

Moscow warns SALT is worthless if NATO 'modernizes'

Top Soviet leaders have warned that a NATO decision to go for an arms buildup in Western Europe would render the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) meaningless as the arms control hallmark of U.S.-Soviet detente.

This marked hardening of Moscow's line comes not only from military spokesmen, but also from leaders of the moderate faction around President Leonid Brezhnev, which has staked its political identity on the pursuit of detente.

Vadim Zagladin, a Soviet Central Committee official, told the Italian Communist Party daily *L'Unita* Oct. 23 that the stationing of 600 new American Pershing-II and cruise missiles on European soil would substantially change the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance and violate the SALT II treaty. The missiles would for the first time be capable of reaching Soviet territory from Western Europe, and therefore Moscow views them as "strategic" weapons—roughly equivalent in military effect to a Soviet deployment of missiles in Cuba.

Zagladin and other Soviet spokesmen, including Defense Minister Dmitrii Ustinov and members of the Soviet General Staff, warned that the U.S.S.R. is prepared to take countermeasures and expects that danger of war to increase if the NATO modernization program takes place.

Ustinov, in an Oct. 25 *Pravda* article excerpted here, located the missile deployment as only one aspect of a global military build-up by the United States in every region of the world. It is the totality of the American strategic posture, involving multitudinous scenarios for "theater nuclear conflict," to which Moscow's tough stance is an answer.

Brezhnev himself delivered a tough speech Oct. 26, warning that Washington's strategic plans for the Third World, especially the dispatch of a "strike force" anywhere around the globe, would "create new dangerous hot spots, enlarge existing ones, and lead to a worldwide deterioration."

Soviet shift

Although Moscow has repeatedly criticized the proposed NATO modernization plans, as it denounced plans in the past for production and deployment of the

"neutron bomb" in Western Europe, never before has this been branded a violation of the SALT II treaty.

The shift followed two weeks after the negotiating offers made by Brezhnev in an Oct. 6 speech in East Berlin, when the Soviets found Western responses grossly inadequate. The Soviet president announced a unilateral withdrawal of 20,000 Soviet troops and 1,000 tanks from East Germany, and offered to open up talks with the NATO countries on strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, including the Russian SS-20 missiles.

Shortly after Brezhnev made his offer, unidentified high-level Kremlin officials gave an interview to the *Washington Post* Oct. 10, saying that the Soviet leaders were "dismayed" at the U.S. reaction. President Carter and his administration dismissed the Soviet proposals as intended to prevent NATO from going ahead with its modernization plans, and as an attempt to split the NATO alliance. According to the *Washington Post*, the senior Soviet officials said that Brezhnev made his offers only after overcoming strong opposition from those in the Soviet leadership who viewed his move as an unwarranted concession to the West.

Now Brezhnev's policies are on the line. The Soviet Union's commitment to seeking detente with the West may be overthrown in favor of the belief that only full-scale preparation for war will ensure the U.S.S.R.'s security. This is the reality of Soviet strategic thinking, which neither "pro" nor "con" sides in Washington's debate over SALT address.

"Limited Nuclear War"

Moscow sees deployment of the 600 medium-range nuclear missiles as a NATO step towards the fantastical strategy of "limited nuclear war" favored by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, and others of their Anglo-American "geopolitical" school. A. Bovin, the top foreign commentator for the Soviet government daily *Izvestia* and a spokesman for Brezhnev's detente policy, wrote in an Oct. 20 article (see below) that the European missile deployment belongs strictly to the "limited war" doctrine.

Leaders in the West German government, whose approval of the NATO modernization plan is required

for the deployment of the new missiles, similarly view the real issue as the "limited nuclear war" doctrine, a doctrine they emphatically reject. The disarmament spokesman of West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's party said this month that "any [Soviet] counterattack [in Europe] would inevitably be accompanied by a counterattack against the North American continent."

Criticism of Bonn

Yet despite Moscow's awareness of Bonn's commitment to a real detente in Europe—a commitment typified by the 1978 Schmidt-Brezhnev agreements that included both military detente moves and a 25-year economic cooperation program—the Soviets charge that Bonn is playing games with the dangerous NATO doctrines behind the 600-missile plan. Schmidt has repeatedly said that the NATO meeting in December should adopt a decision to begin the production of the new missiles, but should not deploy them unless negotiations with the Warsaw Pact on weapons reduction in Europe fail. Further, Schmidt insists that if the U.S. Senate does not ratify the SALT II treaty, West Germany will refuse to accept the NATO modernization at all.

Commentator Bovin in *Izvestia* treated the West German response to Brezhnev's proposals as better than the American one, but far from adequate.

In a domestic radio broadcast Oct. 16, Bovin went further, attacking as "pure sophistry" the idea that NATO might decide to produce the new weapons but

not station them. He attributed this suggestion to Social Democratic Party official Egon Bahr, without mentioning that Schmidt and Apel, too, had drawn this specious distinction.

The generals speak

The fare offered up on Soviet domestic TV and radio over the past week was still stronger testimony of the chilling mood in Moscow. A parade of top brass, past and present, appeared before Soviet viewers to explain that things are getting worse.

On an Oct. 20 program, Lieutenant General Chervov from the General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces said that if NATO deploys the 600 rockets, "the approximate parity between [NATO and the Warsaw Pact] in Europe will doubtlessly be upset in favor of NATO. That will mean a circumvention of the treaty between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. In such conditions our country, like any other one, would have to take necessary measures to ensure its security."

On Oct. 17, retired Marshall Vasilii Chuikov, hero of the battle of Stalingrad during World War II, appeared on a national television program to say how NATO policies look "to me, a military man, who went with the troops from Stalingrad to Berlin." Evoking powerful images of 40 years ago, Chuikov predicted the much worse horror of nuclear combat if NATO's "modernization" is carried to its natural conclusion.

—Rachel Douglas
and Susan Welsh

Using a peace treaty to prepare for war

Following Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev's Oct. 5 offer of substantial disarmament steps on the part of Warsaw Pact forces, President Carter set the standard for a spate of proposals linking Senate ratification of the SALT II treaty to NATO "modernization" in Europe, a policy which the Soviets are now denouncing as preparation for "theater-limited" nuclear war on the continent. At an Oct. 9 press conference, Carter argued:

"Our allies and we are carefully assessing the significance of President Brezhnev's statement. However I'd like to point out that what he's offering, in effect, is to continue their own rate of modernization as it has been, provided we don't modernize at all.

"They have had actual reduction in launchers the last few years. They've been replacing their old SS-4's and SS-5's with the SS-20, not on a one-for-one basis; the old missiles only had one warhead. The SS-20 has a much greater range. ... They have also replaced all older airplanes with the Backfire bomber.

So it's not quite as constructive a proposal as at first blush it seems to be. I think it's an effort designed to disarm the willingness or eagerness of our allies adequately to defend themselves. In my judgment the decision ought to be made to modernize the Western allies' military strength and then negotiate with a full commitment and determination mutually to lower armaments on both sides. ...

"I might point out that Chancellor Schmidt said, I believe yesterday or the day before, that a prerequisite to a decision by our NATO allies to take these steps, which he considers to be vital for the security of NATO, is the passage of SALT II."

Henry Kissinger, on the same day that Carter spoke, told the American Bankers Association convention in New Orleans that Brezhnev's speech was "designed to split our allies from the United States."

For this reason, he said, the strategic arms limitation treaty must be coupled with "significant increases" in U.S. military spending.