

Soviets stoke replay of 1961 Berlin crisis

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

Presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. released the following statement on May 3. The statement was widely distributed in Washington.

All signs point toward Moscow's building up a new Berlin crisis, resembling that during the first year of President Kennedy's administration, back in 1961.

The first sign began early last week, as Moscow announced suddenly an "indefinite postponement" of the most prominently scheduled visit to Moscow by West German President Richard von Weizsäcker. Cross-checks showed that the cancellation of von Weizsäcker's visit was only one of many cancellations of Soviet Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachov's travels and Moscow appointments with foreign dignitaries for the months of May and June.

The cancellation of approximately two months' schedule of meetings with foreign dignitaries by a Soviet head of government always means that something very big is about to break. Some Western intelligence channels hinted that perhaps Gorbachov was in trouble at home. Some among the most authoritative Western specialists in Soviet affairs pointed, instead, to signs of a strategic shift by Moscow, away from emphasis on economic "joint ventures" with Western financier interests, toward a more openly confrontationist posture. I agreed with the latter view.

Then, on Friday, May 1, in West Berlin, there was an explosion of rioting, led by the Socialist Unity Party (SEW) of West Berlin. The SEW is the West Berlin branch of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) of East Germany. The riots continued, with increased violence, on Saturday, May 2. Dozens of West Berlin stores were looted, buildings burned, and many combatants on both sides, police and SEW-led

rioters, injured.

Such SEW-led rioting in West Berlin could not occur without direct Soviet orders. Although nominally an arm of the SED, the SEW is directed by the East German secret police ("Stasi") from its Alexanderplatz office in East Berlin. All such East German paramilitary operations in West Berlin and West Germany are run, traditionally, directly by the Soviet military intelligence, GRU; however, operations on the level of the SEW-led riots challenging the Four-Power Agreement, would be coordinated by the office of the East German head of government, under direction from the top level of government in Moscow.

The riot situation in West Berlin this holiday weekend, is a replay of the manner in which Soviet dictator Nikita Khrushchov ordered East German satrap Walter Ulbricht to orchestrate the 1961 Berlin crisis. In no case, would Moscow allow the SEW to be engaged in a two-day riot scenario of the type which occurred, except as a way of directly confronting the Western powers with the fact of a Soviet-directed build-up in the direction of a strategic showdown.

The question is posed: "Is this the reason for the sudden, two-month cancellation of Gorbachov's agenda of meetings with foreign dignitaries?" Without question, the Berlin riots have something to do with that sudden change of schedules. Since 1947-49, Berlin has always been the point at which Moscow tests the political nerve of the U.S. government. Each time the United States has made concessions on Berlin during such crises, Moscow has assumed that Washington has shown a lack of nerve, and has followed the Berlin showdown with a Soviet adventure somewhere else, as it went ahead with the 1962 Cuban Missiles showdown following Kennedy's back-down over Berlin in 1961.

There is no question that Gorbachov has unleashed a new Berlin crisis. The questions to be answered include: 1) How big a Berlin crisis is Moscow committed to build up? 2) What crisis-spots in addition to Berlin are part of Moscow's larger agenda for the coming two months? 3) Why has Moscow made this very sudden shift in strategic posture at this particular time?

For the first two questions, I have no firm answers at this moment. On the third question some answers are already clear.

First, Moscow is trying to play what it considers Gorbachov's "Reagan Card." Since August-October 1986, Moscow has been convinced that President Reagan is so desperate to save the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings policy that the President will pay almost any political price to secure an early "zero-option" agreement with Gorbachov, and to leave the presidency with his economic and "Iran-Contra" failures buried under his reputation of having become "a man of peace."

Moscow has been convinced, since the "Danilov Affair of August 1986," that the President will capitulate to Soviet blackmail, as a price for getting the negotiations which the President desires. The U.S. capitulations on the cases of Kurt Waldheim, Karl Linnaas, and the April 21st raid on my friends' offices, have shown Moscow a Reagan administration willingness to submit to heavy Soviet blackmail pressures on these and other issues. Now, Moscow presses President Reagan to override the objections to the proposed "zero-option" from such sources as the governments of France and Britain. Since the President's most recent capitulations, more Soviet blackmail was inevitable.

If President Reagan were to agree to such a "zero-option" agreement, the result would be worse than Chamberlain's and Daladier's 1938 capitulation to Hitler at Munich. That is bad enough, but there is something worse afoot.

Second, however, some senior Western specialists on Soviet affairs suggest a second reason for the recent sharp turn in Moscow's policies. My own estimates agree with this view.

The event which set off the sudden turn in Moscow, was Moscow's perception that a general financial collapse of the West was about to occur. In Soviet logic, this means that Moscow would tend strongly to repeat what happened in 1929, when Stalin overthrew the Bukharin government and launched a policy of Soviet semi-autarkism known to specialists as the Soviet "Third Period." The best Western Soviet specialists estimate, that what is now happening in Moscow is a fight between the so-called "globalists," those committed to economic "joint ventures" with Western financial interests, and the "nationalists," those who say that the Soviet economy must rely more heavily on its own internal resources during the period of Western financial crisis, just as Stalin did during the 1929-34 period.

This does not mean any automatic dumping of Gorbachov. Although Gorbachov has been able to wear the smiling death-mask of Bukharin, for purposes of dealing with Buk-

harin's admirers among Western financial circles, Gorbachov is a true political grandson of Stalin, and is a highly popular and integral part of the overwhelmingly dominant faction in Moscow now, the faction conducting the present turn. It does mean, that Moscow will turn very nasty, and be more willing to engage in open strategic showdowns, in Berlin and elsewhere.

Both factors come into play in a new Berlin crisis. It is a way of determining whether President Reagan is as weak-willed as Moscow wishfully believes the President to have

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become over the recent two years. It is also a kind of action in Germany, in which Moscow would not have engaged at this time, unless Moscow were in the process of a turn to something resembling a "Third Period."

If the President shows signs of capitulating in face of the Berlin crisis, this will serve Moscow's design for decoupling a terrified, virtually abandoned West Germany from its alliance with the United States. Moscow's agents hope to lure the United States into choosing an actually strategically pathetic Israel as a strategic replacement for a strategically vital West Germany. In that case, Moscow would have rendered Western Europe nearly defenseless, and could proceed to gobble up most of the world more or less at leisure. Moscow would probably gobble up most of the Middle East almost immediately, and probably move soon to destabilize Pakistan and establish a warm-water puppet-state of Baluchistan, or similar early takeovers.

If the President refuses to yield an inch on the security of West Berlin, Moscow will back away, and direct its aggressiveness to alternative targets.

So far, Moscow's "Cold War" is not yet a solid freeze, but there is a very sudden and very chilly chill in the spring winds blowing into Western Europe from the East.