

Invoking 'peace in our time,' Bush adopts Kissinger plan

by William Jones

In a speech delivered at Texas A&M University on May 12, President George Bush announced a reversal of 40 years of U.S. strategic doctrine and officially committed the United States to the policy delineated several months ago by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. After a prelude of paeans to the success of the last 40 years of "containment strategy," Bush announced, "We are approaching the conclusion of an historic postwar struggle between two visions—one of tyranny and conflict, and one of democracy and freedom." Attesting that his goal was "more ambitious than any of my predecessors might have thought possible," Bush then declared that he was going "beyond containment" toward the ultimate objective—"to welcome the Soviet Union back into the world order."

"Make no mistake," exclaimed the President, "a new breeze is blowing across the steppes and cities of the Soviet Union. . . . Once again, it is a time for peace."

Clothed in rhetoric which was undoubtedly meant to outshine the more euphoric phases of President Reagan's post-Reykjavik utterances, but delivered in the characteristically clumsy, somewhat nervous, style of the Bush presidency, the speech fell flat as a media eye-catcher. But its content made it clear that the Bush administration has decided to travel the slippery slope of appeasement policies and has wholeheartedly embraced the "end of the cold war" illusions of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, with the policy-content authored by Kissinger.

Kissinger laid out his strategy several months ago in a leak to the *Washington Post*. There he indicated that the United States should agree to recognize Eastern Europe as primarily Soviet turf, in exchange for a Soviet pledge to refrain from military intervention in the East European satellite states. After Secretary of State James Baker indicated

in a March 27 interview with the *New York Times* that the Bush administration was seriously considering the Kissinger proposals, the plan was heavily attacked as a "New Yalta" sellout in the United States and Western Europe. Kissinger then deftly sought to transform it—nominally—into its opposite, in a syndicated column titled "Reversing Yalta." The Kissinger stigma has been removed from the policy—or so Bush hopes—but the policy itself is solidly in place.

Texas A&M was symbolically chosen as the place for the Bush speech, since it is the alma mater of Alfred Kotzebue, the first American soldier to shake hands with a Soviet soldier when the two armies met on the banks of the Elbe River in 1945—a fact which was duly emphasized by Bush in his speech. "Once again we are ready to extend our hand. Once again, we are ready for a hand in return. Once again, it is a time for peace," Bush said, echoing the sentiments of an umbrella-carrying prime minister some 50 years ago.

Open skies, open trade

Bush also resurrected a policy from the Eisenhower period called the "Open Skies," which would allow unarmed aircraft from the United and the Soviet Union (surveillance flights, complementing satellites, etc.) to fly over the territory of the other country, thus opening up military activities to regular scrutiny. Perhaps the most dramatic policy reversal in the Bush speech was the promise to work with Congress to issue a temporary waiver of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, "opening the way to extending Most Favored Nation trade status to the Soviet Union"—on condition that Moscow "codify its emigration laws in accord with international standards." Bush also called on the Soviets to 1) reduce their overall troop levels; 2) abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine, which justifies Soviet armed intervention in the satellite countries

under the banner of “proletarian internationalism”; 3) collaborate on resolving regional disputes; 4) achieve a lasting pluralism and respect for human rights; and 5) work together on the issues of terrorism, drugs, and the environment.

Baker’s trip to Moscow

The Bush speech was strategically placed at the end of the talks held between Secretary of State James Baker III and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, at which the nuts and bolts of the new policy were being worked out. Before leaving for his Moscow rendezvous, to consummate the New Yalta relationship with the Muscovites, Baker assured credulous conservative supporters at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington that the Bush administration was not prepared to enter into a “condominium” with the Soviets. Baker’s talks with Shevardnadze and a three-and-a-half hour discussion with Gorbachov laid the practical basis for the new symbiosis.

In what was portrayed as a “vintage Gorbachov” surprise attack, Baker was allegedly caught off guard by the Soviet leader’s proposal to unilaterally withdraw 500 short-range nuclear missiles (out of a total of some 10,000) and a mutual troop reduction of 1 million soldiers. Gorbachov called on Baker to let NATO begin immediate negotiations with the Warsaw Pact for mutual reductions in short-range nuclear weapons. Baker rejected the call for talks, which seemed intended to upstage him on his first visit to the Soviet Union. The secretary of state, reportedly somewhat taken aback by Gorbachov’s heavy emphasis on arms control issues, commented that the move was “a good step, but a small step . . . toward a more equal balance in Europe.” Baker said that the United States has already been urging the Soviets to unilaterally reduce its short-range nuclear force advantage in Europe before the issue can become a subject for negotiations.

In addition, the Soviets have said that they will reduce their tanks in Eastern Europe and the European part of the Soviet Union by 40,000, their combat vehicles in Europe by 42,000, and their artillery by 46,000. The offers were aimed to strengthen the hand of Shevardnadze, as he travels to Bonn to meet with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, while Baker trots off to Brussels to explain the agreements to his NATO allies.

Soviet demands will intensify

Whatever surprises—real or fictitious—may be in store for the administration, the Bush policy is clearly aimed at achieving a withdrawal of a significant portion of U.S. military forces from Western Europe, for budgetary and other reasons. If the Gorbachov initiative lightens the load politically for the Bush administration, so much the better, reasons the State Department. But as there is no end to the demands for appeasement for those who have shown themselves willing to appease, so Soviet pressure on the Bush administration for more and more concessions will be unrelenting. Com-

menting that the resumption of strategic arms talks in June was an important step on the part of the Bush administration, after a six-month hiatus during the “policy review,” Shevardnadze warned that the administration must “ascend new heights” in superpower relations beyond the accomplishments of the Reagan administration. “It would be extremely dangerous to rest on the laurels of what has already been achieved,” Shevardnadze said.

For the time being at any rate, the condominium is in place. Shevardnadze said that he and Baker had developed “good personal relations” and that both men hope to make summit meetings a “key element” in the U.S.-Soviet relationship, a “normal political phenomenon without the veneer of sensationalism.” He said that he agrees with Baker that the two of them should meet three or four times a year, “or more often if need be.” Baker said he would also discuss the possibility of a summit meeting between Gorbachov and President Bush, when he meets with Shevardnadze in New York in September.

One of the prerequisites for Moscow’s remaining in the “condominium” will be a U.S. retreat from the Strategic Defense Initiative. Simultaneous with the talks on strategic arms limitation, there will be companion Defense and Space Talks. Bush is not quite prepared to eliminate the SDI outright—the most popular defense program of his popular predecessor. That would undoubtedly set off a storm of opposition. But budget cuts and program limitations could well serve to whittle down any remaining opposition to the New Yalta sellout.

On May 11, the same day that Bush gave his Texas A&M speech, Lt. Gen. George L. Monahan, who replaced Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson as the head of the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, announced that the administration was delaying development of key parts of the Reagan defense plan for two years, while it studies a proposal for deploying thousands of small rockets in orbit. The continuation of the Reagan program would violate the 1972 ABM Treaty, which Moscow holds as a *sine qua non* of U.S.-Soviet relations.

So far, life is cozy in the condominium. Moscow can continue to play its waiting game. As the U.S. continues its slide down the slippery slope of appeasement policies, Moscow maneuvers and schemes to achieve its ultimate goal—the elimination of the U.S. military presence on the European continent. Moscow can promise the Sun and the Moon to achieve that goal, because once the troops and missiles and tanks are gone, no possible combination of forces will be able to bring them back. Soviet tanks will not have to move across the Elbe to gain physical control of Western Europe. The sheer magnitude of raw Soviet military might will be enough to hold the Europeans—East and West—within the bounds of Gorbachov’s “common European house,” wherever those Soviet troops might happen to be stationed.

And yet in the immediate aftermath of the Bush speech, there are very few who dare call it treason.