

Soviets: London and Washington are toying with war

In the view of the leaders of the Soviet Union, the current crisis in the Carter Administration, including the U.S. energy program, signifies a drastic increase in the danger of World War III. Moscow is blaming not only Washington, but London.

Numerous articles in the Soviet press since the last week of July stress the surprising degree of coordination between London and Washington, on foreign policy and military matters in particular. A whole range of commentaries warn that the Anglo-American "war camp" is gaining factional ground.

Behind Soviet assessments is the ongoing Global Shield maneuvers of the U.S. Strategic Air Command (SAC), the largest in SAC's history. Global Shield, which includes simulated bombing runs up to the borders of the USSR, began without notification to Moscow. The maneuvers are blacked out of the U.S. press, but receive daily coverage in the Soviet military paper Red Star, which labels them a "provocation by opponents of détente."

On July 22, Red Star emphasized that "the Atlantic strategists are already planning the latest series of military maneuvers code-named Autumn-Forge '79, for September-November of this year ... the preparation and the course of both conventional and nuclear war on the European continent are gradually being worked out..."

London's role in all this has been emphasized. The government daily Izvestia has reported that "full agreement" on issues concerning NATO was reached in Washington meetings between U.S. defense secretary Brown and Britain's Francis Pym; the British are also attempting to revive the idea of a "European multilateral nuclear force," in which England's role as "first violin" would rest on its submarine fleet equipped with Polaris missiles.

The Soviet press has reacted with the same sharpness to U.S. threats of intervention in the Persian Gulf and Mideast "to protect oil supplies." Radio Moscow broadcast hourly bulletins at the end of July on the activities of the American military proximate to the

Middle East, reporting July 25 that parts of the U.S. Navy Seventh Fleet have been ordered to protect tanker routes, and have been placed on "full combat readiness" on the pretext of looking for Vietnamese "boat people."

Novosti press agency's Economics Commentator, Gennadi Pissarevski, had the following to say on the relation between oil and the threat of general war in a recent article which we reprint in excerpted form here.

'Oil and playing with world war'

The latest increase in the world market price for oil by the OPEC countries (July 1) has increased the price for oil more than ten times compared to the 1970 price. If the price for fuel continues to increase at the same rate, then at the beginning of the 21st century, gasoline will be sold in little bottles like perfume. ... Inflation, unemployment, and production decreases are the consequences of the increase in the price of oil....

Everyone knows that the U.S.S.R. has nothing to do (and previously had nothing to do) with the bad energy situation in the West. But without being able to contradict the irrefutable facts, the "Sovietologists" have fallen for futurology, and are bringing out various prognoses: for the short term, for the long term, and even for the very long term future. However, these prognoses all have the same purpose: to prove that the U.S.S.R. is always, a priori, and above all to blame. It is a kind of Pandora's box from which everything evil flies to the West—in the past, in the present, and, what is particularly interesting, in the future, too.

One of these prognoses has already brought about a new variety of anti-Sovietism: anti-Sovietism around petroleum. When the CIA published its report on the U.S.S.R.'s energy resources a couple years ago, it predicted a quite wretched future for the Soviets. According to the CIA, the U.S.S.R. will change from an oil exporter to an oil importer in the 1980s. The "Sovietologists" thought about this and came to the conclusion: Since the Russians allegedly have little money, but a lot of tanks, they will storm into the Near

East in order to conquer the Arab oil fields. But because the survival of the West depends on the East, and to be more precise, on the oil fields in the countries in this region, NATO will immediately intervene with its arms. The Third World War will break out, everything will go up in ashes, but the Russians will conquer because they are better armed and prepared. Because of its thoughtlessness, the West will go to pieces.

"What is to be done, in order to avoid this catastrophe?" the authors of the New Apocalypse ask themselves. But they are apparently not so gifted as John the Evangelist, for they come up with an answer that is more than primitive: The West must re-arm and continually re-arm, to conceivable and inconceivable levels.

No matter how sad this all may be, these insinuations have been spread around the world through the press, radio and TV. And at the same time, a new 110,000 man powerful combat corps has been set up. This "Quick Strike Force," as it has been baptized by the Pentagon, consists of two airborne divisions and two Marine divisions, along with 600 to 1,000 combat planes, aircraft carriers with nuclear weapons on board, as well as destroyers....

I believe, dear reader, that it is now clear why the Western mass media has patented the idea of "anti-Sovietism around petroleum." Its inventors are convinced that only the Marines can set up stable prices for Arabian crude oil. One day they will do that for sure, and there will be a lot of noise and complications around this. Therefore, one must first give the Russians a kick in the shins before anything else is done.

By the way, I would like to mention that the leaders of the Arab OPEC countries have repeatedly warned that they will blow up the oil derricks and set fire to the oil fields, in the event that the airborne divisions concern themselves with the problems of establishing the price for oil. And these leaders are by no means pro-communist.

While the propaganda makers labored with the formulation of "anti-Sovietism around petroleum," the USSR conceptualized the production of all forms of fuel in terms of growth, and not decreases, despite the CIA prognosis. They have made not a little progress in this: in the course of the first four years of the 10th Five Year Plan (1976-1980), the production of crude oil and gas condensate increased by more than 100 million tons. In the same period of time, Soviet geologists have discovered more than 100 new crude oil, natural gas, and gas condensate fields.

It is well known that the USSR is first in the

production of liquid and solid fuels in the world, and has considerably overtaken the U.S.A. ... I maintain it is necessary to bring these facts to those people's attention who have worked out very real plans to conquer the Mideast oil fields on the basis of vague allegations about coming Soviet energy difficulties.

The enemies of détente have set up the "Soviet threat" as a kind of axiom underlying all suspicions, even the most senseless. It is only through this that one can explain the tragic situation in which playing with world war has become the fashion. Some particularly reactionary politicians of the West are intimidating everyone with the "Soviet threat," but at the same time they are occupied with by no means harmless plans for the occupation of oil-producing countries.

The European Monetary System saved the dollar

This unusual commentary on the fall of the dollar by the Soviets' Novosti press agency drew the scrutiny of the Executive Intelligence Review's Soviet Desk as a departure from the usual Soviet press view of the European Monetary System (EMS) and its relation to the dollar. Whereas the Soviets have tended to write off the EMS as merely a new instance of "intra-imperialist rivalries" setting the countries of Western Europe at loggerheads with the United States, Novosti's Valeri Begishchev correctly points out that the EMS in fact helped to support the dollar, and that it was politically intended to do so by the EMS's leaders.

'The situation of the dollar: Western skies still clouded'

Amidst the stormy debates over the energy crisis, somehow the topic got submerged that was recently one of the most important in the West: the topic of instability of currencies and above all of the dollar. The fuse on this timebomb inside the capitalist economy is nevertheless still live, and economic experts on both sides of the Atlantic monitor its tick-tock with concern. The problem is that the U.S. dollar remains the most