

Is Bush planning to 'dismantle' NATO?

by Michael Liebig

In his address to a conference in West Germany sponsored by the military think tank Wehrkunde, U.S. Defense Secretary-designate John Tower declared that the postwar era is definitely drawing to a close. Such statements about the end of the postwar order in Europe, of course, are hardly new; but Tower was delivering a signal about the political orientation of the incoming Bush administration toward Western Europe, and especially the Federal Republic of Germany.

The London *Sunday Telegraph* on Jan. 29 published an article on the new U.S. ambassador to Bonn, Vernon Walters. It reported that the Bush administration is preparing for a "post-NATO era," and that NATO is "in its death-throes." This, the paper claimed, will become clear over the course of this year, when the Soviet Union makes a sensational "Germany proposal." Such a progressive collapse of NATO, however, will be accompanied by a no less dramatic renaissance in the "special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain. The United States will be able to solidly rely on the British, the paper said, as opposed to the West Germans.

Once again, such assertions are nothing new; but whereas the Reagan administration's "grand policy" was substantially aimed at maintaining the status quo in Europe, people in the Bush administration seem prepared to go beyond mere game-plans for new geopolitical realities in Europe, into actively promoting them.

It is no accident that President Bush is first going to meet twice with Japanese Prime Minister Takeshita, then with Prince Charles, and then with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Only after that, will he meet with other leaders in continental Europe.

The Jan. 28-29 Wehrkunde meeting in Munich fleshed

out the Bush administration's orientation and "new leadership style" toward continental Europe. West Germany certainly bore the brunt of the U.S. attacks, but it was easy to see the entirety of Continental Europe was implied. Toward West Germany, the U.S. delegation continually used the term "We're sick and tired," and made what amounted to ultimatums, particularly on the question of "burden sharing." Western Europe, and especially West Germany, they said, must take on a greater share of the expense of defending NATO and beyond.

If that doesn't happen, then the U.S. Congress will reduce American troop presence in Europe, even if "President Bush were to make efforts" to stop them. Next to be brought up was the "Libyan affair," and then Germany's attitude toward low-altitude training flights of NATO aircraft over West German territory. Finally came the U.S. ultimatum to modernize the tactical nuclear weapons stationed in West Germany.

Lest there be any misunderstanding: All these U.S. demands are in substance quite justified! But at issue here was not—even if it was at one time—the urgency of solving some long-overdue technical problems in the Alliance; rather, this was merely window-dressing for the Bush administration's actual intended policy of a "stepwise withdrawal" of troops from West Germany.

Only a few days following the Wehrkunde conference, Edward C. Meyer, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, stated that a withdrawal of two U.S. divisions from West Germany would be militarily feasible, and that a "thinning-out" of 50,000-60,000 U.S. soldiers would not endanger NATO's security! This still isn't an *official* declaration of withdrawal, but it nevertheless reflects the Bush administration's actual intentions.

Autumn maneuvers canceled

What is official, is that the Pentagon has canceled NATO's "Autumn Reforger" maneuvers for 1989. These maneuvers, which have been carried out since 1967 and involve the transportation of tens of thousands of American soldiers into Germany, go beyond the usual military exercises, in that they have always had the character of a political demonstration of U.S. commitment to its alliance with the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Reforger maneuvers have been canceled, and overall U.S. armed forces exercises in West Germany have been reduced, so the explanation goes, out of "consideration" for the inconvenience caused to the German people, and also because of growing pressure within the U.S. Congress to reduce defense expenditures.

Admittedly, the federal government in Bonn presents a picture of intolerable weakness and inconsistency on basic questions of national security and of the NATO alliance. The federal government's reaction has been downright pitiful, in the wake of the psycho-political offensive of Moscow, which has been trying to sell its rapid modernization and restructuring of the Soviet armed forces to a credulous West in the cloak of "disarmament" and "peace policy." In Bonn, a crude sort of "appeasement" policy is currently being pursued, under the impetus of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.

But in this, of course, West Germany is coasting in the wake of the "great" appeasement strategy which the Anglo-American Establishment has decreed for the Western Alliance as a whole since 1985. Since Reykjavik (1986) at the very latest, it has been clear that the policy of forming a condominium with Moscow has been pursued, at the cost of severing West Germany's ties with NATO.

Washington's foreign policy under George Bush is aimed at maneuvering the Federal Republic, as a sacrificial lamb on the altar of the superpower condominium, into a position such that it can be passed off as "the Germans' own fault."

Since the end of 1988, Washington's campaigns against the Federal Republic have been aimed not against the "Moscow faction" in Bonn—not against Genscher, the Social Democracy, or pro-Soviet agents of influence among German policymakers and the media—but rather against the Federal Republic of Germany as a whole. Washington is quite aware that Gorbachov, whose own domestic political situation is growing desperate, intends some time this year to make a "sensational offer," comparable to the "Stalin note" of 1952, to the Federal Republic. Vernon Walters has already been spreading rumors around Washington that before the year is out, Gorbachov will announce some kind of "dismantling" of the Berlin Wall.

Washington is also well aware, that the so-called Republikaner party of Franz Schoenhuber (who is no stranger to Western intelligence circles) is pushing not a "neo-Nazi" policy, but rather a "national-bolshevik" policy of "national neutrality." That is precisely why the Western powers sup-

ported him in allied-occupied West Berlin, leading to his recent stunning electoral success there (see *Report from Bonn*). Even if Washington doesn't want to see the Federal Republic under Moscow's *direct* control, there nonetheless seems to be a solid agreement with Moscow according to which Washington would be interested in creating a situation of quasi-neutral "loosening up" in Germany, and thus in all of continental Europe, in which the United States could gradually cancel its commitments toward the Federal Republic. According to this, U.S. military presence in the Federal Republic is to lose its primarily strategic character.

While the Germans were being upbraided at the Munich Wehrkunde conference for weakness, softness, and appeasement, McGeorge Bundy, a central figure of the U.S. Eastern Liberal Establishment, was in Moscow meeting with the Soviet leadership. They used the occasion of a Soviet-American conference on the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis to hold talks on fundamental geopolitical questions. The week before, Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller were also in Moscow for talks with Gorbachov and to deliver the Soviet leader a letter from George Bush. Gorbachov then gave them a letter to the President to take back with them.

SDI on the chopping block

Meanwhile, Bush and Gorbachov have been holding lengthy telephone conversations with each other. The White House spokesman announced that we can reckon on a Bush-Gorbachov summit meeting occurring sometime this year. U.S.-Soviet talks toward concluding, in the latter half of this year, a START agreement on reduction of strategic ballistic weapons by 50%, are proceeding quietly but steadily.

An important indication of this, is the remarks of Defense Secretary-designate John Tower on the Strategic Defense Initiative. He stated categorically that the conception of the SDI as a comprehensive shield against nuclear offensive missiles is "unrealistic." The SDI, he claimed, is only conceivable as a limited "point protection" for specific U.S. nuclear systems. The "official" U.S. press organs such as the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* followed up with a squall of articles on the SDI, based on "background discussions" of Bush administration officials, and all reporting in unison about a drastic curtailment of the SDI program.

The intensification of U.S.-Soviet agreements in the context of the global condominium has reached a decisive point. Beyond the issues of "arms control" and "regional crisis management" in the Third World, the Federal Republic and continental Europe have assumed a central role in these agreements. This is occurring at a point, when the worsening of the crisis situation in the Eastern European sector of the Soviet Empire and in Yugoslavia is coming to a head. The Bush administration's intention to "loosen" NATO and to withdraw troops from the Federal Republic will ensure that Western Europe—and especially West Germany—is turned into a zone of disintegration and destabilization. And that's what Gorbachov's successors are waiting for.