

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

A long-overdue look at the Red Army

Some people in Germany have rediscovered the aggressive character of the Soviets' military policy.

In the late summer and autumn of 1984, contributors to this magazine talked to military experts here, some of them ranking officials of the Defense Ministry. In most of the encounters, which were intended to gather and compare facts on Soviet military power, the experts disagreed with this magazine's analysis of the Ogarkov Plan and the Red Army's unchanged strategy of an annihilating, war-winning attack.

Said a ranking official of the Ministry of Defense: "I can agree with everything you've just presented here. But you are not allowed to tell the public." Why not? "If you tell the public, you create panic, and that is more dangerous than the facts."

The official added a threatening remark, "Everybody trying to create such panic among the population would meet the firm opposition and resistance of this government."

From the summer of 1984 until July 1987, this pact of officially decreed silence has predominated among most ranking military experts. Fortunately, a change is now visible.

On July 13, Defense Minister Manfred Wörner caused quite a stir when he addressed an international seminar on defense policy. "In spite of all recent Soviet arms-control diplomacy," he said, "the Soviet armed forces have rearmed and modernized at full pace." Wörner said there was "full continuity" in Soviet armaments policy since "at least the early 1970s, when détente began." And, he added: "As before, Soviet strategy aims at offensive operations on the territory of the Federal Republic from the start of

military conflict."

Because of that, Wörner said, he doesn't like Gorbachov's term "common home of all Europeans," which implies the absence of the Americans from the European continent. A Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals," often talked about these days, is not possible as long as Soviet armaments policy still aims at surprise attack against and victory over Western Europe, and first of all, he warned, West Germany.

Because of that unchanged Soviet military policy, a "zero-zero option" leading toward total denuclearization of defense in Central Europe would not find support in the Bonn government, "even if that view is not liked in other Western capitals," said Wörner. He was clearly referring to new attacks from the U.S. State Department, charging that his Defense Ministry was a "source of constant obstruction of a Geneva arms-control settlement."

Wörner added some very straightforward reminders to the disengagers at the State Department and in the U.S. Congress: "No serious American politician would deny that the alliance with Europe is a pillar of the American world power position. The United States can't secure the opposite North Atlantic coast on their own. More than that, the political, economic, cultural, and also strategic connections have grown so tight that an amputation would cause the most severe harm to the American organism as well. . . . Between the United States and Western Europe, there exists a strategic symbiosis that can be disbanded only with damages for both sides.

"There is no efficient defense of Europe without close cooperation and partnership with the United States, and its strong presence in Europe. That is why all tendencies toward unilateralism or even isolationism in the United States must be fought with the same rigor as those dangerous theses of a Europeanized defense."

Wörner's statements caused some very alarmed headlines in the West German media, and also in Moscow and the United States.

Then, on July 16, Vice-Admiral Dieter Wellershoff, the Inspector-General of the West German Armed Forces, created new waves when he presented the "1987 Strategic Comparison" report to the press.

As Wellershoff remarked, he and many military officers believe that Gorbachov's *glasnost* and *perestroika* serve only one purpose—"to make the Soviet military machine much more efficient." This policy, Wellershoff said, can be documented with new figures on Soviet armaments. Comparable NATO armaments in Europe are in brackets: more than 50,000 tanks [17,800], [14,000], 2,265 helicopters and gunships [680], and 4.0 million men [2.2 million].

Wellershoff said this study, the first of its kind since summer 1984(!), was made public three months before the "official NATO study due in September," because it was desirable to "provide to the already ongoing arms-control debate some basic facts on increased capabilities of the Warsaw Pact for in-depth attacks on a very large scale." Admiral Wellershoff warned the American administration: "In spite of the zero option policy, a nuclear capability that can reach into Soviet territory" should be kept at NATO's front-line in the Federal Republic of Germany.