

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

General Scherer warns of Soviets

The former military intelligence head from West Germany defines the Gorbachov threat to the West.

In a press conference at the National Press Club Apr. 27 attended by embassies from 13 nations and leading international press, Brig. Gen. Paul Albert Scherer (ret.), the former head of the Military Intelligence Service for the Federal Republic of Germany, outlined the grave danger the Soviet Union continues to represent to the free world.

General Scherer described the internal crisis facing Soviet leader Gorbachov, and the impossibility of any "convergence" of the West with the Soviets regardless of Gorbachov's fate. He cited the personality change in Gorbachov over the last six months, which has found him irritable and depressed in public. This is due, Scherer said, to the failure of Gorbachov's internal reform policies, pivoted on currency and price reforms. The delay of these reforms until 1991, at the earliest, is the most important signal that Gorbachov's program is failing.

Nonetheless, any one of three scenarios for Gorbachov—his immediate ouster or assassination, his demise after a protracted struggle for power, or even his eventual "success"—would present the free world with a Soviet Union still dedicated to global domination.

Scherer said that the United States, in particular, "cannot survive without asserting its influence effectively on both coasts" of the Eurasian land mass; namely, in Western Europe and Asia. He added that the "trading nations" of West Germany and Japan cannot exist without the full military support of the U.S. He warned of the danger of perpetuating the "enemy image" of West

Germany and Japan inside the United States.

If the Soviets neutralized Europe, and the Europeans were to go to work for the Soviets, he said, "such a shift would cause the lights to go out in the U.S. very rapidly."

He said the Soviets remain very committed to the fight for world domination, waging an "underground war" unrelentingly since World War II. An additional 25,000 Soviet agents have recently been insinuated into the peace and other movements of Western Europe, there are 500,000 active Soviet agents already operating in the free world, and there is more Soviet infiltration in the U.S. now than during the early 1950s.

Areas directly next to the East bloc, "where the two blocs collide," such as West Germany, Turkey, and South Korea, are prime targets, where the Soviets do not invent their own movements, but "jump on moving trains." Muslim fundamentalism is one such train the Soviets are exploiting in Turkey, he said, as they did in Egypt to assassinate Sadat.

The combination of Syria and Islamic fundamentalism is key to Soviet designs for destabilizing the Middle East. Scherer warned that it is there, where all sides retain nuclear and chemical warfare capabilities, that World War III is most likely to break out, if it does.

In Ibero-America, "the Soviets hope to transform the strategic relations there by exploiting the issue of indebtedness of these countries with their 'passionate suffering' to destroy the Western world." In Asia, the re-

cent killing of a U.S. colonel in the Philippines confirms the "Pacific emphasis" that the Soviets retain. The Soviets are interested in building up India as the world's third superpower as part of their global strategy.

Scherer said that "convergence theories" which envision a gradual reduction in tensions are misguided: "Even those who seek with good will to reform the Soviet Union into a democracy will wind up with their backs to the wall."

This is because, he said, the Russians have never gone through the succession of "cathartic" experiences, which fundamentally change the psyche, such as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the revolutions in America and France, in which the West has shared. "Russia has always been outside of these developments. . . . They have not trodden the path of Western civilization for the last 400 years," he said. "Therefore, we must doubt the ripeness of the Soviet population to adopt democratic ideas as we have them in the West." Instead, he warned, "There will be blood raining out of heaven in the Soviet Union in the coming period."

Soviet "peace initiatives," such as Gorbachov's offer to cut conventional forces in Europe, serve Soviet self-interest in a number of ways, Scherer said. The Soviets are looking for loans from the West, the abolition of Co-Com (the 16-nation Coordinating Committee on Multilateral Export Controls which prohibits high technology trade of potential military value with the Communists), and access to Western technology. They also need to save money on their own military, while improving its offensive efficiency (by producing, for example, 10 of the most advanced tanks in the world daily). All of these aims, Scherer pointed out, gain from the Soviet conventional force reduction proposal.