

# Gorbachov goes west, in a Paris foray designed to sink Geneva talks

by Konstantin George

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov has just concluded a four-day trip to France, his first visit to a Western nation since his installation as Party general secretary last March. The visit began on Oct. 2, when Gorbachov was received at Orly Airport by French President François Mitterrand with red-carpet treatment. During his stay, Gorbachov held three separate meetings with Mitterrand, addressed the foreign-policy committees of both chambers of the French Parliament—the National Assembly, and the Senate—had separate meetings with French opposition leaders, led by Jacques Chirac, head of the “Gaullist” RPR party, and—most interesting of all—had talks with former French Prime Minister Raymond Barre.

Barre is a leader of the French section of the Trilateral Commission, a close colleague of Henry Kissinger, and of leading Trilateral Commission figures who dominated the Carter administration. In six months France will be holding parliamentary elections, and most observers expect that the opposition to Mitterrand’s Socialist Party will win. Moscow’s hope in that situation is that Raymond Barre would dominate post-Socialist France.

This visit was not Gorbachov’s first to France. He and his wife had been there in a “private” capacity 20 years earlier, for an extensive visit. During that stay, they had been guests of Jacques Doumeng, the “French Armand Hammer,” old friend of the Gorbachovs, and financier of the French Communist Party, with his own private channels and friends from Gorbachov on down in the Kremlin. Under Gorbachov’s rule, France—and Doumeng personally as boss of the huge agriculture export firm Interagra—has been awarded huge Soviet contracts. The latest example, covered elsewhere in this issue of *EIR* (p. 13), is a Doumeng-Gorbachov-engineered sale to Russia of 175,000 tons of European Community surplus beef (out of France) at prices 10% of retail cost in any European supermarket.

Gorbachov’s talks with Mitterrand focused, according to Radio Moscow, on “key international and regional issues,” as well as bilateral Soviet-French matters. In the context of a massive loss of American influence in the entire Mediterranean and Middle East, which dramatically escalated following President Reagan’s unparalleled strategic blunder in endorsing the Israeli bombing of Tunisia, the phrase “key international and regional issues” may be key-and-code for

talks on redrawing the map of the region.

If Gorbachov made headway in his talks in France, it would have been on such issues, and on economic deals with Moscow. Gorbachov’s “offer” to hold disarmament talks with France was bluntly rejected, and, Mitterrand—although he himself opposes the American Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and has rejected France’s participating in the project—refused to co-sign any anti-SDI declarations with Gorbachov.

The visit produced two signed Franco-Soviet economic deals. The first was a \$50 million contract awarded to the state-owned French auto company, Renault, for machine tools and robots to modernize the Moskvich car plant near Moscow. French companies have also been awarded an \$80 million contract to modernize the signal system along the Moscow-Kaliningrad trunk railway. This modernization has important military-logistic ramifications, since this rail line forms the bulk of the rail line connecting Moscow and Russia-Byelorussia with the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda—which will soon be the key supply and logistics Soviet Baltic Sea port for supplies destined for East Germany.

On Tuesday evening, Oct. 1, the eve of his arrival, Gorbachov held a two-hour press conference in Moscow, televised in France and the Soviet Union. His words were anything but reassuring. He again demanded that the United States scrap the SDI, otherwise there would be no results at the Geneva summit, nor at any future U.S.-Soviet negotiations. Gorbachov threatened, “International tensions are increasing, and the threat of nuclear catastrophe is not getting smaller.”

Knowing full well that no one in the West is either preparing for or contemplating war, the Kremlin boss had the nerve call for “putting out the fires of war, before everything goes up in flames.”

It was useful, in any case, to see Gorbachov at length on television. Quite the contrary of the *Time* magazine portrayal of the Soviet leader as a Russian version of a movie star, he came across unmistakably as a mafia-style thug, the toughie from the provinces who’s made it to the top of the “corporation.” He exuded the image of a cold and brutal personality, “the smile with the teeth of iron” as former Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko had once labeled him.

During this TV interview, Gorbachov promised that he would disclose the contents of his various "new" disarmament proposals during his Paris visit. Speaking before French parliamentarians, the Russian leader made public his "new offers." They bear two striking characteristics, besides being totally laughable in content; they guarantee that the Geneva summit will produce no tangible results, and represent a clumsy attempt to try and forge further divisions in the ranks of the Western Alliance.

The Gorbachov proposals are:

- If the United States abandons the SDI, then a supposed 50% reduction in "strategic" nuclear missile launchers by both superpowers can take place. In the ultimatum, the formulation on the American SDI alone is unacceptable enough for the United States. The percentage reduction on game (the Soviets have a vast superiority over the United States in strategic and other nuclear warheads, thus a percentage reduction would, first, freeze the existing overwhelming Soviet offensive weapon superiority, and, second, reduce the already relatively small U.S. warhead total down to exceedingly dangerous low levels) is likewise totally and insultingly unacceptable to the United States.

One would have thought that such demands upon the United States would already serve as pre-Geneva overkill in the Russian negotiating stance. The modern-day Stalin in tailored suits went further. Gorbachov's exact wording introduced a new and ultra-provocative Russian definition of "strategic weapons."

Gorbachov's exact formulation reads: "a truly radical reduction by 50% of all nuclear weapons systems capable of reaching the territory of the other [superpower]." With the phrase "capable of reaching the territory of the other," he is in fact demanding from the United States a unilateral cut of 50% in the Pershing II and cruise missiles stationed in Europe, plus parallel unilateral cuts in U.S. forward-based aircraft in Europe and the Pacific theater.

- With one stroke, Gorbachov, by incorporating the Pershings and cruise missiles into the "strategic arms negotiations," pulled the SS-20 out of the Geneva talks with the United States, de facto declaring the SS-20s non-negotiable. His statement that the number of SS-20s "in operational service" facing Europe now stands at 243 launchers—the June 1984 total—is laughable. It's like owning three new cars and declaring one of them not "in operational service" because it's parked in your garage.

Gorbachov also officially confirmed what Western defense experts have known all along, that the SS-4 medium-range missile, which the SS-20 allegedly "replaced," had never been removed from service. Only now, according to Gorbachov, Russia is starting to move them out of "operational service"—i.e., into SS-4 garages.

- Gorbachov asked for direct negotiations with Britain and France concerning their respective nuclear weapons systems. Under this schema, the mobile SS-20, which could be

---

---

*The Soviet leader made a grandstand play, offering sweeping arms reductions and millions in trade deals—provided France break with the United States. But behind Gorbachov's urbane smile are "teeth of iron."*

---

---

operationally reactivated in less than a day—no longer even theoretically up for negotiation with the United States—would be "negotiated" against fixed land-based French missiles which could not be readily redeployed, and British and French missile submarines, which could not leave their ports in an instant. Under this charming formula, all the Soviet SS-20s made "inoperable," could easily join the order of battle in the event of a Soviet surprise attack, whereas the French and British missiles would be out of the picture.

### **Russian ABM monopoly by 1988-89?**

President Reagan has already denounced these latest Gorbachov proposals. Reagan, quoted on both U.S. and West German television, reiterated the U.S. refusal to stop the SDI, stressing that Russia has been working on its own SDI "for many years," that Russia is "already ahead of us" in developing a laser-based missile defense system, and that America has got to "catch up to them." (See *National*, pp. 58-59, for more on the U.S. response.)

While the final results of the talks between Gorbachov and Mitterrand will not be known immediately, Gorbachov received a cold reception from Paris mayor and RPR head Jacques Chirac, the leader of the opposition in France. Chirac was not impressed by Gorbachov's charm. *Au contraire*. Chirac told the Kremlin boss in no uncertain terms: "We had great hopes for human rights at Helsinki, and our disillusionment is very bitter. . . . I think of the Jews of Russia not being allowed to leave their territory."

Chirac then warned Gorbachov not to try and use his visit to drive a wedge between France and Germany. "France and Germany have been reconciled. France and Germany together make up Europe." Then Chirac asked the boss with the iron teeth, "Why is the Soviet Union building a massive nuclear, chemical, and conventional weapons arsenal against Western Europe? Why this threat?"

What wedges between NATO members will be driven remains to be seen. One has already surfaced from the Gorbachov visit. In contrast to France, which rejected Gorbachov's "offer" for direct talks on nuclear weapons systems, British Foreign Minister Geoffrey Howe signaled his support "in principle" for Gorbachov's offer of direct negotiations.