

With SALT ended, NATO cancels Reykjavik blunder

by Criton Zoakos

On Nov. 28, the Kissinger-era SALT II Treaty passed into ancient history, as the 131st nuclear cruise armed B-52 bomber rolled out of its hangar to begin service. Six days later, at the NATO defense ministers' meeting in Brussels, the last hopes of the Trilateral Commission for a decoupling of Europe from the U.S.A. were dashed. The ministers issued a joint communiqué which scrapped the so-called Reykjavik proposals for "eliminating all nuclear missiles," including the American Pershing II and cruise missiles stationed in Europe.

Soviet spokesmen in Geneva and in Moscow held press conferences to note the change. Foreign ministry press spokesman Genadii Gerasimov, in Moscow, flatly announced that the United States has abandoned the Reykjavik proposals, and warned that the "internal crisis in Washington," referring to "Iran-gate," should not be used as an excuse to slow down the arms-control negotiations. "Time is of essence," Gerasimov warned, "because military technologies are developing at an alarming rate." Victor Karpov, Moscow's chief negotiator in Geneva, echoed the same theme: "The United States is refusing to discuss any limits for the Strategic Defense Initiative. It is the SDI which is the principal obstacle to progress in arms control."

Indeed. Not only has the SDI proven to be non-negotiable, but, it has been expanded to include anti-missile defenses for Europe against short-range and intermediate-range Soviet missiles. In the course of the NATO meeting in Brussels, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger formally announced the awarding of \$14 million worth of contracts for the "architectural studies" for a Tactical or European Defense Initiative. Weinberger took the occasion to stress that the defense of Europe against Soviet SS-20s, SS-21s, and the

short-range series, is a task not only for the European members of NATO, but for the alliance as a whole. Moreover, in the text of the final NATO communiqué, the term "zero option" does not appear, either in reference to strategic or to intermediate-range missiles. Instead, what does appear for the first time in a NATO communiqué, is an unequivocal, wholehearted endorsement of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

These developments, from Nov. 28 to Dec. 4, are dramatic and unusual, and their implications are enormous and far-reaching. They have so far gone unnoticed by the general public, primarily for two reasons. First, the Soviets recognize the importance of these changes in the West's defense preparations, without illusions. After the liberals and the appeasers had their say at Reykjavik, after the clamor of the Moscow-directed peace movement had its say, the patriotic forces in the Western alliance still had the required strength to both break the SALT Treaty and scrap the proposals of the Reykjavik fiasco.

Moscow, for the time being, is engaged in a thorough reassessment of its options. That reassessment will provide the tenor of its future propaganda blasts. In the West, the liberal news media, which would ordinarily be screaming about such matters, are embroiled in histrionics over "Iran-gate," which they can neither understand, nor stop obsessing over.

The most influential printed and electronic media aligned with the Trilateral Commission, have, on cue from Henry Kissinger's speech to the British Labour Party Dec. 1, attempted to circulate in Europe the line that the United States has been caught in a debilitating, paralyzing domestic crisis

and that, therefore, the European allies must go on alone to make their accommodation with the Russians.

The bottom line

The European allies of the United States are best situated to understand what is occurring in Washington with "Iran-gate," when they focus on the same "bottom line" that the Soviet military commanders read, and ignore the public confetti over the scandal. The bottom line is: The United States has abandoned SALT II, and Defense Secretary Weinberger has emerged as the principal cabinet official of the Reagan administration. Secretary of State George Shultz, whose letter of resignation is still in some drawer in the Oval Office, is contemplating a quiet, private life for after January, or perhaps February of 1987. Shultz's ally Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff, has been stripped of all policy influence and is slowly twisting in the wind. His continuing presence in the White House is a measure of the man's capacity to endure ridicule and humiliation. The appointment of Frank Carlucci as the President's national security adviser was imposed by Weinberger, and is a public signal of Weinberger's emergence as a principal officer of the cabinet.

Personalities, however, are not the issue in what is going on in Washington. Policies are forcing themselves on the nation, policies which are beyond the control of personalities. Caspar Weinberger, or George Bush, or their advisers, are becoming important and come to the fore, to the extent that they are able to respond to the dramatic strategic realities of the day by devising and carrying out policies which correspond to the extent of the crisis.

The matter is best illustrated with a U.S. military intelligence "leak" published by the conservative columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak on Dec. 5. As of Nov. 10, Evans and Novak write, U.S. intelligence has identified the existence of three more massive ABM radar installations in the Soviet Union, all similar to the previously discovered Krasnoyarsk installations. They are located 1) at Baranovichi, near the Polish border, 2) at Skrunda on the Lithuanian border, and 3) at Mukachevo, on the Czech border. Evans and Novak report that the Pentagon and CIA want the President to declare, in his next report to Congress on Soviet compliance, that the Soviet Union is on the verge of a strategic defensive "breakout." The State Department opposes this. The man to resolve the conflict will be Frank Carlucci, who begins his new duties Jan. 1.

It is rightly pointed out, that a presidential declaration of such an imminent "breakout" will have momentous implications, both for national survival of the United States, and for all the policies of the Reagan administration. Out of "Iran-gate," the United States may emerge a nation chastised and awoken to the horrible reality of the Soviet military threat. The verified existence of a grand total of four Krasnoyarsk-style ABM radar installations will have an impact on both the population and the policy-elites of the United States approx-

imating the Pearl Harbor shock of 1941. To give an example of such a potential impact: The Krasnoyarsk radar installation is the only arms-control issue for which the Soviets are berated by their best arms-control supporters in the United States, McGeorge Bundy and Gerard Smith. These two and their friends in the arms-control mafia of the United States have agreed with President Reagan that Krasnoyarsk is a Soviet violation of SALT and of the 1972 ABM Treaty. It was this admission by the liberal opposition which facilitated the quiet abandonment of the SALT limits last week.

A declaration of an "imminent Soviet breakout," will go very much beyond merely obliterating any liberal objections to a vigorous strategic defense policy: It will obliterate all economic policies and economic arguments associated with the insanity of the Gramm-Rudman budget-cutting legislation and with de-industrialization. Such a recognition of harsh reality, which might be announced at the next State of the Union address or even, perhaps, at the maiden speech of a President George Bush, would set the United States on a course of Roosevelt-style wartime economic/industrial mobilization.

The significance of the NATO defense ministers' communiqué, and of the irreversible abandonment of SALT by the United States, is simply this: With Reykjavik now scuttled, and the commitment of the United States to the defense of Europe reconfirmed, the Soviet command is adjusting its war drive to compensate for the fact that Western Europe is not likely to be neutralized during 1987 as had been earlier projected. The Soviet command, when it takes action to compensate for its temporary reversal in Europe, will, at the same time, be forcing the United States further in the direction of events already anticipated.

The reason that the Moscow propaganda machine is so quiet over the abandonment of SALT limits by the United States is, primarily, that Moscow is not sure exactly what it will be that will awaken the still sleeping American giant and set him onto a post-Pearl Harbor industrial mobilization course. As the political chemistry of the United States is changing rapidly and unpredictably, Moscow is afraid that any harsh bullying from its side will play straight into the hands of those forces that, Moscow suspects, are steering the course of events behind Iran-gate.

In this post-SALT situation, two alternate courses appear available for the world: either continuing deterioration all the way to thermonuclear confrontation, or, the only alternative grounds for a new type of arms-control negotiations: on the basis of the proposed sharing of advanced SDI technologies by both superpowers. In all likelihood, for the months ahead, the more the confrontation and war threat increases, the more both sides will strive to preserve the arms-control negotiating channels.

The only Reykjavik proposal remaining on the table is President Reagan's generous offer to share SDI technologies. Will Moscow be interested?