

*On March 5, University of Edinburgh Defense Studies Prof. John Erickson made a number of on-the-record comments and evaluations, in a discussion with Mark Burdman of EIR. We print excerpts from the discussion with Professor Erickson, who had returned a few days earlier from a visit to the Soviet Union, for discussions with Soviet government officials, academicians, and others. Erickson, a widely read expert on Soviet military strategy, is the coordinator of the "Edinburgh Conversations," which brings British spokesmen regularly into contact with their Soviet counterparts.*

**Q:** What can you tell us about the reaction or evaluation in Britain, to the arms proposals made by Gorbachov?

**A:** I think, from the government side, the attitude is one of extreme caution—and skepticism. The Gorbachov proposal has many implications for British government policy. There is a feeling of "let us see." There is a difference, you must understand, between the government and the population.

**Q:** The *Daily Telegraph* of March 3 cites comments of yours, on coming back from Moscow, that one must wonder whether what the Soviets are doing is really *perestroika* ("restructuring"), or *peredyshka* ("buying time"). What can you say on this?

**A:** Well, what I said was somewhat misprinted, although it really doesn't matter. The point is, I quite heatedly and agitatedly debated this question last week with Soviets I talked to. Is this all a great big strategic deception? Or is it for real? They were very upset when I brought it up, but I said I had every intention of doing so, and I told them, "You must answer this."

**Q:** You and colleagues in the past have stressed the importance of *maskirovka*, or camouflage, in Soviet planning. Ogarkov was formerly a coordinator of *maskirovka* operations, and there are others. What can you say about *maskirovka*, in the context of what you have just said?

**A:** It is tied to the question of joint ventures. Very recently, the Soviets have begun talking about joint ventures. But they haven't gotten the legal underpinnings for this! I said to them, "You'd better get your act together."

Of course, it depends on who you speak to in the Soviet Union. The higher up you go in the scale, the better the arguments are. From discussions with higher-up people, what I understand is that the Soviets' Number One priority, above all else, is achieving a modern economy. This is the great thing on their mind, and this is what the internal changes are about. There is a link between the internal changes, and their concept of security.

**Q:** I saw references in the *Telegraph* piece, to your saying that the Soviets are talking about revisions in the international security system.

**A:** Look at what they're saying about the new international economic order. That has to do with their talk of recasting the nature of the international security system.

**Q:** You also mentioned that the Soviets are now using the term "sufficiency," to refer to their military aims, rather than, for example, "parity." Isn't this a conditional "sufficiency," dependent on the U.S. giving up the Strategic Defense Initiative? In that sense, isn't talk of "sufficiency" also part of the strategic deception?

**A:** If you have looked at Soviet writings for the past six months carefully, you will have noticed that there is no more talk of "parity" and "equal security," as in the past, but rather the talk is of "sufficiency." I don't think it need be associated with the way they are approaching the matter of the SDI. The strange thing, to me, is that the SDI was never mentioned once when I was there, in discussions. I think they think that discussing the SDI has become fruitless. A very sensible point was made by Academician Sakharov, a couple of weeks ago, when he said the Soviet position on the SDI was nonsensical. He was right.

**Q:** Speaking of Sakharov, what do you think the Soviets are up to with release of dissidents?

**A:** There won't be any human rights in the Soviet Union. Don't talk of human rights. Talk of co-optation. The Soviets need the dissidents. They have brains, they're clever, they're astute, and, frankly, they are more patriotic.

**Q:** Our evidence is that there is a big push toward Great Russian cultural chauvinism, Russification, etc. What can you say about this?

**A:** Yes, that's one of the implications, absolutely. Russification is the name of the game. And they are not fooling around! The primacy of the Russians has become the key thing. This has to do with the tremendous argument now going on, about the implications of the October Revolution. It has become a *furiosus* argument.

**Q:** You mean to say, that the Bolshevik Revolution was the means to accomplish old Russian-imperial aims, by different means, so to speak? Is that what you mean? What do you

think the aim of the Bolshevik Revolution was?

**A:** To give Russia back to the Russians. Get out the Westernizers. Get out the separatists. I tried to see all this, in visiting the recently renovated Menchikov Palace. It's very interesting. We had quite an argument there, about all this. I see this as linked to the interest now in Bukharin. I bet some Russians in December 1985, that they would be rehabilitating Bukharin. Now, indeed, they are *reviving* his ideas. As you may know, Bukharin was a philosopher of science. He was very good. He also had a social philosophy and he was not interested in class war. It's good stuff.

**Q:** Backtracking a bit: On the Bolshevik Revolution being what we've just discussed, are you saying that there was a continuity within certain units of the Okhrana, from the pre-Bolshevik period, into the post-Bolshevik period, to bring about some aims that the Okhrana wanted?

**A:** Oh, yes, sure.

**Q:** So the Bolsheviks were the Raskolniks, the Old Believers, come back into power?

**A:** It's a very interesting question. I spoke to a senior Party chap in the U.S.S.R., and he had to ask me what the Raskol were! I repeat what I said before. It all depends on what level you speak to there. Sophistication varies. At the higher-up level, it's not only camouflage you get. The spearheads of the current transformation are the writers and poets. The head of the Soviet Writers Union is publishing the writings of the poet Gumilyov.

**Q:** And what did you mean before about discussions on the new international economic order?

**A:** There is a discussion about this. There are three groups in the Soviet Union. There are those who want autarky. There are those who want international revolution, themselves divided into two groups, those who want violence to achieve their aims and those who don't. And then, there are the globalists. The globalists want *access*, not *conquest*. These are the ones who are concerned with the implications of the new international economic order. An example is Zagladin [first deputy head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party]. Read his book, *Globalistika*. There are about two dozen, three dozen of these types. Economists, scientists, people working on predictive techniques.

**Q:** On Gorbachov's latest arms proposal, do you see the agreement now as a *fait accompli*, totally fixed, or do you think the applecart is going to be upset?

**A:** If anyone upsets the applecart, it will be the Europeans. I agree, in this sense, entirely with Zagladin. The problem in reaching an agreement is not military, or strategic, it is *psychological*. The Europeans, I think, will drag their feet. It is most extraordinary, everyone has reversed his role!