

## Thatcher to broker East-West relations?

by Criton Zoakos

In her report to the British Parliament on the results of her trip to Moscow, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher rejected categorically the idea of general nuclear disarmament, at least for the foreseeable future. "World peace will depend on nuclear deterrence, for the next 20 years at least," she said.

"Elimination of all nuclear weapons may be a distant dream, and you do not found your defense policies on dreams. You found them on security.

"For the next 20 years at least, the security of this country and the West will be founded on a nuclear deterrence, and that is accepted by the Soviets as well as us," she emphasized in her report on her summit with Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov. "I made it clear to Mr. Gorbachov," she went on, "that the United Kingdom would not be prepared to accept *denuclearization of Europe*, which would leave us dangerously exposed to Soviet superiority in conventional and other forces."

Mrs. Thatcher's visit to Moscow at the end of March, had to it "more than meets the eye." Exemplary was the statement quoted above, in which the British prime minister appears to be speaking to the Soviet leaders on behalf of all of Western Europe. In this capacity, Mrs. Thatcher represented to the Kremlin the commonly held Western European view, that any agreement to remove medium-range U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe, must be accompanied by a further agreement to balance out the inequalities in short-range nuclear missiles, follow-up negotiations to redress the Soviet conventional superiority and, finally, an understanding that neither the British nor the French independent nuclear deterrent will be made issues to be negotiated.

Most interesting to study, was Mikhail Gorbachov's and other Soviet leaders' attitude toward Mrs. Thatcher. Despite

her strident and polemical style, Thatcher was accorded the honors and attention implicitly accorded to the American President, the de facto chief of the Western alliance. She lectured her Soviet audiences on SDI, on the subject of Western unity, and on the commonly shared Western concern over Soviet nuclear military superiority.

### 'Don't try to divide us'

"The mistake is sometimes made," Mrs. Thatcher said, "of believing that Europe can be divided from the United States. But on fundamentals and in our determination to defend our democratic values, we are inseparable." Further, during an unprecedented and sensational appearance on Soviet television, aired during the evening of March 31, Mrs. Thatcher held forth in a 50-minute interview, informing the Soviet audiences on matters they had never been told before:

"You have more inter-continental ballistic missiles than any country in the West, you have more medium-range missiles, you have more short-range weapons than anyone else and yet you say there might be a nuclear accident. . . . You have the only anti-satellite system in the world. You have 20 years more experience than anyone else in this field. Moscow has a very good anti-ballistic missile system around it. It was recently updated. It has 20 years experience taking incoming missiles fired from the ground—more experience than anyone else. You are way ahead of us. . . ."

Mrs. Thatcher also assumed the role of public champion of a purely U.S. program, President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. In her Kremlin banquet speech, she warned General Secretary Gorbachov that it is futile to try to stop the SDI. "You cannot stop such research any more than you can stop the onward march of science in general. Man will always

strive to push forward the frontier of knowledge. And now we know that similar work is being undertaken in the Soviet Union."

### **Spirit of Churchill**

One of the most politically memorable elements of her banquet speech was her deliberate evocation of the spirit of Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime leader who, to this day, commands the admiration of many high ranking officials of the U.S. government, for his having led the pre-war political crusade against appeasement and against the spirit of capitulation at Munich.

Mrs. Thatcher, in opposing "complete elimination of all nuclear weapons," said: "A world without weapons may be a dream. But you cannot base a sure defense on dreams. Without far greater trust and confidence between East and West than exists at present, a world without nuclear weapons would be less stable and more dangerous for all of us. I recall to you some words of Winston Churchill: 'Be careful above all things not to let go of the atomic weapon until you are sure and more than sure, that other means of preserving peace are in your hands.' That is why the government which I lead will not abandon the security provided for our country and for the NATO alliance by nuclear weapons."

Understandably, on the following day, Dr. Georgii Arbatov, one of Moscow's leading experts on the United States and the West, appeared on British television to say that he considers Mrs. Thatcher more of a "hawk" than President Reagan: "I think that, on nuclear issues—and I really never thought I would have to say this—Reagan is more progressive than Thatcher. He, at least, understands that he, humanity, and America can't live forever with nuclear weapons. He understands it is not natural, it is dangerous, and he has to do something. . . . Mrs. Thatcher says it is okay. She does not believe in a denuclearized Europe. If we were to think in the same way, and the Americans were to think in the same way, it opens up the way directly to a holocaust."

### **The results**

To evaluate the results of Mrs. Thatcher's five-day trip to Moscow, one ought to, perhaps, include one crucial factor to that trip—a factor beyond either Moscow, or Mrs. Thatcher. This factor is the actual political situation in Washington at the present time. Moscow, for one, would give anything to gain access to a reliable political evaluation of what is going on in Washington.

Is there paralysis in the U. S. government structure? Is President Reagan a "lame duck" President? Are the financial interests of the Eastern Liberal Establishment in or out of control over policy? Is the "military-industrial complex" in control? With liberals such as Sam Nunn and Les Aspin in control of the Armed Services Committees in Congress, does Weinberger have any influence? If the Liberal Establishment has been kicked out of influence, then who kicked them out? Is this kicking force now in control in Washington?

Decidedly, Moscow is slightly confused in the matter of these tactical questions. For them, the practical question is: With whom must we deal in the West, if we wish to have an arms-control agreement, say over European INF weapons, which would gain us the 12-to-18 months of time that we need? Can Reagan deliver? Does the "Reagan Card" still exist in the same way it had existed at the Reykjavik summit? If Reagan is knocked out and Don Regan out of power, can George Shultz deliver? Is there a power center in Washington, or should the deal be sought elsewhere?

It is indeed a very interesting turn of events when former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, during a secret presentation at the latest Trilateral Commission meeting in San Francisco, proposed that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher be supported by the financial powers of the U.S.A., to act, at least in the interim period, as the tacitly recognized spokesman of the Western Alliance toward the Soviets. Kissinger cited the "impasse" in Washington, Thatcher's own virtues, and the contention that Moscow, out of some great respect toward Britain, would be happy to have Thatcher be their interlocutor with the West.

### **Thatcher as Western spokesman**

We are not in a position to evaluate the sincerity of Kissinger's proposal to the Trilateral Commission gathering. We wonder: Would the Soviets themselves, with the precious little that they know of what is occurring in Washington, be in a position to rely on Kissinger's suggestion that Thatcher be taken as the West's designated spokesman? Even if the British Establishment were to be found behind Kissinger's recommendation, and even if Mrs. Thatcher had been so designated, and even if Kissinger's recommendation were to have been accepted—even so, what conclusion would the Soviets draw?

The Bukharinite Dr. Georgii Arbatov is right, from his standpoint, to argue, with his typical dose of hysteria, that President Reagan is "more progressive" on the nuclear weapons issue than Margaret Thatcher. Especially if Arbatov researches the origins of the Winston Churchill quote Mrs. Thatcher employed at her Kremlin banquet. He will discover that Churchill's advice to retain nuclear weapons was offered directly against the proposals of his contemporary, Lord Bertrand Russell, the man who, secretly during 1954-55 negotiations between the Liberal Establishment and Khrushchov, advanced the general anti-nuclear, anti-science, one-world-government package which was put to implementation after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, under the rubric of "post-industrial society."

Thatcher's evocation of that particular Churchillian quote at the Kremlin, was a very well chosen message to certain Kremlin factions. This was one of the matters to which Arbatov reacted the following day. It was probably a twist that Kissinger had not anticipated. And one which must have been savored by certain Churchill enthusiasts in the Washington administration.