

Gorbachov answers Reagan, shells West German ship

by Konstantin George

On June 12, U.S. President Ronald Reagan made a speech in West Berlin and asked Soviet party boss Mikhail Gorbachov to tear down the Berlin Wall. Three days later, Gorbachov indeed made alterations in the physical boundaries between East and West—when a Warsaw Pact vessel shelled a NATO ship in the Baltic Sea. Since no one seemed to respond to this outrageous provocation, could the June 15 shelling be construed as a partial response to Reagan's Berlin speech?

On the morning of June 15, a Warsaw Pact corvette from the Polish or East German Navy, engaged in Warsaw Pact naval exercises under Soviet command in the Baltic, fired a salvo of 76mm artillery shells at point-blank range at the West German Navy tender *Neckar*. Five shells struck the *Neckar*, wounding three of the crew and igniting a fire which lasted for several hours. The outrage occurred in international waters, some 50 kilometers off the coast of Soviet-occupied East Prussia, where visibility was at least 15 kilometers.

As brazenly provocative as using a West German Navy ship for target practice, was the *total* lack of any coverage of the provocation by the governments or media of the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Poland.

Yet, the senior partner of NATO, the United States, responded to this bombing of a NATO ship with indifference. On June 17, the State Department answered a reporter's demand for a statement on the Baltic outrage: "No comment."

Left to fend for itself, the West German Defense Ministry on June 15 declared the *Neckar* affair an "accident"—without even waiting for an investigation into what had actually happened.

Berlin May Day was first test

Since the West German Navy was formed in 1956, until June 15, 1987, there had never been a case of Warsaw Pact

naval vessels firing on a West German naval vessel in the Baltic. Moscow's small-scale act of *regular* warfare against West Germany occurred exactly six weeks after Russia had launched a new Berlin crisis, through the Soviet- and East German-directed *irregular*-warfare riots that raged in the West Berlin district of Kreuzberg on May Day. As *EIR* warned, and the Baltic outrage now proves, the Berlin crisis was the inception of a Moscow showdown policy, marked by a series of Soviet thrusts to test Western responses. The lack of Western response guaranteed that Soviet "testing" would escalate.

Just as the dynamics of Hitler's expansionism were a result of Western appeasement, the Reagan administration's suicidal rush to conclude a "Munich II" zero-option medium-range missile agreement with Moscow this year is responsible not only for the Berlin crisis but the Baltic "incident" as well.

What is now rapidly unfolding is a process leading to a U.S.-Soviet New Yalta, which threatens to produce a new division of spheres of influence, in Moscow's favor, for Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The trigger for this is the planned zero-option accord—the INF agreement—which would withdraw from the European continent the U.S. nuclear forces that count in wartime, and would rapidly transform Western Europe, starting with West Germany, into an adjunct of the Soviet Empire.

New Yalta case #1: Germany

West Germany today is a country gripped by well-founded anxiety over the image of a post-zero-option Europe. Moscow is exploiting this to the hilt by a mixture of crisis and confrontation, while simultaneously playing the "German reunification" card. That means hinting at offering a

“neutral reunified Germany” in which the reunified Germany became a Soviet satrapy.

A milestone in this process is expected around the July 6-11 visit to the Soviet Union by West German President Richard von Weizsäcker. Von Weizsäcker is the son of Ernst von Weizsäcker, the number-two man at Hitler’s foreign ministry, who went on trial at Nuremberg, and was one of the key figures in the negotiation process that led to the August 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact. The son, Richard, a proponent of German-Russian reconciliation, has gone out of his way to issue one “deal” signal after another to the Kremlin.

In May, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published leaks from a letter by von Weizsäcker to Christian Democratic member of parliament Bernhard Friedmann. Friedmann, the author of a proposal for negotiating a “neutral, reunified Germany” with the U.S.S.R., had written to von Weizsäcker, asking him whether he would bring this up in his talks with Soviet leaders. Von Weizsäcker answered that he definitely would discuss in Moscow the “German question” and the “question of divided Europe.” Soon thereafter, von Weizsäcker addressed 450 generals and colonels at the 29th annual commanding officers’ meeting of the West German armed forces. Von Weizsäcker called for an end to using the Soviet Union as the “enemy image” in the German armed forces. He added, that Germany must “talk to” the Russians, “negotiate with” the Russians, and finally, “conclude agreements” with the Russians.

His latest signal is an interview in the June 17 issue of the Soviet weekly, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, where he calls for a flowering of German-Russian “cultural cooperation.”

President Reagan’s Berlin speech on June 12, where he appealed to Gorbachov to “tear down the Wall,” unwittingly helped Gorbachov play his German Card. The speech was written by John Kornblum, U.S. chief of mission in West Berlin, who recently consulted with East German leaders at Aspen Institute meetings in East Berlin. Gorbachov is holding open the option, once the INF agreement is signed, to make an all-German gesture and tear down the Berlin Wall partially, beginning at the Brandenburg Gate. Such a gesture would cost Moscow and East Germany nothing. East German civilians are allowed no closer than 300 meters to the Wall at this point, and the “prohibited zone” leading to the gate and then the Wall is an open square (Pariser Platz) devoid of all cover. The area is escape-proof, and while the Wall here is low enough to jump over, no one ever has.

The option of a partial opening of the Wall was proven in the recent Pentecost weekend riots in East Berlin, where KGB operatives, using crowd-psychology agitational techniques, got the young rock music fans to juxtapose the slogans “Down with the Wall” and “Gorbachov, Gorbachov.”

New Yalta case #2: Persian Gulf

The U.S. administration’s zero-option policy of giving away Europe is matched by a process of negotiating other

giveaways to the Russians, starting with the Persian Gulf.

Just before the Venice summit, White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker went on record to announce that the United States and Russia “could play a joint naval role in the Gulf.” The London *Financial Times* of June 17 commented accurately that Howard Baker’s energies “are almost exclusively aimed toward an arms control agreement on medium-range and shorter-range missiles and a summit with Mr. Gorbachov . . . later this year. A [White House] desire to please the Soviets may also account for Mr. Baker’s gaffe before the Venice summit—a suggestion that the U.S. and the Soviet Union could play a joint naval role in the Gulf.”

The recent phase in the Gulf began with the Soviet-managed attack on the U.S. frigate *Stark*. Ever since, Soviet press commentaries have been stressing that if U.S. warships stay in the Gulf, anything can happen to them. An *Izvestia* article of June 10 went as far as to quote Radio Teheran approvingly that the Persian Gulf would become a “graveyard” for U.S. warships.

On June 15, Soviet Colonel Nikolai Chervov, of the General Staff, speaking in Geneva, confirmed for the first time that the Soviet Union has stationed full complements of 1,000-km range SS-22 and 500-km SS-23 missiles in all its southern military districts facing Turkey and Iran, and blanketing the Persian Gulf.

‘Project Democracy’ justifies New Yalta

A group of “conservatives” of the “Project Democracy” set of Iran-Contra notoriety, continues to influence the Reagan administration with its schemes to redraw the map in Russia’s favor. One prominent U.S. “Project Democracy” crony, Irving Kristol, was quoted June 17 in the French daily *Le Figaro*, calling for the dissolution of NATO as it now exists, and for the United States to stop supporting “the European burden.” The quotes come from an interview Kristol gave to the Paris-based Polish emigré journal *Kultura*:

1) “NATO, in its current form, ties our hands absolutely. . . . The Western European nations prevent the United States from conducting an independent foreign policy.”

2) Kristol terms NATO “a sick alliance” which weakens “the will of the Europeans to resist the Soviets,” and the U.S. draws “no advantage” from NATO membership.

3) NATO should be turned into “a purely European alliance,” through a “gradual retreat, extended over five years,” of all American troops now stationed in Europe.