

# Thatcher warns of U.S. nuclear pullout

by Konstantin George

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has warned the U.S. administration not to commit a fatal blunder by reaching a deal with Moscow that would remove all U.S. nuclear missiles from Europe—a deal which the State Department is promoting, and which would achieve the decoupling of Western Europe and the United States. Thatcher was speaking on the evening of Nov. 10, at a banquet in her honor hosted by the mayor of London.

She added that Great Britain would, under no circumstances, relinquish her own nuclear missile forces, whether or not a superpower missile reduction agreement, either in the strategic or intermediate-range sphere, were reached.

As reported in the London *Daily Telegraph* of Nov. 11, Thatcher said that a U.S.-Soviet deal, which would have American Pershing II and cruise missiles pulled out of Europe, would “leave Europe vulnerable to overwhelming Soviet superiority in conventional, chemical and biological weapons.”

The substance of the British prime minister’s warnings to the United States formed the main agenda item in Thatcher’s talks with President Reagan at Camp David during the weekend of Nov. 14.

## The ‘zero solution’

Thatcher was responding to the attempts by the U.S. State Department to conclude an agreement with Moscow, embodying a “zero solution” for U.S. nuclear forces in Europe, while Moscow would merely agree to scrap its SS-20 intermediate-range missiles, stationed in the European portion of the U.S.S.R. Such an arrangement would leave NATO devoid of any effective nuclear forces, while Russia would still have its hundreds of short- and medium-range SS-21, SS-22, and SS-23 missiles (up to 1,000 km-range) forward-based in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary, to say nothing of Soviet missile units based in the Soviet Baltic states and the Kola Peninsula, blanketing Scandinavia.

Secretary of State George Shultz had fashioned such a deal prior to the Reykjavik superpower “pre-summit,” which the United States then offered to Mikhail Gorbachov. Fortunately, Moscow, obsessed with linking all agreements to a

U.S. capitulation on the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), turned down the dangerous offer. On Nov. 5, Shultz, present in Vienna for talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, again made the “zero solution” offer; Moscow said, “Nyet.”

Thatcher stated that a Europe devoid of American nuclear forces, is a Europe open to Soviet blackmail or even invasion:

“We can never forget that the frontier of freedom cuts right across our continent, and renders Western Europe vulnerable to attack by conventional forces and chemical weapons in a way in which the United States is not. The fact is that nuclear weapons have prevented not only nuclear war, but conventional war in Europe for 40 years. That is why we depend, and will continue to depend on nuclear weapons for our defense.”

Thatcher cited the last address by Winston Churchill, which he made before a joint session of the U.S. Congress. Churchill made a similar insistence on the maintenance of strong U.S.-NATO nuclear forces overall, and in Europe, until the time when “something better” than nuclear weapons came into existence.

In a hint at the SDI program which would make nuclear weapons obsolete, Thatcher echoed Churchill’s statement: “Other means are not yet at hand, and we should do well to heed his wisdom.”

On the question of maintaining and modernizing both U.S. nuclear forces in Europe and independent national strategic and tactical nuclear forces (the British and French nuclear “deterrents”) Thatcher’s views are fully endorsed by French Premier Jacques Chirac. Days before Thatcher spoke out in London, the Chirac government disclosed its plans to expand its nuclear capability, the *force de frappe*.

The newly unveiled French defense budget includes provisions for: 1) a seventh nuclear ballistic-missile submarine; 2) a new, mobile, land-based intermediate-range nuclear ballistic missile; 3) development, production, and deployment of its own arsenal of chemical weapons.

These moves by the United Kingdom and France should force Reagan to think over his pre-Reykjavik blunder, in giving Shultz and the State Department a “blank check” to negotiate the de-nuclearization of Europe.

The machinations of the State Department are facing a united wall of opposition from all three major governments of Western Europe: Britain, France, and West Germany. The latter, by the provisions of the 1955 Paris Treaties, is prohibited from either developing or producing nuclear weapons in response to a U.S. nuclear decoupling move; but Bonn has been using its political clout to lobby Washington to turn away from its insane “zero solution” policy.

Since the Reykjavik summit, the medium-range-missile “zero solution” has been publicly attacked by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Defense Minister Manfred Wörner. The criticisms were also delivered during the post-Reykjavik Washington discussions between Reagan on the one side, and Kohl and Wörner on the other.