

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Trade war is part of Euro-Corps fight

Anglo-American mistrust of Franco-German plans for a genuine European defense stems from economic concerns too.

Germans are aware that in 1990, most foreign governments, including NATO partners, opposed German reunification, and many remain opposed to this day, said Chancellor Helmut Kohl before an extended party executive meeting of his Christian Democrats in Bonn June 15. Many of the problems Germany faces with other western states have to do with this antipathy, Kohl hinted.

Hopes that Kohl's recent letter to the White House, protesting a stream of arrogant *démarches* from leading U.S. officials on the Franco-German army corps, had calmed relations with Washington, were dashed on the eve of the June 19 meeting in Bonn of the foreign and defense ministers of the nine-member Western European Union (WEU). The meeting, which was to pass a "European" mandate distinct from NATO and authorize the establishment of a new, standing WEU military staff of 40 officers by October 1992, was greeted by new Anglo-Americans attacks on Bonn and Paris.

In an interview with the June 14 German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, outgoing commander-in-chief of NATO forces in Europe, U.S. Gen. John R. Galvin, voiced doubts over assurances that the Franco-German corps was not undermining NATO.

British Minister of Defense Malcolm Rifkind, in the June 15 London *Financial Times*, charged the German government with intending to withdraw from NATO, which is the "single most important example of European defense collaboration that exists at the present time." Rifkind said that the British-authored concept of a rapid de-

ployment corps (under British command, naturally) within the framework of the western alliance was "very different from the French and German concept of a European corps." He voiced strong objections to the concept pushed in Bonn and Paris that the WEU should be linked to the political institutions of the European Community (EC) and be developed into its military leg.

Rifkind asked, "Will the relationship between the Franco-German corps and NATO be the same as the current German relationship [with NATO] or the current French relationship? It must be one or the other, and the indication so far is that the relationship would be closer to the current French than the current German one. If that is true—and I say, if—then clearly we would have to see the Franco-German corps as weakening rather than strengthening NATO."

Robert Kimmitt, U.S. ambassador to Bonn, expressed similar views in a speech on June 15 at an event of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Bonn.

Having Germany under firm Anglo-American control has been a prime aim of Washington and London since NATO was formed. Alfred Dregger, past chairman of the Bonn parliamentary group of the Christian Democrats and their longtime defense policy spokesman, addressed the issue of NATO "command and control" on June 16 in an interview with Germany's leading business daily *Handelsblatt*. Reiterating proposals to turn the WEU into a "military arm of the EC" along the lines of Franco-German accords signed in La Rochelle, France on May 21, Dregger

declared: "The United States and Great Britain have to realize that not everything can remain the same, and this also includes their dominance in the command structure" of NATO.

The fact that this appeared in the most widely read economic daily the day after Rifkind's attack, signals that the key issue involved goes beyond the military sphere and is, indeed, an economic one.

Gen. Jörg Schönbohm, assistant defense minister of Germany, let out this "inner secret" in a presentation at a security policy panel of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bonn on June 15. Schönbohm said that in terms of military policy conduct, nobody had the right to blame the German government, which had made sure that all NATO partners, and the U.S. most of all, were kept fully informed about all steps taken together with Paris in the development of the Euro-Corps over the past months. Charges made by Galvin were ill-placed, he declared.

His view of the U.S. attacks on Germany, Schönbohm said, is that economic considerations are shaping American views on the Franco-German defense project, turning it into a welcome scapegoat for other things. "In NATO, we're basically sitting in the same boat as alliance partners, but as soon as the European Community is entering the agenda, we are a key world market competitor to the [United] States," he said.

This relates directly to defense industries. As long as the NATO structures exist, the alliance is also a multi-billion-dollar market for Anglo-American-produced military goods. Against the background of an increasing framework of cooperation between the aerospace sectors of French and German industries, genuine European defense structures are the last thing strategists in London or Washington would want.