

## British blast Shevardnadze's 'bullying, insolence' in Bonn

by Mark Burdman

In comments made during a British television interview the night of Jan. 25, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher strongly rebuffed Soviet demands that Britain weaken its own independent nuclear deterrent. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, during his visit to Bonn the week of Jan. 18, had insisted that Britain and France not modernize their nuclear capabilities. In response to a question, Mrs. Thatcher affirmed: "I do not dictate to Mr. Gorbachov what he can or cannot do. No one dictates to us." We have a duty, she continued, to upgrade Britain's nuclear deterrent to provide adequate defense for the country.

In another segment of the interview, Mrs. Thatcher warned that Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachov had not changed in fundamentals.

Mrs. Thatcher's comments reflect a mood, in both Britain and France, that their nations' nuclear deterrents are non-negotiable. Linked to growing Anglo-French weapons cooperation, and certain efforts by both countries toward the defense of the Federal Republic of Germany, this attitude represents significant rearguard resistance to the U.S.-Soviet "New Yalta" deal, to place all of Europe under Russian imperial domination.

The effect of Mrs. Thatcher's intervention was limited, however, by her strong endorsement of the INF treaty. She called this treaty "good," saying that it referred to "one kind only" of nuclear weaponry, as if the INF process could be isolated from the more general Soviet effort to disarm Europe.

Days earlier, she had gone on American television to warn that Senate rejection of the treaty would be a "disaster." Similarly, in her Jan. 25 interview, she backed off from addressing the deeper implication of the New Yalta deal—that the Soviets intend to have the *United States* do the dirty

work and arm-twist Britain and France into weakening their nuclear deterrents.

This point was made very strongly by London *Sunday Telegraph* chief editor Peregrine Worsthorne, in a Jan. 24 lead editorial entitled, "Russian Storm Clouds Gather Over Europe." Worsthorne blasted Shevardnadze for declaring in Bonn that British and French strengthening of their nuclear deterrents "would be a dangerous trend . . . and the Soviet Union would never allow it."

Wrote Worsthorne, "The Soviet Foreign Minister's language in Bonn last week was quite unacceptable. He spoke as if Russia had suddenly acquired the right to tell the countries of Western Europe what they can and cannot do. As it happens, the orders were not given to West Germany. They were given to Britain and France, who were told that the Soviet Union would not tolerate their using any pause in the Russo-American arms control negotiations, to strengthen their nuclear deterrents. . . . When dealing with Eastern European countries, such prohibitions are routine Russian practice. Those poor countries have long become accustomed to being told what Moscow will or will not allow. But Britain and France are not yet Russian satellites." Wondering why, after several days, there had not been any Western reaction to this threat, Worsthorne mused that "on this particular question, the Russians are backed by the Americans."

In similar tones, the *Times* of London, under the heading, "Diplomacy of Insolence," commented Jan. 23:

"Such is the supine attitude of much Western opinion in the face of Mr. Gorbachov's diplomacy—including much governmental opinion—that these sinister and insolent remarks have attracted little attention and not a whimper of protest. The modernization would not be in breach of any treaty. It would be part of an attempt by the West to preserve

some sort of balance of power in Europe between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. . . .

“What did Mr. Shevardnadze mean—NATO modernization ‘cannot be tolerated’? Who would stop it? Probably he will rely on the United States doing so in order not to jeopardize its new relationship with the Soviet Union. If Western Europe is not careful, it will be trapped between the interests of its enemy and its supposed ally. Western European governments should ignore the advice of this week’s bullying visitor.”

As for Shevardnadze, he has only escalated his “bullying” and “insolence.” Speaking at a dinner in honor of visiting East German Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer in Moscow Jan. 27, Shevardnadze expressed his concern over “the danger of compensatory rearmament in Europe.” According to the account on Radio Moscow the next day, he warned, “Mrs. Thatcher should not act as if she does not know the difference between the inviolable right of defense, and the danger of a new round in the arms race.”

### ‘First the nukes and then the troops’

Mrs. Thatcher, obviously speaking for a certain consensus in Europe, is trying to do two things at one time. She does not see them as contradictory, but they are.

On the one side, the British and French are expanding cooperation on many levels. Discussion of joint production of an air-launched nuclear missile—with the French acronym “ASMP”—are under way, as are discussions of joint weapons procurement programs. Both countries, albeit the French much more vigorously, are taking initiatives to guarantee the defense of West Germany against Soviet aggression, under conditions that most factions of the American Establishment favor a U.S. withdrawal from Europe. The British have announced the formation of a 5,000-man helicopter-borne special force based in Yorkshire, to intervene in West Germany in the event of Soviet attack. Its mission would be to stall a Soviet advance long enough for more comprehensive Western forces to intervene. Alongside this, the British have created an army air corps regiment of 16 Lynx anti-tank attack helicopters.

Defense Ministers George Younger and André Giraud have established such an exceptional personal rapport and working relationship that Franco-British relations are considered the best in decades, if not centuries.

However, there is also the question of Mrs. Thatcher’s determined public support for the INF treaty. While she is known to have strong private reservations, her frequently stated position could be summed up, “This far and no more.” However, unless the entire arms control and disarmament process is overturned, beginning with U.S. Senate rejection of the INF treaty, each step necessarily implies the next. And that means ultimately dismantling, by superpower fiat if nothing else, British and French nuclear capabilities.

In the United States, for instance, pro-arms control appeasers have taken the position that the “flaws in details” of

the INF treaty, such as Soviet capability to re-target intermediate-range weapons against the United States, can only be countered by reaching the *next* deal, the so-called START arrangements on strategic arms. That, in turn, implies decapitation of the American SDI program.

The recent history of arms control discussions underscores the point. When Reagan met Gorbachov in Reykjavik in October 1986, Europeans were shocked by Reagan’s acquiescence in what has since come to be known as the first zero-option: elimination of INF missiles of the longer range. By the time the actual INF treaty was signed in Washington, on Dec. 8, 1987, the agreement was for the double-zero option: elimination of INF of both longer and shorter range. As of this writing, the simply minimum next agreement being mooted is the triple-zero option, of which there are various versions, but all of which amount to an agreement to remove *short-range* missiles (under 500 kilometers range).

But no sooner is this mooted, than the appeasers’ lobbies in the Socialist International and related institutions go on to the next step. In an interview with the *Der Spiegel* weekly, West German Social Democratic ideologue Egon Bahr argued that one cannot stop at simply missiles, but must go on to launchers and other systems, particularly because many weapon systems are “dual-capable,” able to launch both nuclear and conventional systems. This implies yet a further widening of the “arms control process.”

Says Bahr: “Much more dangerous than these short-range weapons are, in case of conflict, tactical nuclear weapons, battlefield weapons like artillery that can fire conventional and nuclear ammunition alike. Several thousand of them are posted far forward.”

According to Bahr’s office, he has concluded meetings with East German Central Committee member Herman Axen that discussed an arms control agenda that included “linkage between conventional and nuclear forces.”

The crux of the conventional issue, is that it is inextricably linked to European-American *decoupling*, since it puts onto the agenda American troop withdrawal from Europe. It is widely expected in Europe, that Gorbachov will soon make his long-awaited proposal for the withdrawal of Soviet divisions from Europe. As *EIR* has documented, this would be, on the ground, part of a *reorganization* of Soviet forces, away from cumbersome and relatively ineffective division-strength units, toward more mobile and strike-force-capable brigade-strength units. In the media, however, it would be portrayed as a big “disarmament” initiative, and would further catalyze the process of U.S. withdrawal from Europe.

As pro-American European strategists see it, the emerging formula is, “First the nukes and then the troops.” As a total denuclearization of Europe unfolds, so this viewpoint holds, the liberal American establishment would whip up a sentiment in the American population that “our boys are unprotected,” and should be “brought home.”

Hence, arms control, the various zero-options, and American departure from Europe, are all one process.