

Create a strategic balance in Europe!

A Western European expert contributes an analysis of Olof Palme's "nuclear-free zone" proposal.

In spite of immense efforts of the Soviet leadership, in spite of fireworks from the department of the KGB responsible for disinformation, in spite of infiltration of church organizations and the real, idealistic peace movement, the violent propaganda battle against NATO arms modernization has been lost. Gradually, the Kremlin is adjusting to the fact that, after the re-election of President Reagan, there will be no reason to expect a capitulation of the West on the issue of the American medium-range missiles.

So, what is one to do with the pumped-up peace movement, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany? The peace movement will need new, powerful, and catchy targets, because there is a tendency in the peace movement to increasingly demand "disarmament in the East and West." But that is just what Moscow can not permit to occur. It is only the West that should disarm, because that is the only way—in Moscow's view of the situation—that a military-technological balance can be re-established.

The relatively good reception accorded the peace slogans of creating a "nuclear-free zone of cities and communities" encourages the propaganda-managers in the Kremlin to dig out an old, dusty and previously not that energizing project, to link it up with some new ideas, and coin it as the new grand design of the grand peace movement:

Create a nuclear-free zone in Mitteleuropa.

With the appropriate packaging, this sort of project can seduce a number of advocates, primarily because of the suggestive association of two ideas that can be made attractive to those who really want peace:

- the idea that a nuclear-free zone would be selectively spared the horrors of a holocaust if war occurred. I.e., the idea that if one has not nuclear weapons in the region where one lives, none will be shot into that region.
- the idea that a nuclear-free zone in Mitteleuropa is a just cause to fight for, because regions in East and West Europe would be included.

The West must be prepared for a propaganda campaign with this new argumentative packaging. We have heard it all before, but never with such intensity and concentration, because in the past the chief issue was to prevent the dislocation of Pershing II and cruise missiles.

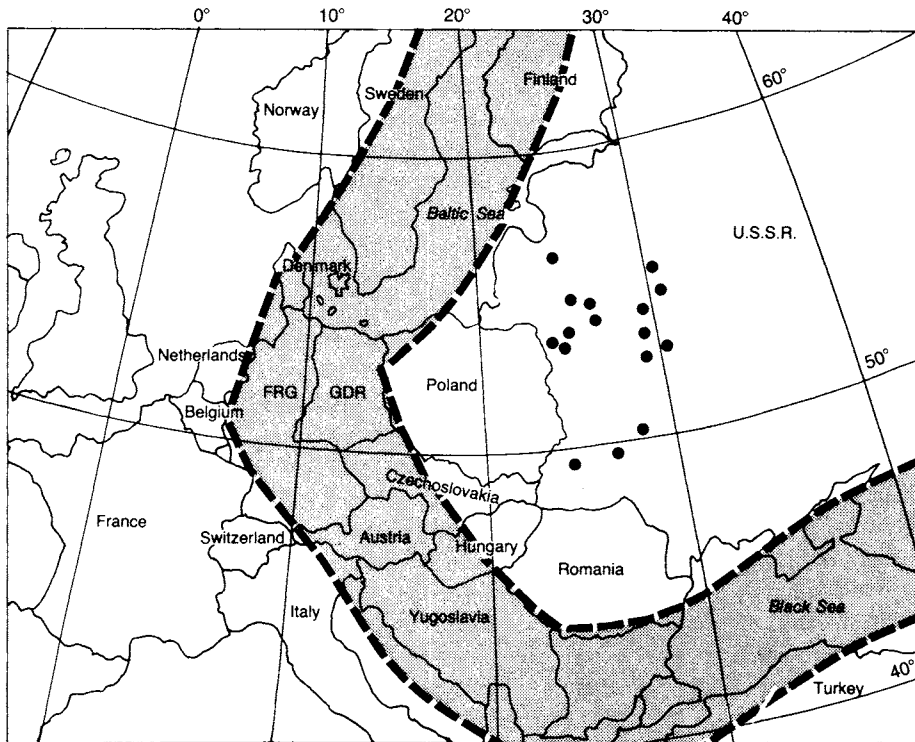
As always, Kremlin propaganda relies on the lack of information available to the simple "man on the street," and relies just as strongly on the nearly desperate willingness of the better-informed to believe anything with which the fear of the horror of nuclear war can be mitigated. In anticipation of this wave of influence peddling, it is appropriate to examine the proposals for a nuclear-free zone more closely.

History of the 'nuclear-free zone'

The former Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki was the first to propose such a plan, in 1957, in which Poland, the German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.) and the Federal Republic of Germany would be included in such a nuclear-free zone. That proposal even seemed unrealistic to the Soviets—after all, their own nuclear armed forces were just being built, and so they only supported the plan half-heartedly. In 1963, the Finnish president Udo K. Kekkonen proposed a drastically reduced plan, encompassing basically Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, but already included the notable feature of leaving out the Kola Peninsula, chock-full of weapons by that time, and likewise contained no satisfactory proposals for the Baltic areas. In the phase of "détente," i.e., between 1970-1980, nuclear-free zone ideas were rather quiescent. It was only in 1979, following the famous Two-Track Resolution of NATO, that Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme came forward in public with a new proposal.

Palme proposed a 150-kilometer strip, running parallel to the border between East and West Germany, on each side of the border, as an area in which location and storage of nuclear weapons would be forbidden. A lot of ink has been spilled over his plan, numerous rousing speeches were held, but support from the Soviet side has been lackadaisical. The Kremlin's calculations have been based on their expectations that they would succeed in politically preventing the Pershing II/cruise modernization in the West.

But before we look into the reasons for this half-hearted Soviet support, we have to examine what the level of information about the Soviet SS-20 available in the West has been. The Soviet SS-20, in contrast to the American Pershing II, which is always the star of the show in peace and disarmament discussions, has always been given short shrift. That our leftist peace researchers and our peace movement do not



Military District 6: Carpathia

Drogobits 23.50E–49.35 N
 Ternopol 26.60E–49.57 N

Military District 3: Kiev

Zhitomir 28.67 E–50.27 N
 Kazhitin 28.83 E–49.72 N

Military District 4: White Russia (Byelorussia)

Mogilyov 29.23 E–53.90 N
 Bobruisk 29.23 E–53.15 N
 Shtuchka 25.22 E–56.63 N
 Baranovich 25.04 E–53.13 N
 Lida 25.30 E–53.88 N
 Molodetsno 26.82 E–54.32 N
 Postavy 26.83 E–55.12 N
 Polotsk 29.70 E–52.77 N
 Vitebsk 30.18 E–55.20 N
 Orsha 30.40 E–54.50 N
 Valkovysk 24.47 E–53.12 N
 Borisov 28.50 E–54.25 N
 Zlobin 30.05 E–52.90 N

SS-20 regiments threatening Western Europe and the proposed nuclear-free zone

The dots indicate the garrison cities of the 17 SS-20 regiments which directly threaten Western Europe. The actual firing-sites are located within a circumference of about 30 kilometers around the city. Since the range of the SS-20s is 5,000 kilometers, the ten regiments located in the military district of the Ural mountains (five east and five west—not marked on the map) are also capable of reaching Western Europe. The map contains the longitude/latitude coordinates of the SS-20 sites, and shows the sanctuary belt representing the nuclear-free zone around these sites.

like to talk about Soviet SS-20s is understandable, because, for them, Soviet missiles are “peace missiles,” as we read every day in *Pravda*, or other papers in the East bloc. But that advocates of the NATO-modernization resolutions know so horrifyingly little about Soviet medium-range missiles has caused considerable consternation among experts. That goes for numerous parliamentary deputies in the ruling West German Christian Democratic/Christian Social Union parties as well—people who at least have the potential to be better informed.

First, a few words on the military organization of this new weapon system.

Missiles cannot be fired without special troops. For that reason, the Soviet Union developed a new branch of its armed services, beginning in 1961, known as the “Strategic Rocket Troops.” These are elite troops, soldiers serve for six years, and obtain a special technical training. As is the case in the Red Army as a whole, or in the Navy or Air Force, all tasks associated with special responsibility are carried out by officers. NCOs and lower-rank officers command only during drill or maneuvers. For this reason, the ratio of officers to

soliders in the Rocket Troops is higher than that in the other services. An additional characteristic of these Rocket Troops, one particularly important for the internal structure of organization, consists in the fact that nuclear warheads are stored apart from other munitions, most of the time 10 km distant from the actual firing position. They are stored in specially constructed, deep bunkers, and are guarded by a specially trained corps of the KGB, which is subordinate to the respective regimental commander. KGB soldiers transport and mount (in case of war) the nuclear warheads. The Rocket Troops always exercise with equivalent-weight warhead-dummies.

For every three launchers (detachment), there is one command vehicle (fire-control command), and for every command vehicle there are always two “controllers” of KGB troops, in addition to the technical officers. Thus, in the strict sense, normal officers of the Rocket Troops, who have all received an artillery-officers’ training, never come in contact with nuclear munitions.

Information gathered by Western photo-reconnaissance satellites for years has shown that the organizational unity of

the SS-20 troops always consists of nine launchers, corresponding to a regiment in the normal army hierarchy. The organization of such a regiment is:

1 launcher (battery) with 36 men

3 launchers (detachment) with 108 men

9 launchers (regiment) with 472 men

Included in the regiment are:

KGB Battalion with 300 men, incl. officers

Radar and communications

Battalion with 300 men, incl. officers

Transport Battalion with 300 men, incl. officers

Maintenance Company with 100 men

Sanitation squad with 20 men

That gives a regimental strength of about 2,450 soldiers and officers.

Three regiments form a brigade. The headquarters of the brigade is located generally between the headquarters of the regiments, and the bunkers of nuclear munitions are generally located nearby. Most likely, a brigade headquarters is also the center for communications and intelligence relays, inclusive of military satellite communications. The next unit level—the army—is formed out of two brigades. The army exercises tactical-operational leadership, but not the selection of targets, which is under the command prerogative of the next higher unit, the Army Group, or Front.

Up to the middle of 1983, 378 launcher positions, i.e., 42 regiments, were known in the West, distributed over the Soviet Union and grouped around three focal points. If the sketch provided of the troop strengths is correct, then the total strength of SS-20 troops would be about 103,000 officers and soldiers. Together with the 350,000 men estimated by the Institute for Strategic Studies in London for the ICBM troops in 1980, with the inclusion of the SS-29 troops since 1983, we reach a comprehensive figure of 450,000 Rocket Troops (cf. Military Balance, IISS, 1983/84).

Western observers did not actually expect, in view of the political battles in the West around the NATO modernization resolutions, that the Soviets would set up more than 42 SS-20 regiments. But since so many of the dislocation sites of the SS-20 have become known in the West, the Soviet leadership has drawn the only appropriate conclusion. Since the spring of 1984, new SS-20 sites have been surveyed and constructed, in order to evade the threat of the Pershing II and cruise rapidly (in case of war).

There are no pictures of the SS-20 in the West; they were never rolled over Red Square in military parades. Understandably, specialists in the West have been tempted to speculate and to “reconstruct” the SS-20. Recently, a professor at the University of Munich published a “reliable reconstruction” in a German monthly magazine, one which represents a mixture of solid and fluid rocket technologies. But this professor, too, has never seen a photograph or a drawing, so in conclusion of his argument he poses the question of “Whether there even is such a thing?” Since he poses the

question as if the SS-20 were the only Soviet missile that the West has never seen, we have to put the question: Where has he ever seen photos of the S-17, SS-18, or SS-19? Naturally, the German weekly magazine, *Der Spiegel*, enthusiastically picked up the issue of the existence of the SS-20, and argued that the SS-20 was invented in the West to provide an excuse for NATO’s own armaments decisions.

Of course, there is no precise list of dislocation sites of the SS-20 even in the specialized literature. But over the past eight years, individual sites have been identified, mostly in scattered reports. With some detailed detective work, these individual reports can be collected. It is then possible to fill in the holes in the information provided by applying logistical considerations, roads, railroad connections, brigade and regimental dispositions, stationing in cities in which there are no motorized divisions, tank, artillery, or air-transport divisions. It is also useful to know that the Strategic Rocket Troops are subordinated to the commanders of the military districts in peacetime, particularly with respect to their logistical supplies. The list provided on the accompanying map of 17 SS-20 regiments is identified geographically only in terms of the “garrison-cities,” and the actual firing-sites are located within a circumference of about 30 km around the city.

Let us return to the notion of a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe. At the end of 1982, the Soviet Union announced its plan for such a zone of peace. This zone is identified in the attached map. It covers half of Sweden, half of Finland, all of the G.D.R., almost all of the Federal Republic of Germany, the western part of Czechoslovakia, half of Austria, all of Yugoslavia, Hungary and Bulgaria, as well as the western part of Turkey. Poland and Romania are left out of the zone.

Now, is that not a really just proposal?

To make the proposal somewhat clearer, only 17 of the 42 SS-20 regiments have been entered on the map, those stationed in the western part of the Soviet Union, and within the range of the Pershing II. Not entered on the map are the 10 regiments in the military district of the Ural mountains (5 west and 5 east of the mountain chain)—these too, however, are perfectly capable of reaching Western Europe. Other regiments not marked on the map are the 15 along the Chinese-Soviet border, which do not need to be considered in relation to a quick assault against Central Europe.

This representation of the real situation demonstrates with brutal clarity what the Kremlin means when it talks about a “real balance of forces” in Europe.

But what good does that do? The peace researchers, together with West German Social Democratic Party politician Lafontaine, will continued to insist that true peace in Europe lies in the one-sided disarmament of the West. Naturally, that would also be the fulfillment of the desires of the well-known author and peace propagator Graham Greene (in an interview with the London *Observer*): “I would rather end my days in the Gulag than in California.”