

“technological chauvinism”—his intolerance of technological dependence on the West. He views the Brezhnev era of détente, in which the Soviet Union relied heavily on importing Western technology, as having eroded the U.S.S.R.’s independent technological base. It is understood that Ogarkov’s *perestroika* will mean further purges of the Brezhnevite military-political elite.

A top Western defense source revealed that at the Minsk Warsaw Pact Military Council meeting, some military figures expressed resistance to Ogarkov’s drive for innovation, demanding instead “more of the same” in military hardware, in view of the alleged “NATO threat.” Ogarkov reportedly dismissed their arguments, saying that no NATO threat exists, and the Soviet Union must prioritize its investments in the SDI and related fields.

The upcoming Central Committee Plenum on economic planning, announced recently by Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov, and rumored to take place in June, promises to be a watershed in the implementation of the Ogarkov war plan. Further, within about a five-week period beginning on May 28, there will be two other significant conferences. On May 28, the Warsaw Pact summit will begin in East Berlin. Then June and early July will almost definitely witness a Comecon summit, to thrash out the implementation of the Ogarkov Plan.

Interview: John Erickson

Soviet ‘Globalists’ will be beaten now

On April 28, EIR spoke to Edinburgh University Soviet expert Professor John Erickson. Erickson had just returned from a several week stay in the United States. The following are extensive excerpts from that discussion.

EIR: Certain breaking developments concerning the U.S.S.R. have caught our attention, and raised questions. For example, the strange, sudden “indefinite postponement” of the trip of West German President Richard von Weizsäcker to the U.S.S.R. What do you make of that? In what context would such a development be occurring?

Erickson: There are *several* of these kinds of things going on. This is one sign, of many. It certainly indicates that there are a great many problems in the Soviet Union. What you have to understand, is that there is a great deal of *improvisation* going on in the U.S.S.R., tactical moves on a day-to-day basis.

The problem I came across in the United States, is people always asking me: “How long will Gorbachov last?” Frankly, it doesn’t matter much. Gorbachov is not irrelevant, but whatever happens to him, the process of change is permanent. Nonetheless,, there will be turbulence for a long time. Both Russia and America are operating tactically. I reached a consensus with senior people in the United States, that the Soviets have defined an 18 to 20 month period for achieving crucial aims of the *perestroika*, but one must expect things like this von Weizsäcker development. Many changes are going on. I remember very much, I was in the Soviet Union for a long time during the Khrushchov era, and I met people at a very high level, and there was literally chaos.

EIR: One critical element of all of this, in our view, is the Western financial crisis, which is unfolding very fast, toward a crash. Is this affecting Soviet planning, is this an element in some of the changes we are referencing?

Erickson: This plays a key role *tactically*, in the sense I said about how important tactical considerations are to the Russians, but what the effect of the financial crisis will be *strategically*, that is the *real* problem. Expect more perturbations, as a result of this.

I’ve always argued, that a Soviet leader *has* to work, at the beginning, from a standpoint of autarky. *Then*, this is followed by periods of new revolutionary activism. In the

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latter Brezhnev era, we saw the emergence of *globalism*, what the Soviets call *globalistika*. This involves a strategic problem: the relations between socialism and capitalism. The financial crisis in the West, now, must raise second thoughts about this. Particularly in Eastern Europe, problems will arise. It is causing a fluttering of doves.

It will now be said in the Soviet Union, that the policy advisers were wrong. There will be a great deal of doubt, now, about certain strategies. Let me give you an example. Two months ago, we were in the Soviet Union, and there was also this talk of *joint ventures*. What the hell will now become of *that*? First of all, there was already the problem of the lack of legal underpinnings for joint ventures. Now, with the financial crisis, there's no *basis* for joint ventures! This also affects the *enormous* debate about Soviet relations with the IMF. We have always told them there, that they would have to make the ruble convertible, or else there's no way to join the IMF. But the ruble, you know, is worth about 15 cents.

EIR: So's the dollar these days.

Erickson: Yes, that's the point. The dollar has gone into disarray. They did *not* expect this, this rapid slide of the dollar. Frankly, it caught many of us here by surprise, in Britain. This dollar problem affects a mechanism of two years, between East and West. What is happening to the dollar is not a regulated downturn, but a *slide*. It affects a range of policy options formerly open to the Soviets. The question is not *fiscal*, but primarily *political*. It goes to the heart of the problem. Does socialism cooperate? Or is socialism autarkic and independent? Isolationism is a powerful pull in the Soviet Union. There's another trend, opposed to the Globalists, which doesn't give a damn about anything, except for the Soviet Union, couldn't care less about the United States, the West.

EIR: And what will happen to the Globalists, with the financial crash? You said before, the policy advisers have been wrong on the dollar situation. What happens?

Erickson: The Globalists will get the daylight beaten out of them. Look, what they've been up to is a carefully constructed policy option, that has not been done by isolated individuals, but in coordination with top people in the military and security forces. Now, they see they've been wrong, strategically and politically. But what is involved here, is an interlocking directorate of policy. They had decided, they had about 18 months, 20 months to get their act together. Now, however, there will be extreme turbulence. The situation is not controllable. They can still set the same timetable, but they can't have control over these factors.

EIR: And what about the Soviet offer to discuss protocol on deployment of SDI objects in space among respective military representatives. You were in the United States, during a time when various Soviet military people were saying all

sorts of things in the United States What's this all about?

Erickson: This involves a major debate, a huge debate in the Soviet Union, which some Americans don't see, or understand, but which is very real, involving the nature of Soviet strategic thought. It involves the idea of abandoning *equal parity*, to what in English would translate as *sufficiency-in-defense*. This is what the 18 to 20 month gap I referred to earlier, has to do with. Here's where the big mistake of many people in the U.S. comes in. They say that the Russians are abolishing nuclear weapons, to be able to use conventional weapons. What the Soviets *really* want to do, and what all of *perestroika*, or *globalistika*, have to do with, is to make a quantum leap from intercontinental ballistic missiles, a quantum leap to space warfare. For that, they've got to have *perestroika*. *Perestroika* is needed to enable them to redeploy on the SDI/space side. Military men in the Soviet Union that I met, were actually quite willing to take up discussion of SDI.

EIR: Western SDI, Soviet SDI, both?

Erickson: All of it. Although, they don't call it SDI on their side. They call it *space-strike weapons*, which gives them what they want. Increasing missiles, by 10,000 or whatever, has given them numerical parity, but not global equality, which is what they really want. Equality in space efforts. Which alters ground and naval warfare.

EIR: And that is where all their enthusiasm for the "zero-option" comes in. . . .

Erickson: The zero-option fits in perfectly well with this! They are saying nuclear weapons are useless to them, because, in fact, they *are* useless. They're not pushing the zero-option out of the kindness of their hearts, but because SS-20s do not give them what they want. *Space-based systems* give them what they want! They are developing new techniques, which will affect the operating form of warfare to the year 2050. This will change naval warfare, it will change ground warfare. So-called space-strike weapons, as the Russians call them, will give them a whole new bag of tricks. What has been happening until now, under Gorbachov, is giving them the restructuring of Soviet forces that will carry them till the year 2000. The quantum leap will take them much further. It's very wide-ranging. It's why both the *tactical* and the *strategic* are so important to the Soviets. And, when it comes to *tactical* response, they are doing much better than us. We have no tactical response, that's what I kept telling people in the United States.

. . . . When it comes to questions like this, people in the U.S. are simplistic. They always ask me: "Will Gorbachov stay or go?" That's an overly simplistic interpretation! Gorbachov was *put* there, he didn't move in there by himself. He'll stay in there as long as he has his uses. In my view, he has his uses, many uses, for the people who put him in there. But, if they feel differently, he'll go. That's the way it works.