

## Gorbachov kindly offers to freeze Soviet superiority

by Konstantin George

On April 7, Easter Sunday, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov declared a "moratorium" until November on further stationing of intermediate-range mobile missiles. Within the same time frame, Gorbachov also "froze" Soviet deployment of short- and medium-range missiles in Eastern Europe. These latter missile types form the so-called "countermeasures" to the U.S. Pershing II and cruise missile deployments in Western Europe.

The Reagan White House immediately rejected the insult, saying that the only thing the "offer" would freeze would be overwhelming "Soviet superiority."

The moratorium declaration and the platitudes it carried were printed by *Pravda* that Sunday, the "peace-loving" occasion of Palm Sunday on the Russian Orthodox calendar. Gorbachov also called on the United States to suspend its missile-deployment program, implicitly holding out the temptation of Soviet reduction in missiles pointed at Europe.

The Soviet leader, employing the language of an ultimatum, also demanded a "moratorium for the duration of the Geneva talks on development, including research, testing, and deployment of space based weapons."

The Gorbachov "moratorium" is intended as the first move in a well-calculated campaign of "peace initiatives" and "arms reduction offers" designed to break Western European support for the American program of laser-technology missile defense, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). It thus inaugurates the continuation of the cardinal Soviet policy goal, to effect a rupture between the United States and Western Europe.

The Soviet ploy, to unfold over coming weeks and months, is quite simple and crude: Exercises of brute power coupled with ever more "enticing" offers of reduction in the array of Soviet nuclear hardware targeting Western Europe. The

United States will reject them, but Europe, if she does not, will gradually strategically decouple from the United States.

The announcement was timed with the "Easter Marches" of the Western European "peace movement," and designed to feed an escalated "anti-Star Wars" offensive by the Western European foreign ministries—the "Foggy Bottoms" of Europe—and the neutralist Socialist International's hard-core opponents of the SDI. This escalation began with the March 15 speech by British Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, condemning the SDI.

Following that speech, the Australian government rejected participation in the SDI, turning down Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's offer. The Danish parliament, in a majority vote, bound the government to reject SDI participation. West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher followed Howe with his own blast at participation in the SDI, written as an article in his ministry's newsletter. His Free Democrats, together with Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, form the coalition government in Bonn.

### **An ultimatum by any other name. . .**

When the cold military facts are examined, the Gorbachov "offer" proves to be nothing but an ultimatum demanding that overwhelming Soviet military superiority be institutionalized. If this goal can be politically achieved, then the Kremlin can effect world domination, including imperial suzerainty over all of Europe, by 1988's 1,000th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church.

What exactly is Gorbachov "freezing"? A Soviet superiority of not 10 to 1, but precisely 4,992 to 134!

The Soviets themselves never state how many missiles they have stationed. But the Soviet Union, minimally, by confirmed Western intelligence count, has 414 SS-20 mobile

launchers. Launchers are not missiles; each launcher has—again by minimal Western intelligence estimates—*four* missiles. These can be fired in the space of a few hours on the first day of war. But, missiles are not warheads. Each missile has *three* warheads. Thus,  $414 \times 3 = 1,242$  warheads in the first round, and, otherwise, a total of  $1,664 \times 3 = 4,992$  warheads. Remember, the range of an SS-20 is 5,500 kilometers.

This staggering total would be “frozen” against a U.S. total of 54 Pershing II and 80 ground-based cruise missiles now stationed in Western Europe. The U.S. grand total is not only 134 launchers, but, given no reload missiles, 134 missiles, and, with only one warhead each, 134 warheads. Since Jan. 1, 1984, the Soviet Union has deployed 54 SS-20 launchers (36 of them since June 1, 1984), whose warhead total alone is more than the entirety of the U.S. missile inventory in Western Europe.

The Soviet Union, as the Pentagon’s annual report, *Soviet Military Power*, states, has also developed an improved version of the SS-20, dubbed the SS-X-28, which has greater accuracy.

Gorbachov has generously offered to “freeze” the so-called Soviet “countermeasures” to the stationing of U.S. missiles. These “countermeasures,” announced in the fall of 1983 by Yuri Andropov, comprised the stationing of three types of highly accurate short- and medium-range missiles with the Soviet forces in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the western U.S.S.R. They are: the SS-21 (range 120 km = 70 miles); the SS-23 (500 km = 325 miles); the SS-22 (1,000 km = 625 miles). In short order, by the fall of 1984, these “countermeasures” were deployed with the Soviet armies stationed in all of the states named.

The time-frame of the deployment alone destroys the “countermeasures” claim. Three new types of missiles cannot be operationally deployed overnight. They were clearly researched and developed before any Pershing-stationing decision occurred—and in serial production long before any Pershing ever arrived in Europe. Not to mention that the missile regiments of the Soviet army were thoroughly trained to operate and maintain these new weapons before Andropov ever opened his mouth to say: “countermeasures.”

Thus, if not even one SS-20 existed, the Soviets have by now stationed a minimum of 288 SS-22 launchers, with a 1,000-km range capable of blanket bombardment of all important areas in Western Europe, including all of Germany and Scandinavia, and most of France, Italy and Britain. The SS-22s are broken down as follows; 72 in East Germany, 36 each in Czechoslovakia, and at least 144 with the Soviet forces in the western U.S.S.R., including the area which used to be East Prussia. The SS-22 arsenal alone is more than double the total of Pershing IIs and cruise missiles. Add to this hundreds of SS-23s and SS-21s stationed with the Soviet forces in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, and both the insult and the ultimatum contained in Gorbachov’s “moratorium offer” become very clear.

Gorbachov is the cheating card shark who just won the pot, and now demands an end to the game.

### **Split response today, split alliance tomorrow**

The White House’s firm rejection of the Gorbachov “offer” was not matched by and large by the European allies. The only other rejection was delivered by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, speaking in Singapore: “The consequences of such a freeze would not be to achieve balance, which is of course what we seek, but enormous Soviet superiority.” But British solidarity with an ally, even in the best of times, is always rather double-edged. Thatcher took the occasion to reiterate her “support” for “the SDI *research* program,” reflecting the British posture of “research only”—no deployment. Thatcher, perhaps casting a signal to the Soviets concerning a future phase of the Gorbachov “peace-initiative” campaign, stressed the importance of “verification” in arms-control agreements: “The essence of any agreement in the arms sphere is verification.”

Sir Geoffrey Howe on his visit to East Berlin—the first ever by a British foreign secretary—more openly deviated from the U.S. position, saying: “We shall study it carefully to see whether it can make a contribution towards achievement of the objective of truly balanced and verifiable reductions in those weapons.”

The West German government, reflecting the blackmail power of Genscher and heavy Soviet threats, formally declared it had nothing to say on the matter. Chancellory spokesman Peter Bönisch declared: “It is our principle not to give statements which concern the bilateral dialogue and the strategic dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union.” Bonn, with Genscher “quarterbacking,” received the kick-off, punted on the 1st down, and then left the field.

### **Socialists ‘second’ Gorbachov**

The Brandt-Palme wing of the Socialist International immediately and heartily endorsed Gorbachov’s “offer.” This coordination between Moscow and the West German Social Democrats (SPD), the British Labour Party and Social Democratic Party, and other social democracies in Europe is ugly, but no surprise.

From the British Socialists, Shadow Foreign Secretary Denis Healey spoke out April 8 on BBC, attacking the “knee-jerk negatives” of Reagan and Thatcher, while hailing Gorbachov: “I think it’s a good offer and I think we should take it up.” Radio Moscow, monitored that same day, lost no time in broadcasting these quotes. British Labour Party Chairman Neil Kinnock also hailed the “offer,” attacking Thatcher’s rejection: “It is pathetic that Mrs. Thatcher has just trailed along behind the White House.”

West German SPD spokesman Horst Ehmke outdid them all by calling the Gorbachov statement “a signal in the right direction. A mutual freeze on both the U.S. and the Soviet side is exactly what is needed to gain time. . . .”

Yes, Herr Ehmke, but for whom?