

European oligarchs go 'ape' against strategic defense

by Don Baier

On Nov. 7, Soviet agent-of-influence Henry A. Kissinger appeared on West German television to mobilize Europeans to support his Nixon administration cronies George Shultz and Brent Scowcroft in a coup to take U.S. defense policy away from President Reagan. Kissinger proposed Shultz or Scowcroft as "ideal choices for the job" of arms-control czar in the second Reagan administration. Their assignment: to negotiate U.S. surrender to Soviet demands, and abort Reagan's strategic defense plan to protect America and Europe from nuclear missile attack.

It didn't take Kissinger's allies in Europe long to act on Henry's "Get Reagan" instructions.

"We have to start negotiating soon," said Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on Nov. 12, "because we are on the verge of new technologies in space which would cost so much to develop."

It was Maggie Thatcher's second major anti-SDI speech this year. In July, she warned of space being "turned into a new and terrible theatre of war" unless "we address ourselves to the new and urgent challenge of arms control in outer space."

Her latest call to stop beam-weapons development at London's Lord Mayor's banquet came just weeks before the visit to Britain of Mikhail Gorbachov, the Soviet Politburo member who is frequently mentioned as a possible successor to Soviet President Konstantin Chernenko. Gorbachov will be the highest ranking Soviet to visit Britain in eight years.

On Nov. 12, West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher visited NATO Secretary-General Lord Carrington in Brussels for one hour of talks. They both agreed, according to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, that "a positive signal concerning arms control and limitation" can be expected

from the Warsaw Pact foreign ministers and defense ministers meeting on Dec. 3-4.

Meanwhile, an outpouring of the vilest anti-American propaganda is blanketing the continent, with the President as its chief target. Its venom and ferocity suggest that the same Moscow-allied forces that carried out the assassination of India's Indira Gandhi are advertising for a new John Hinckley to step forward. Just as in the operation against Mrs. Gandhi, the loudest voices are coming from Britain, the organizational "staging area" for the anti-Reagan forces.

On Nov. 11, Peregrine Worsthorpe, the deputy editor of Britain's largest Sunday newspaper, the *Sunday Telegraph*, compared the President's re-election to "the way Caligula's horse was chosen as Consul" during the most decadent days of the Roman empire—"just as the latter choice suddenly lit up the decadence of late imperial rule, so does the former light up the decadence today of late American democracy."

David Watt, former chief of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the parent organization of Kissinger's New York Council on Foreign Relations, stressed in the *London Times* of Nov. 9 that defeating the Reagan "Star Wars" initiative was the top priority. Declaring himself "thoroughly opposed" to Reagan's anti-missile defense program, Watt exclaimed: "The abolition of nuclear weapons is not desirable anyway. Nuclear weapons have been a thoroughly beneficent factor in human affairs."

A further refinement on this general "party line" accepted, as we stated at the outset, by a majority current in the British oligarchy, was reflected in the Nov. 8 editorial of the *Financial Times*, "Tests beyond the triumph." The editorial promised Ronald Reagan "the political fate of Herbert Hoover and the second Eisenhower administration," and under-

lined that "President Johnson in 1964 and President Nixon in 1972 won by margins comparable to President Reagan's this year only to see their authority blown to tatters in one instance within a couple of years, and the other within a couple of months."

What Reagan should do to avoid such a descent into the predicted hells of depression, recession, or Watergate, is simple, the *Times* continues: "Mr. Reagan's new willingness to take arms control seriously is very welcome. . . . The president may have to choose between the serious measure of arms control he now seems to want and the continuance of his buildup of defense expenditure. In particular, it would be reassuring if he were to reconsider some of the new strategic weapons programs and especially the so-called star wars initiative." Short of that, it is predicted, "economic reality" will "catch up with him. . . . The newly elected President can take tough decisions, or wait for tough decisions to be imposed upon him."

Faint signs of realism

This venom stands in considerable contrast to a minority faction of the British oligarchy, which has been coming to the conclusion that the Soviets' aggressive intentions are ominous indeed. One spokesman for this faction was Sir Nigel Bagnall, the general who commands the Army on the Rhine and NATO's North Group. On Nov. 1, General Bagnall gave an interview to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* warning of Soviet plans for a surprise attack on West Germany.

Also showing unusual signs of alarm at Soviet influence in the West was Lord Chalfont in the House of Lords debate on Oct. 30. Chalfont demanded that there be an immediate investigation of the Generals for Peace group, a grouping of retired pacifist generals such as notorious KGB front-man, German "Green" general Kurt Bastian.

This grouping is clearly in the minority, however.

In Germany, too

At the same time, in West Germany, the newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*, a "shared asset" of British intelligence and the Soviet KGB, featured a cover-story attack on Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative that pictured the President in the costume of the villain Darth Vader from the movie "Star Wars."

Portraying the United States as planning to invest \$500 billion to get a full three-layered anti-missile defensive system, *Spiegel* claimed Reagan's "offer" to share this technology with the U.S.S.R. was "inspired" by . . . Henry Kissinger! And this offer, *Spiegel* whined, was only a deception—the United States wants superiority in space.

Pity the poor Soviets, *Spiegel* urged, because the Russians are falling behind in the technological arms race. Therefore, *Spiegel* argued, Moscow has no choice but to resist Washington's space strategy by threatening war: "The Kremlin might again heat up the crisis spots of the past in Central Europe and elsewhere any time."

Spiegel also complained vigorously that in late summer, the German Federal Security Council reversed previous opposition to the Reagan policy and recommended that West Germany make its best use of the new U.S. strategy. As it has for some time, *Spiegel* is currently campaigning to replace the government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl with a "Red-Green coalition" government of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party environmentalists, that would take West Germany out of NATO.

Economy seen as Reagan's weak spot

The anti-Star Wars forces see the crumbling U.S. economy and escalating budget deficit as their lever to kill the President's plan, in line with Mrs. Thatcher's complaint that "new technologies in space cost so much to develop."

The *Economist*, mouthpiece of the London financial establishment, began its cover story/editorial on the U.S. elections, "Landslide, mandate, arrogance, bump." Pointedly recalling the fate of Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson among others, the *Economist* claimed, "Reversals big or small have swiftly followed the triumphs of the past four American presidents to be returned to office with smashing majorities."

The crumbling economy will necessitate deep cuts in the defense budget and social services, the *Economist* forecast. "Without the economic success, the slogan 'America is back' would hardly have been persuasive," the *Economist* reviewed the election campaign, admitting the ballyhooed "recovery" is a hoax.

Therefore, when the U.S. dollar collapses in 1985, Reagan will have to apply Mondale's austerity program, the *Economist* contended.

Under the banner of cutting the federal budget deficit, Treasury Secretary Don Regan, budget director David Stockman, CEA acting director William Niskanen, and the White House Palace Guard met on Nov. 12 to put the final touches on a package of budget-cutting recommendations for the FY 1986 budget to present to the President later this week.

Stockman and other administration "fiscal experts" are now predicting that the budget deficits for the next few years will exceed \$200 billion—\$30 billion more than the administration's previous estimates.

This has led to a new chorus of demands that Reagan take strong measures to slash the deficit. On Nov. 13, Sen. Dan Quayle (R-Ind.)

Nov. 8 urging him to create a Kissinger-style "bipartisan commission," to be composed of House and Senate leaders, administration officials, and private business executives, to come up with a plan by March 1 to cut the deficit by \$100 billion. Henry A. Kissinger has run the principal "bipartisan commissions" created during the Reagan administration: the panel on Central America whose recommendations are embroiling the U.S. deeper in "limited wars," and the Scowcroft Commission, which was used to impose on the President fatal compromises on the MX missile program.

British press heaps abuse on Reagan

The Economist, Nov. 10-16, first part of editorial, entitled "Landslide sweet and sour."

Landslide, mandate, arrogance, bump. The declension has a rhythm to it, like "silk, satin, cotton, rags" or "rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief." It is not, of course, an iron law of politics that big victories beget big reversals, but it is too common a pattern for a wise politician to neglect. Reversals, big or small, have swiftly followed the triumphs of the past four American presidents to be returned to office with smashing majorities. Mr Reagan has won a mighty victory; let him use it better than others have done.

In 1936, a similar victory made an overweening Franklin Roosevelt think that he could pack the Supreme Court that had so frustrated his New Deal; he was soon rebuked by congress and, in 1938, saw his party lose 70 seats in the house of representatives and seven in the senate. After the huge vote of confidence in Dwight Eisenhower in 1956, aimlessness and mild scandal led to an inconsequential second term; in 1958, the Republicans lost 47 seats in the house and 13 in the senate. Lyndon Johnson surged back to the White House in 1964 only to slink out of it, hated and humbled, four year later; in the meantime, in 1966, the Democrats had lost 48 seats in the house and four in the senate. And in 1972 Richard Nixon made a sweep almost as clean as Mr Reagan's on Tuesday, only to be driven from office in disgrace in 1974; that year, his party lost 48 seats in the house and five in the senate.

History need not repeat itself, but it is not difficult to see how it could. Old age, bad advisors, bad judgment, bad luck, any of these could turn Mr Reagan's second term sour. A recession will not be easy to avoid. Mr Reagan has already presided over the hardest economic times since the great depression, as well as the most spectacular recovery since the Korean war. Subtler management by the Federal Reserve . . . and by a re-elected Mr Reagan are going to be needed if the free lunch provided by tax cuts and defence increases is not to be found to have been rather expensive after all. Mr Reagan's campaign this year has been waged chiefly on his dual claim to have restored the economy and national esteem. Yet without the economic success, the slogan "America is back" would hardly have been persuasive. It would certainly

not have been in 1982, when Mr Reagan's standing in the opinion polls was lower than Mr Carter's two years into his presidency. . . .

Sunday Times, Nov. 11, from "The Man Who Could be President," accompanied by a cartoon of George Bush standing behind the presidential podium removing a Reagan mask.

If the "awful-awful" happens—as Ronald Reagan describes the death threats to a president—the man who would take over is George Bush. What kind of leader would the vice-president make? Jon Connell reports from Washington.

It was a routine morning at the White House and the president was working at his desk in the Oval Office. Suddenly a tall figure burst into the room wearing a grotesque Ronald Reagan rubber mask, complete with rosy cheeks and lopsided grin. Neither the president nor his aides were alarmed. . . . It was the vice-president George Bush. . . .

But Bush does not have Reagan's charisma, and he will never excite people as Reagan does. There are some who feel that his best hope lies in the "awful-awful" happening or in Reagan becoming too old or too ill to carry on. As some of the more ghoulish political buffs like to point out, every president first elected in a year ending in zero since the year 1840 has died in office. . . .

Sunday Telegraph, Nov. 11, "Reagan—King or President?" by Peregrine Worsthorne.

The best thing to be said of President Reagan is that he provokes progressives into paroxysms of rage. But perhaps, for a change, we Tories should try to think about Reagan without allowing our judgment to be affected in his favour by the silly things his left-wing critics say of him. . . .

Something very strange is happening in the world's oldest and greatest democracy which has always claimed to be the pioneer of new and more sophisticated forms of popular participation in government. It is fast reverting to very ancient forms of government which may even have more in common with imperial Rome than monarchical Europe. This is not to suggest, I hasten to add, that the way a Hollywood actor has been chosen as President has any very close parallel to the way Caligula's horse was chosen as Consul. But just as the latter choice suddenly lit up the decadence of later imperial rule, so does the former light up the decadence today of late American democracy. A process of trivialisation has set in. . . .

Of course President Reagan is a marvellous neo-royal symbol of "America the Powerful," and of course he won last week's election by a landslide. But there is something a bit ersatz about both achievements, neither of which may prove authentic enough to withstand the challenge of hard times, should they ever return.