

**press
review****EUROPE — A PAWN IN THE HANDS OF THE SUPERPOWERS**

«ZËRI I POPULLIT»

Europe has long ago been involved in the war plans of Washington and Moscow. These plans take precise account of the cities and industrial centres of the continent based on the information and photographs taken from their spy satellites. The present political developments in the relations between the two superpowers are showing ever more clearly the place and role assigned to Europe in the American and Soviet war plans. In the name of the defence of peace the superpowers have been publishing plans of their preparations for nuclear war which the American and Soviet strategists intend to wage somewhere outside their borders — in Europe.

Although both Moscow and Washington talk much about the «defence» of their allies, they never consider the possibility of their own countries being turned into theatres of a nuclear war. This was once more apparent in the «new prospects of defence» against ballistic missiles presented by Reagan recently. Immediately thereafter, in an interview intended to be an

answer to Reagan, the new chief of the Kremlin, Andropov, reaffirmed in violent undiplomatic language that the European countries were destined to become «nuclear hostages» of the Washington-Moscow rivalry.

It is not the first time that the superpowers openly declare their plans of transforming Europe into a potential theatre of nuclear war. Reagan publicly developed this idea in the autumn 1981 when he declared that a local nuclear war in Europe need not imply a war between the two superpowers. The facts show that the superpowers consider the European countries as potential fields of their nuclear clashes. That is why either of them have turned the continent into a gigantic arsenal of its nuclear armaments.

Both talk of a nuclear retaliation and this either starts from the European soil or ends here. Some days ago, talking about war on the European continent, the NATO commander-in-chief in Europe, the American general Rogers, stressed that «the forces of the Atlantic Alliance can-

not organize a direct and effective defence without immediately going over to the nuclear escalation of the conflict.» Only one day later, the Soviet minister of defence, Ustinov, addressed himself to the European peoples and threatened them in these cynical and sinister words: «The governments of the Western countries must keep it well in mind that they will not come off unscathed, because we will retaliate against objectives in Western Europe.» For Moscow nuclear retaliation is calculated in such a manner as to extinguish all life on our continent. «This nuclear retaliation», says Ustinov, «might spell the end of life in most West-European countries.»

In their plans of defence and attack both Moscow and Washington consider our continent as a cordon sanitaire from which to defend their territories from each other's nuclear strikes. Both superpowers do their utmost to maintain the European countries in this role of cordon sanitaire. For this purpose they do not hesitate each to use as a means of blackmail the threat posed by the nuclear

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weapons of its rival, if they want to accept the Soviet or American nuclear missiles on their territories. The NATO general secretary, the general Luns, warned Europe that «the United States might reassess its role in NATO if the members of this alliance change their mind about the stationing of medium-range missiles in Europe by the end of this year.» The allusion could not have been more clear. If the American plan for the stationing of nuclear weapons in Western Europe is turned down, the latter will remain alone and undefended in front of the Soviet atomic retaliation.

Washington's pressure and threats do not differ from Moscow's. The official organ of the Soviet government, the newspaper «Izvestia», indicate the alternative the European peoples are faced with: «Either agreement (which means toeing the Moscow political line), or confrontation with the Soviet Union», suggesting that there is no middle road.

Recently Reagan came out with another proposal about the fate of Europe, which will be discussed at the Geneva talks. The Soviet reply was immediate, rejecting the new American proposal out of hand

as unacceptable to Moscow. The essence of Washington and Moscow's proposals and counter-proposals is the same, with each superpower trying to ensure its superiority over its rival so as to establish its nuclear hegemony over Europe. Be that as it may, even if an agreement is signed in Geneva, or Reagan and Andropov meet and come to an understanding between them on some sort of parity of their nuclear missiles in Europe, nothing changes for the peoples of our continent. The superpowers will continue to consider them as pawns in their nuclear game.

