

calling for an international peace settlement of the Gulf war.

Through diplomatic cunning and sheer military brutality, it pulled off an agreement in recent weeks with a longstanding demand of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, for Syria to become neutral in the conflict. This was preliminarily achieved in the first week of May after Syrian President Hafez al-Assad's visit to Moscow, which was immediately followed by an Iraqi-Syrian summit.

Washington officials have refused to even question the May 17 events. Instead, President Reagan announced on May 19 that the "villain is really Iran." True in general, but not when it comes to a direct Soviet operation. On the contrary, the American denunciation of Iran now only strengthens Moscow's bid. The same day, the United States introduced at the U.N. Security Council a motion calling for a full economic embargo against Iran. The motion was vetoed by both the French and the British, but had Soviet support. By doing that, Washington is falling with both feet into the Soviet trap.

Soviet military move in Iran?

Intelligence sources do not rule out that one of Moscow's next steps in the region may be a simple military intervention against Iran. Moscow is carefully building its case by daily accusing Teheran of trying to destabilize Soviet Central Asia. The Americans can do little; they have blinded themselves to the internal situation of the country by breaking with most of the secular opposition, leaving the field open to Soviet agents. The present state of American-Turkish relations precludes any chance of using the American bases in Turkey to intervene against such a Soviet thrust.

No doubt the Soviets will be also clever enough to present such a move as made in coordination with the Americans; some Washington officials may actually believe it. After all, didn't Kissinger advocate in the early 1980s that Iran be shared between East and West? These are the policies followed nowadays by the State Department. However, Moscow alone will reap the fruits.

If such an intervention takes place, it will be the last blow against American credibility and power, not merely in the Middle East, but worldwide. The NATO alliance, which depends on Gulf oil, won't survive such a move, and Moscow knows it. The Red Army doesn't need to fully occupy the country to achieve such results; a thrust from northern Iran to its southern Baluchistan region, linking up with Afghanistan, will be enough.

As underlined by Lyndon H. LaRouche, in a statement issued May 19, the "time to turn tough is right now, before this deterioration of the strategic situation becomes much more dangerous than it is already." The United States has to make a show of strength in the region, quickly. It also has to launch a series of political and military initiatives and gestures aimed at consolidating such allied countries as Turkey and especially Saudi Arabia.

The 'zero option' runs into obstacles

by Konstantin George

On May 14, Mikhail Gorbachov returned to Moscow from his tour of the Soviet rocket-launch site at Baikonur. On the same day, French Premier Jacques Chirac arrived in Moscow. Also on the same day, the NATO defense ministers assembled in Stavanger, Norway, for a meeting of the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). Both the Chirac visit and the NATO meeting provided some unpleasant surprises for the Kremlin.

The tone for the NPG meeting was set one week earlier, on May 7, when U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger issued a statement "endorsing" the proposed zero-option agreement on condition that it be a "global zero option." Moscow must dismantle not only its European-based missiles, but also its Asia-Pacific SS-20s, a threat to Japan.

Weinberger was engaged in a flanking attack on the zero option. His formal "endorsement" of the proposal, which would commence selling out Europe to the Soviets, attached a condition totally unacceptable to Moscow.

A flanking, rather than frontal, attack was necessitated by the fact that President Reagan has foolishly backed Secretary of State George Shultz's commitment to reaching a disastrous agreement with Moscow on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF).

Weinberger's "global zero option" was approved by the NATO defense ministers in Norway. Britain's George Younger announced that Great Britain was now giving "conditional approval" to the zero option, provided that it be global; that French and British nuclear forces be excluded; and that West Germany keep its Pershing-1A nuclear-capable missiles (warheads are under American custody). Moscow has been insisting that any zero-option agreement be confined to Europe, and, that the Bundeswehr's Pershing-1A missiles be scrapped along with the American Pershing-II and cruise missiles.

Moscow responded furiously, denouncing NATO for "putting obstacles in the path" of the zero option by "adding conditions" that "constitute a deviation from the positions agreed to at Reykjavik."

Since that initial Kremlin response, Soviet attacks on the

U.S. and NATO postures have escalated in scope and venom. In the May 19 *Pravda*, an article by Viktor Karpov, the chief of the arms control section of the Soviet foreign ministry, formally accused Washington of "dragging out" the INF talks, and NATO of "dragging out" the consultations among the member allies. Karpov fumed that the U.S. draft treaty for the zero option includes a provision whereby America would retain the right to convert the Pershing-II into a shorter-range (under 1,000 km) variant, and for insisting on keeping cruise missiles in Europe, removing only their nuclear warheads.

Karpov also raised the ante for a Reagan-Gorbachov summit. Besides the standing Soviet condition that an INF agreement be reached first, Karpov demanded that the United States renounce a space-based SDI system, an obvious attempt by the Russians to pressure Reagan, who is deeply committed to a "Peace in Our Time" summit with Gorbachov, into removing all obstacles to the accord. That accomplished, Moscow would readily return to its "non-linkage" stance on a summit, and seal a "Munich II" zero option.

Soviet pressure on European governments resisting the zero option has also become brutal. This is evidenced in advance leaks from a Gorbachov interview with the Italian Communist Party newspaper, *l'Unità*, scheduled for publication May 21. Gorbachov used the following phrase: "I know who these people are . . . some European governments. . . . It's time to break the opposition by those who are sticking to a policy of strength."

Pressure on Germany

The Soviet Union will try "to break the opposition" in Europe in the country which is now the politically weakest link, West Germany. This began with the May 1 West Berlin riots, which, as West German intelligence sources are stressing, were "the dress rehearsal for President Reagan's June 12 Berlin visit." The Russians are also reactivating the "German reunification" card.

But the Norway NPG meeting led to a surprising twist in Bonn. Only hours after the meeting concluded, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl released a statement (May 15), rejecting Gorbachov's proposed "double zero option," which would incorporate missiles with a range of between 500 and 1,000 km. Kohl said that Bonn would only accept the so-called "double zero option" if it were expanded to include *all* missiles in Europe, from a range of zero to 1,000 km, thus depriving the Russians of their short-range missiles, "with the goal of increasing the security of all parties, above all the Germans." Kohl thus joined in the game of pouring conditions onto the zero option, and also called for negotiations on "conventional stability between the Atlantic and the Urals," and a ban on chemical weapons.

Nearly everyone in Bonn was caught by surprise, including Foreign Minister Genscher, who demanded that Bonn's policy be acceptance of the "double" zero option, with no ifs, ands, or buts.

Whatever Kohl's intentions, his statement raises many questions concerning what Germany's position *actually is*—it will definitely serve to delay the process leading to a zero option agreement. Kohl's statement triggered hasty consultations within the leadership of the ruling CDU-FDP coalition government. The upshot was a government decision to issue a "final statement" saying that on June 4, a government declaration will fully define policy on the zero option. If Washington maintains a posture of weakness in the coming weeks, the timing of the declaration bodes ill. It will come after Gorbachov gives his policy address at the May 28 Warsaw Pact Summit in East Berlin, while not waiting for the Reagan-Kohl talks scheduled at the June 8-10 Venice economic summit of Western leaders.

France not fooled

The Soviet leadership's anger was not only reserved for the NATO defense ministers. A lot of invective is being poured on France, whom Moscow correctly recognizes as the bastion of resistance to the zero option. France is the one nation responding appropriately. Premier Jacques Chirac has not only led European opposition to the zero option, but has unveiled a program, ratified by the parliament, to *quadruple* the number of French nuclear warheads over the next five years.

Chirac's four-hour meeting with Gorbachov on May 15 reflected no inclination for appeasement. The Soviet media sourly noted that "large differences" remained between the two countries on arms control issues. Chirac emphatically told Gorbachov that France's nuclear forces and future programs are "definitely non-negotiable," and brushed off all talk of the zero option. France has "no intention to comment" on the U.S.-Soviet Geneva talks.

Chirac's visit was preceded by the greatest barrage of Soviet attacks against a Western government in the entire postwar period—without exaggeration. An article in the Soviet weekly, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, which appeared on May 13, one day before Chirac's arrival, denounced him for: supporting the SDI; repeatedly denouncing the "Soviet danger"; "extreme reserve" toward the "new" Gorbachov policies; maintaining and expanding the French *force de frappe* (nuclear forces); an "excessive anti-Soviet campaign"; arresting and expelling Soviet spies; "violating the 16th parallel in Chad"; denouncing the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

The attacks continued through Chirac's meetings with Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Facing Chirac at the May 14 Kremlin dinner, Ryzhkov said: "Some West European governments have voiced doubts and objections [on the zero option]. . . . Progress depends on whether Europe responds appropriately. . . . We regrettably have *failed to see France* among the critics of the nuclear arms race."

Chirac, on his return home, toured France's ballistic-missile submarine facilities.