

# Trilaterals offer Soviets help in war economy mobilization

by Vivian Freyre Zoakos

In the wake of the Soviet Party Congress, with its stated determination to reorganize the Soviet economy for maximum industrial/war mobilization, spokesmen for the Trilateral Commission have begun to air the curious view that Western aid in backing up this mobilization is the only sure guarantor of peace.

The proposal is not actually a new one for the Trilateral Commission. It was publicly introduced back in 1982 by Trilateral member Bertold Beitz, currently chairman of the West German Krupp Foundation. At that time, Beitz surfaced a public plan for virtually merging the West German and Soviet economies. He stated that the Federal Republic of Germany need not rely on markets across the seas in the developing nations. The Soviets, he argued, need German technology and know-how, and Soviet labor and raw materials are cheaper than what is otherwise available to West Germany. The combination, he concluded, would be ideal.

Now that the U.S.S.R., under Gorbachov, has shown its categorical determination to reverse the inefficiencies of the Soviet economy—inefficiencies which have to date hampered the full potential for Soviet war production in depth—offers to participate in this economic transformation are being repeated by Trilateral Commission spokesmen and their co-thinkers.

## 'Gorbachov needs Western credits'

In an article entitled "Let Peace Become Conceivable," published in the March 3 edition of the West German weekly *Die Zeit*, Trilateral Commission member and *Die Zeit* editor Theo Sommer returns to the Beitz program. Speaking of Gorbachov's sweeping plans for the Soviet economy, Sommer writes:

"It is difficult to see where the advanced technology and the financial means for it are supposed to come from, other than from the capitalist West. Eastern Europe can hardly expand its exports into the Soviet Union significantly . . . and there are also problems with their quality. Without investment goods from the West, Gorbachov cannot implement his program. He needs cooperation with Western exporters. He needs training centers in his country, entirely or partially staffed with Western technicians. And he will not get by without Western credits. . . .

"If Gorbachov does not want the power balance in the world to turn against the Soviet Union, he must seek coexistence with the West in all areas, including disarmament."

One day before Sommer's article appeared, West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher broadcast an interview over the German Saarland radio advancing the argument that Gorbachov's speech at the Soviet Party Congress proves that Soviet interest lies only in technological modernization of the economy. From this, Genscher concluded that the U.S.S.R. can have no interest in "existing in a foreign policy environment characterized by a confrontation which wastes one's powers, and a costly arms race." For that reason, "the West cannot interpret Gorbachov's arms-control proposals as propaganda."

Later that week, Genscher had his Chief of the Planning Staff, Konrad Zeitz, author a discussion of the implications of Genscher's argument for creating "stability" in Europe.

Zeitz began by reviewing the threat to the "security structure in Europe" represented by "the imbalance of conventional forces to NATO's disadvantage," and the fact that "the Western alliance . . . neutralizes the threat . . . with the counter-threat to escalate a war begun conventionally by the other side, with nuclear weapons." After detailing the problems inherent in this form of deterrence, Zeitz concludes:

"What would move the Soviet Union to offer Western Europe a condition of 'equal security'? . . . What would move the Soviet Union to give up the offensive structure of its armed forces, which gives it such a comfortable conventional superiority in Europe? The answer is obvious: The present structure of armed forces prevents real détente and large-scale economic and technological cooperation between West and East in Europe. This is disadvantageous for both sides, but the costs are incomparably higher for the Soviet Union.

"The democracies of the industrial triangle America/Western Europe/Japan are in the midst of a new technological revolution. They are on the threshold of a transition into the information age.

"If the Soviet Union and the other countries of the Warsaw Pact only rely on themselves, then in the course of this technological revolution, they will fall increasingly behind. They can connect up to this revolution only under two con-

ditions: They must liberate their economies from the pressure of an exaggerated armament, and they must create a situation which makes possible a broad technological exchange and large-scale economic cooperation between East and West.

"However, the door to a confidence-based, economic-technological cooperation with the West can only be opened entirely if, parallel to nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament in Europe too can be brought forward. The goal must be to create conventional as well as nuclear stability, and thus to create the basis upon which a dynamic pan-European cooperation in all areas can unfold."

### **Drive to stop the SDI**

In line with Soviet views, the Trilateral faction in West Germany is advancing support for Soviet "disarmament" proposals, side-by-side with denunciations of alleged American aims to achieve "superiority," via President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

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*U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé has denounced the "club of foreign ministry stability fanatics" in Europe, and no wonder: The foreign ministers and their Trilateral Commission friends are endorsing Gorbachov's offer, that Europe help finance the Soviet war-economy build-up.*

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Not for the first time, Foreign Minister Genscher said as much at the Wehrkunde meeting of military experts that took place in Bavaria, West Germany, the first week of March. Genscher was responding to statements from U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé, who had argued against what he called the European "club of foreign ministry stability fanatics." Iklé criticized those who think "that we should help the East to modernize its economy, and that our help towards improving the economic development of the Soviet bloc contributes to European stability. Such help will do the opposite."

Genscher countered this with the classic Soviet argument against the SDI: that those who demand Western superiority over the Soviet Union will "endanger stability as much as will the attempt to guarantee security only in military categories [i.e., to reject East-West economic collaboration]."

Theo Sommer, too, discussed the SDI as an impediment to the disarmament-cum-economic collaboration policy he

proposed. But Sommer concluded that, thanks to the Gramm-Rudman budget-cutting amendment, the backers of the SDI will shortly be brought to their knees.

He wrote: "The U.S. budget deficit is now supposed to be cut. Where, and how, and what will be cut is still open. But one thing is clear: The days when Defense Secretary Weinberger could dip his ladle into the soup without worries are over. Not even the budget for Reagan's darling project of a missile defense will go unshorn.

"The SDI program is going to be further thinned out. When the axe falls, it could mean that, of Reagan's demand for \$312 billion for the Pentagon, \$75 billion will be rudely chopped off. A freeze of the defense budget is the best he could hope for. . . . There is a need for rethinking."

Meanwhile, Sommer's fellow Trilateral Commission member, former German chancellor and Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt, has just released a book which is being partly serialized in the national circulation German newspaper *Die Welt*. Entitled *A Strategy for the West*, Schmidt's book is a recipe for the disarming of the West, in which Western Europe would be decoupled from the United States.

Schmidt deals at length with the topic, formerly advanced by the so-called Brandt Commission on International Development, that the "surplus" of funds currently employed for weapons production would be better used for reorganizing Third World debt, under the aegis of the International Monetary Fund. Schmidt's policy agrees well with that of Beitz, whose argument in favor of German-Soviet economic collaboration was premised on a switch from Germany's traditional Third World markets to those of the Soviet Union and its Eastern satrapies.

Despite some progress, says Schmidt, "one would have to say, in the words of Henry Kissinger, 'I have the impression that the present debt management has reached its limits.'

"The economic corrective measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund of the debtor countries are, at core, reasonable, but they do not always necessarily take account of the domestic political situation of debtor countries. . . . It seems essential to me that all of the governments concerned now reach agreement on a common strategy. This strategy would require sacrifices from almost all sides." Schmidt proposes the reorganization of the Third World debt structure, together with a plan, first put forward by Kissinger, for the sale of Third World equity to the developed sector bank creditors.

Returning to the implications of this for the SDI and military policy, Schmidt concludes:

"To a certain degree, European governments understand these necessities better than Wall Street, but up to now the Europeans have preferred to leave the game to the IMF and Wall Street. . . . I am sure that European governments could be more excited about such a plan for joint financial aid for Central America, than they are about the American invitation to deploy budget finances for Star Wars research."

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