

Moscow wonders: ambiguity or chaos in Washington?

by Criton Zoakos

On Wednesday, Aug. 26, President Reagan addressed via satellite television, the Third Annual U.S.-Soviet Chautauqua Conference, in which, among other things, he accused the Soviet Union of having reneged on its obligations under the 1945 Yalta agreements.

The President's speech was delivered three days after mass demonstrations in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia protested the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact, to this day the only "legal" instrument on which the Russian occupation of the Baltic republics is based.

It remains a mystery whether the demonstrations and the theme of Reagan's speech coincided by accident or by design.

Also a mystery, and not only to the casual observer, is the present direction of United States foreign policy overall. If most Washington observers wonder what the Reagan administration's present foreign policy posture is, they are not alone.

Moscow also wonders: If Kremlin strategists look at U.S. military deployments in the Gulf, they draw one set of, mostly alarmed, conclusions; if they look at U.S. diplomatic deployments in Western Europe, especially around the disastrous, and, by all appearances imminent "zero-zero" agreement on intermediate nuclear forces (INF), they must be very pleased with the progress they are making toward decoupling Western Europe from the United States.

If Moscow looks at the Pentagon, it gets displeased; if at the State Department, pleased; if at the White House, both pleased and displeased—as well as confused. It is interesting to note that President Reagan's Aug. 26 speech was preceded

by an informational background briefing from a senior Reagan administration official, and by an announcement from West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl of his intention to retire his 72 Pershing-IA missiles if certain preconditions are met.

As the official explained in his background briefing, Helmut Kohl's decision had been preceded by two days of close consultations and discussions between the Chancellor's Office and the White House. As a result of these consultations, Chancellor Kohl announced four preconditions under which he would remove his Pershing missiles:

- 1) That both the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union agree on *global* elimination of all intermediate range weapons.
- 2) That all disputes over verification procedures be resolved.
- 3) That the INF treaty be both *ratified* and take effect.
- 4) That both superpowers actually complete carrying out an agreed upon schedule of elimination of these weapons.

"In that case," Chancellor Kohl declared, "I am prepared to declare already today, that with the final removal of all Soviet and American intermediate range missiles, the Pershing-IAs will not be modernized, but, instead, will be removed."

Indicative of the perplexity in Moscow, is the fact that it took the Soviet leaders 48 hours before they responded with guarded satisfaction. Their first reaction was in a TASS release which said, "Kohl is trying to shift the blame for the possible failure of the talks from West Germany to the Soviet Union."

Otherwise, President Reagan's speech was centered on

two themes: First, that the Strategic Defense Initiative is the centerpiece of the American defense and diplomatic posture; second, that the United States will challenge Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. This, in turn, was in stark contrast to a speech, two days later, by Deputy Secretary of State John C. Whitehead at the U.S.-Soviet conference in Chautauqua, New York. In it, Whitehead, after praising Gorbachov's *glasnost* as the equivalent of the U.S. Bill of Rights, went on to portray his vision of a future in which "all Americans and Soviets would have a chance to experience Mother Earth, an Earth at peace and in harmony with herself."

Which one is the real Reagan administration policy? Maybe we shall know when we discover the real reasons why Sen. Sam Nunn abandoned the attempt to run for President.

Documentation

The President's Speech

The following are excerpts from President Reagan's speech on Wednesday, Aug. 26 in Los Angeles.

Yalta meeting

In February of 1945, as he first began meeting with Roosevelt and Stalin at Yalta, much the same purpose preoccupied Winston Churchill. He felt a great sense of urgency and said to his daughter, "I do not suppose that at any moment in history has the agony of the world been so great or widespread. Tonight the sun goes down on more suffering than ever before in the world."

It was not just the misery of World War II that appalled him. Churchill said he also harbored a great fear that "new struggles may arise out of those that we are successfully ending." About the Great Powers meeting in Yalta, he added, "If we quarrel, our children are undone."

Well, we know now the Great Powers did agree at Yalta; difficult issues were raised and resolved; agreements were reached. In a narrow sense, the summit conference was successful; the meeting produced tangible diplomatic results. And among these was an endorsement of the rights upheld in the Atlantic Charter, rights that would "afford assurance that all men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want."

And so, too, the right of self-determination of Eastern European nations, like Poland were, at least on paper, guaranteed. But in a matter of months, Churchill's worst fears were realized; the Yalta guarantees of freedom and human rights in Eastern Europe became undone; and, as democracy died in Poland, the era of Allied cooperation ended. . . .

Strategic Defense Initiative

In addition to opening negotiations to reduce arms in several categories, we did something more revolutionary in order to end nuclear fear. We launched a new program of research into defensive means of preventing ballistic missile attack. And by doing so, we attempted to maintain deterrence while seeking to move away from the concept of mutual assured destruction—to render it obsolete, to take the advantage out of building more and more offensive missiles and more and more warheads, at last to remove from the world the specter of military powers holding each other hostage to nuclear retaliation. In short, we sought to establish the feasibility of a defensive shield that would render the use of ballistic missiles fruitless.

This was the meaning of our decision to move forward with SDI, and I believe it was the right decision at the right time.

Foreign policy

But while we sought arms reduction and defensive deterrence, we never lost sight of the fact that nations do not disagree because they are armed; they are armed because they disagree on very important matters of human life and liberty. The fundamental differences between totalitarianism and democratic rule remained; we could not gloss over them, nor could we be content anymore with accepted spheres of influence, a world only half-free. That is why we sought to advance the cause of personal freedom wherever opportunities existed to do so. Sometimes this meant support for liberalization; sometimes support for liberation. . . .

And finally, undergirding all of this was our commitment to public candor about the nature of totalitarian rule and about the ultimate objective of United States foreign policy: peace, yes, but world freedom, as well. We refused to believe that it was somehow an act of belligerence to proclaim publicly the crucial moral distinctions between democracy and totalitarianism. . . .

Our foreign policy, then, has been an attempt both to reassert the traditional elements of America's postwar strategy, while at the same time moving beyond the doctrines of mutual assured destruction or containment. Our goal has been to break the deadlock of the past, to seek a forward strategy; a forward strategy for world peace; a forward strategy for world freedom. We have not forsaken deterrence or containment; but working with our allies, we have sought something even beyond these doctrines. We have sought the elimination of the threat of nuclear weapons and an end to the threat of totalitarianism.

Today, we see this strategy—the strategy of hope—at work. We are moving toward reductions in nuclear arms. SDI is now under way; our offer to share the benefits of strategic defense remains open to all, including the Soviet Union. . . .

For two years we've been asking the Soviets to join in

discussing a cooperative approach towards a transition to defensive deterrence that threatens no one. . . .

Glasnost—military matters

. . . We also need to see more openness, a departure from the habits of secrecy that have so long applied to Soviet military affairs.

I say to the Soviet leadership, it's time to show some *glasnost* in your military expenditures—just as we do. Second, reveal to the Soviet people and the world the size and composition of the Soviet armed forces. Third, open for debate in your Supreme Soviet the big issues of military policy and weapons—just as we do. These steps would contribute to greater understanding between us, and also to the good sense of your own decisions on the grave matters of armaments and military posture. . . .

We have also repeatedly pointed out that the last-minute demand by the Soviets concerning West German Pershing-IA missiles was without foundation. Well, earlier today, Chancellor Kohl removed even this artificial obstacle from consideration. We are therefore hopeful that the Soviet Union will demonstrate that there is substance behind the rhetoric they have repeated so often of late—that they genuinely want a stabilizing INF agreement. And if so, they will move to meet our proposals constructively rather than erect additional barriers to agreement. . . .

The background briefing

Remarks of a senior administration official, previewing Reagan's Los Angeles speech:

Let me just make a couple of points about the President's speech, and then get on to today's developments. What the speech tried to do is to state the President's continuing political philosophy for the conduct of East-West relations, pursuit of peace, strong defense, expansion of freedom. It reflects both continuity with staff policies and the innovations of the Reagan administration, the SDI, the so-called Reagan Doctrine, real nuclear reductions, challenges on human rights, people-to-people contact in our bilateral relationships. The President's four-part agenda is all operational, and all parts are important for a general improvement in relations. But we don't hold one part hostage to improvements in the others.

The version of a far-reaching improvement in relations—and that's what the speech tries to convey—depends basically on Soviet respect for democracy, both abroad and at home. It is very clear that new things are happening in the U.S.S.R., that the system is trying to develop reforms that strengthen and preserve Communist rule. Only if there is a fundamental liberalization of the regime can internal developments lead to a fundamental transformation of the basic relationship away from competition and conflicts. That's possible, but at this stage, we can't count on it, and we can only hope for it. And that's inherent in the President's message. In the meantime, we find Gorbachov's foreign policies more active and more challenging in their tactics.

Historically, I might note, reformist regimes in the U.S.S.R. have been assertive and aggressive, such as Khrushchov, and we have to be alert to that. On the other hand, it does appear that Gorbachov wants some kind of a breathing space so that he can accomplish his internal changes, and this does, it seems to us, offer opportunities in the arms reduction field, specifically INF and START.

In regional conflicts, what the President is saying is that the Soviets are pursuing their traditional goals with increased skill and flexibility. While they make a lot of statements about Afghanistan, we don't see any fundamental changes in their policy. Indeed, we see continuing pressure on Pakistan, which denotes no let up in places like Angola, Nicaragua, Ethiopia. There is, of course, a parallel interest in ending the Iran-Iraq war, but we should not read a lot into this because it does not really disguise a conflict of aims in that region.

In the human rights area, there have been some positive developments. There have been some 150 political prisoners released, immigration is up, and there is clearly freer discussion in the press, but much more in our judgment needs to be done. Many more political prisoners are still jailed, religious dissenters still suffer, and *glasnost* is far from a free press.

In bilateral relations, there have been some promising developments in the people to people exchanges, such as the Chautauqua series that is currently going on.

In the arms control area, as you're aware, we are moving forward on an INF agreement, but we want to press just as hard as we can on a START agreement, because this ought to be looked upon in its total context. With regard to the developments in Germany today, the President . . . well, let me read it. "There are still issues to be worked out. Our delegation in Geneva has already pointed the way to simplifying verification requirements now that we've agreed to the total elimination of U.S. and Soviet missiles. We've also repeatedly pointed out that the last minute demand by the Soviets concerning West German Pershing-IA missiles was without foundation. Earlier today, Chancellor Kohl . . . [see Reagan speech excerpts.]

If so, they will move to meet our proposals constructively, rather than erect additional barriers to agreement. We will have a statement . . . by the time we end this session.

Questioned on extent of cooperation between Bonn and Washington on Kohl offer:

There was contact between Bonn and Washington, between the Chancellor and the President, during the course of the day and evening yesterday. The Chancellor did send the President a letter, and the President responded. And our statement will say that we strongly support Kohl's statement that the Pershing-IA's have not been and should not be included in the Geneva negotiations. We also understand and support his statement on what he intends to do with the IAs; that is to say, non-modernization and dismantling after certain conditions are met. It goes on to make reference to the Reykjavik agreement with regard to the under 500 kilometers. But you'll have the statement.