

RESPONDING TO GORBACHEV'S TOUGH LINE

George Bush is wise to postpone his planned February 11-13 Moscow summit with Mikhail Gorbachev, at which the two leaders were to have signed a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). While Bush cited the war in the Persian Gulf as his main reason for the delay, in fact he had several other good reasons, including Gorbachev's armed crackdown in the Baltic states, Gorbachev's switch to a hard line in Soviet domestic policy, and Moscow's failure to live up to arms control commitments already made, particularly the November 17 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

To make sure that Moscow gets the message that America is losing patience with Gorbachev's backsliding on foreign policy and domestic reforms, Bush must do more than just postpone the summit. He also should: 1) suspend the \$1 billion in United States loan guarantees to the Soviet Union; 2) delay support for Soviet membership in international trade organizations like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT); 3) delay submitting the CFE Treaty to the Senate for ratification until Moscow provides accurate data on its forces in Europe and complies with the letter and spirit of the agreement; and 4) refuse to consider signing a START agreement until Moscow lives up to arms commitments already made.

Veering Toward Repression. Regardless of whether Gorbachev is leading the retreat from reform or has become a political captive of the Soviet military and hard-line communists, the Soviet regime has veered toward repression. The trend first was evident in October when Gorbachev scrapped the "500 Day" economic reform package of Stanislav Shatalin, which was designed to move the Soviet Union toward a market-oriented economy. There followed the December 20 resignation of reform-minded Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze, who warned of a "coming dictatorship." Then came the January 13 Red Army crackdown in Lithuania in which fourteen people were killed and, a week later, the bloody storming of the Interior Ministry in Latvia by elite army "black beret" forces in which five were killed. On January 26, Gorbachev issued a decree ordering secret police (KGB) and army patrols in major Soviet cities and the next day he empowered the KGB to search private businesses and freeze private business assets. All the while, the official Soviet media have reverted to the kind of hard-line reports that characterized the first seven decades of Bolshevik dictatorship. In the wake of all this, a Bush-Gorbachev meeting in Moscow would have put Bush's implicit stamp of approval on Gorbachev's abandonment of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

Even without Moscow's crackdown, there was good reason for Bush to call off his planned START-signing ceremony with Gorbachev next month. Evidence is mounting that Gorbachev cannot assure Soviet compliance with the arms control commitments that he has made. This is most apparent regarding the CFE Treaty, signed in Paris on November 17, 1990, by the NATO and Warsaw Pact states. Evidence of Soviet bad faith on CFE includes claiming to have stationed in Europe approximately 20,000 fewer tanks, artillery pieces, and armored combat vehicles than NATO as-

assessments indicate are there. Moscow also arbitrarily has designated three Red Army divisions — each with about 225 tanks and 550 other armored vehicles — as “shore defense” naval forces exempt from CFE. Technically, the Soviet Union has until February 17 to resolve these issues, but U.S. officials see no evidence that it is preparing to do so. These dubious claims come on the heels of Moscow’s transfer of at least 70,000 tanks, artillery pieces, and other weapons to behind the Ural Mountains. This exempts them from the destruction required by the CFE treaty had the weapons remained in Europe. In a January 9 article in the Communist Party newspaper, *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, a hard-line critic of the CFE Treaty, identified as V. Litov, admitted that the transfer of weapons circumvents CFE, but praised it nonetheless as necessary to “make up for the miscalculations of our diplomacy” — a clear broadside at the Soviet Foreign Ministry, which negotiated the CFE Treaty under the instructions of Shevardnadze.

Delays and Backtracking. Another disturbing development is Moscow’s failure to notify Washington of ballistic missile test launches as required by the 1988 Agreement on Notification of Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) Launches. Some U.S. officials told The Heritage Foundation that they also are concerned that Moscow is delaying dismantling the Krasnoyarsk radar complex, which Gorbachev in September 1989 ordered destroyed by the end of 1991. This radar violates the 1972 Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. U.S. START negotiators, meanwhile, are complaining that Moscow is backtracking on negotiating concessions already made, including rules for counting manned bombers. These developments follow revelations last March that Moscow secretly transferred SS-23 intermediate-range missiles to Czechoslovakia, the former East Germany, and perhaps Iraq, in violation of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty that bans these weapons entirely.

To avoid committing the U.S. to further arms agreements that Gorbachev cannot or will not uphold, and to signal America’s concern over Moscow’s new domestic hard line, Bush should:

- ◆ **Suspend the \$1 billion in U.S. guarantees for loans to the Soviet Union;**
- ◆ **Delay U.S. support for Soviet membership in the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT);**
- ◆ **Delay submitting the CFE Treaty to the Senate for ratification until the Soviet Union has presented accurate data on its forces in Europe and withdrawn spurious claims; and**
- ◆ **Refuse to sign a START Treaty at least until Gorbachev demonstrates — by complying with arms control agreements already in place — that he has the will and ability to comply with new arms agreements.**

In backing Gorbachev thus far, Bush has given him every benefit of every doubt, even as Gorbachev has presided over a sharp turn away from reform. It made sense for Bush to back Gorbachev when the Soviet leader’s name was synonymous with movement toward democratic institutions and a market economy in the Soviet Union. No longer, however, is Gorbachev such a synonym. Support for a Gorbachev without reform does not serve the interests of the Soviet people or America. The Bush Administration thus must contemplate revising its view of Gorbachev and adjust U.S. policy to take account of Gorbachev’s hard line and Moscow’s increasing untrustworthiness on arms control. Postponing the summit is the correct first step.

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