

Reagan coalition's collapse is key to stopping INF

by Webster G. Tarpley

Preparations are now being completed for the Dec. 7 arrival of Russian party boss Mikhail Gorbachov in Washington for a summit parley with President Reagan during which the infamous treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) is to be signed. In times as unstable as these, it cannot be ruled out that even at this late hour some unpredictable event might intervene to abort this looming replay of the 1938 Munich sell-out. The Soviets might, for example, attempt to attach new and outrageous demands to the summit at the last moment, in conformity with their classic strategy in negotiations. These might conceivably be too much for even the prostrate Reagan administration. Or, a U-2 incident of some sort, certainly an act of Divine Providence, might occur to prevent the summit of abominations from happening.

In the absence of these eventualities, we will be obliged to turn our attention to preventing the ratification of the INF treaty in the Senate, a task which is imperative on its own merits as well as necessary to block the negotiation of further appeasement treaties in the realm of strategic missiles and the Strategic Defense Initiative. Stopping the INF in the Senate is a debt of honor to the patriotic forces of the European allies who fought for the deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles after 1979. It is also a fight which can be won, provided that it be waged together with the 1988 presidential campaign of Democrat Lyndon H. LaRouche, the only candidate for the White House who is pledged to tear up the INF treaty if he is elected.

Even the leading appeasers of the Senate concede that the INF treaty faces a very difficult ratification fight. Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) concedes that 22 or 23 conservative senators of both parties are likely to oppose the treaty. "Unfortunately, we cannot assume the Senate will ratify," said Cranston, who is the Senate Democratic Whip and thus chief vote-counter. "I don't believe that one-third plus one (34 votes) would take it on, but it could be defeated by loving it to death with efforts to improve it and make it acceptable."

Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) stated: "I believe in the treaty, but I hear thunder on the left and thunder on the right. This treaty is going to be very difficult to ratify." Patrick Buchanan, writing in the *Washington Times*, predicts a war within the GOP over the INF and other arms control deals. The senators most likely to vote against the INF are centered on a group of conservative Republicans including Helms, Wallop, McClure, Symms, Humphrey, and others. The likely supporters are liberal Democrats and Republicans.

The INF treaty fight, in short, completes the shattering of the President's base of support among ideological Reagan-aunts, who are now turning against the President on many issues. The corollary of this is that Reagan's pathetic bid for the Nobel Peace Prize, and, more importantly, George Bush's grab for the White House, depend on liberal Democratic votes in the Senate—a risky gamble to say the least, especially in the bitterly partisan atmosphere now obtaining in relations between the White House and the Congress.

Each recent step in the disintegration of the President's political personality has alienated more and more of his old guard of backers. After Robert Bork and Douglas Ginsburg, the President offered Anthony Kennedy for the Supreme Court, much to the displeasure of Jesse Helms, who as ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee is in a key position for blocking the INF treaty. On the budget, many right-wing Republican senators are seething with discontent about Reagan's acceptance of new taxes, for them an ideological taboo. When the Inouye-Hamilton committee issued its report on the Iran-Contra hearings, accusing Reagan of indifference to the laws, the Republican congressmen split over the report, with Senators Warren Rudman, Paul Trible, and William Cohen joining the Democrats in censuring the White House.

Similarly, when Gorbachov attempted to extort an invitation to address a joint session of the House and Senate, the White House was quick to pander, but a group of over 75

House conservative Republicans was able to blackball the man with the mark of the beast.

The departure of Caspar Weinberger from the Pentagon must be ascribed to the former defense secretary's disgust for Reagan's capitulation to further cuts in the defense budget, against which he has continued to snipe in a low-key way, as well as opposition to the way the INF treaty and the summit are being handled. At his last NATO ministerial meeting, Weinberger had demanded that the stationing of over 200 cruise missiles be continued up to the moment that the INF treaty were ratified by the Senate. Now Secretary of State George Shultz, with the help of Genscher, Howe, Andreotti, and the rest, has halted deployment, arguing that this saves money.

Weinberger's successor, Frank Carlucci, lacks all of Weinberger's commitment to principle. Carlucci has already forced out the acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, Frank Gaffney, whom he saw as insufficiently "pragmatic," and replaced him with Ronald Lehman, whose appeasement credentials include a stint with Max Kampelman's Geneva negotiating team, which produced the INF treaty itself. Carlucci may next dump Deputy Secretary of Defense William H. Taft IV, who had been rumored as Weinberger's personal choice to take over the Pentagon. In addition, Venetian operative John Negroponte is now likely to enter the National Security Council as deputy to Gen. Colin Powell.

'The courage of cowards'

The new team are all taking to heart the observations of Lord Cadogan of the British Foreign Office at Munich, when he noted that sometimes it is necessary to have "the courage to be a coward."

The national security bureaucracy has thus gotten the message that further reports on Soviet violations of existing arms control treaties could lead to the firing of the reporters. By law, Reagan is required to report to the Congress by Dec. 1 about Soviet violations of SALT II and the Threshold Nuclear Test Ban treaty. In an act of open illegality, that report will not be forthcoming, and the President's press spokesman openly ridiculed the idea that the administration might try to meet this deadline. The same goes for the five-year review the administration is required by law to provide the Congress on the observance of the ABM Treaty.

Columnists Evans and Novak, writing on Nov. 27, predict that Senators McClure (who is supporting Bush), Wallop, Wilson, and Quayle may be inclined to let the INF go by without a fight in order to save their ammunition for START and SDI sell-outs now on the drawing board. A fatuous argument indeed: INF, START, SDI, and a series of regional agreements tantamount to a monstrous New Yalta giving the Soviets uncontested world domination, are seen in the Kremlin as one indissoluble package. The only effective way to fight this New Yalta is by stopping INF before it can be ratified, since the Soviets will be unwilling and unable to

negotiate new treaties while the INF treaty remains unratified and bottled up in the Senate. If, by contrast, the INF should be ratified, then nothing could stop the signing of a START-SDI treaty at yet another Reagan-Gorbachov summit, with the concomitant disastrous strategic effects. The fight is here and now.

The best way to stop INF is to kill it outright with 34 votes in the Senate, enough to prevent a two-thirds vote for ratification. Even short of that total, the treaty can be mortally wounded through various parliamentary tactics. One is the attaching of so-called "killer amendments." Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.) has talked about an amendment specifying that none of the INF terms be binding until the Soviets fulfill the terms of earlier arms control treaties, which they will not do. Other killer amendments could demand Soviet withdrawals from Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, or Nicaragua as the price of making the treaty operative. The Soviets will accept none of these. An excellent idea for a killer amendment would be to require Soviet repudiation of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact.

Delay of ratification could be fatal to INF. Sen. Claiborne Pell (R-R.I.), chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has announced hearings in January and wants a floor vote in February. Serious opposition could delay that until the end of the summer. In the meantime the treaty would be, as the *Washington Post* put it, "vulnerable to international developments," that is to say to new Soviet atrocities, in the same way that SALT II was given the *coup de grace* by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Then there is the wild card known as the Dole factor. In the recent debate of the Republican presidential candidates, Jack Kemp, Pete du Pont, Al Haig, and Pat Robertson all came out against the INF treaty. None of them has much clout in the Senate. But Bob Dole has reserved judgment on the treaty until he has seen the text, and has assailed Bush for praising the treaty even before vital verification provisions had been completed. If Dole is an intelligent demagogue, he will conclude that opposition to the INF, or a killer amendment at the very least, will help him more in the fight for the GOP presidential nomination than weakly seconding Bush, who has made the INF the touchstone of peace in our time. Dole's endorsers in the Senate include Kassebaum, Nickles, Pressler, Tribble, Stafford, Symms, Domenici, Grassley, and Rudman, several of whom could thus be drawn into the anti-INF camp.

If the INF goes through, San Diego, California and Magma, Utah will get a first taste of the nightmare world of the TV series "Amerika" as Soviet military spy teams barge into defense plants and other premises for "inspections." Rep. Bill Lowery, Republican of San Diego, has commented that "the visits are going to be very hard to stomach." Senators Wilson, Hatch, and Garn will please take note. Nobody in these states will accuse Shultz of not being "fulsome enough about the inspection regime," as the malaprop Shultz said in Geneva. That regime is very fulsome indeed.