

The EEC meets: The allies spurn Carter's policy

by Susan Welsh

The Carter administration's policy of imposing economic sanctions against the Soviet Union and Iran, and its moves toward blockading or mining the Persian Gulf, have created the greatest crisis in the Western alliance since France pulled out of the NATO military organization in 1966. America's allies in continental Europe are completely opposed to Carter's confrontation policy, and if Washington goes ahead with it, it will soon be faced with the wholesale loss of the allegiance of every major ally except Great Britain.

Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher shuttled to Western Europe this week to try to pull the allies into line behind the administration's new "Carter Doctrine," but his mission was a dismal failure. A meeting of the NATO Council in Brussels Jan. 15 ended without a single U.S. demand accepted, and no statement of concrete action was even issued.

Instead, France and West Germany are shaping an independent policy to try to steer the world back toward detente. The foreign ministers of the European Economic Community met in Brussels simultaneous with the NATO meeting, and decided to substantially increase aid to unstable developing countries, as the best way to prevent future Afghanistan-style crises. The EEC plan calls for:

- A program of cooperation with the nations of the Persian Gulf region to stabilize the area.
- The economic and political stabilization of Yugoslavia through an emergency aid program that would include the extension of soon-to-expire trade agreements.
- Immediate political and economic aid to Turkey, an aid package which has long been delayed.

The EEC statement was formulated in private caucusing beforehand by French Foreign Minister Jean François-Poncet and West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher, and rammed through the EEC

over British opposition. The statement contained no hint of European sanctions against the Soviet Union, although the EEC agrees not to do anything to undermine U.S. measures in this respect.

U.S. must not 'overreact'

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, following his meeting with Christopher in Bonn Jan. 15, delivered a speech to the parliamentary fraction of his Social Democratic Party warning that the worst possible thing for the United States to do would be to "overreact" to the Afghanistan situation. Less tense means must be found for dealing with the crisis, he said, and while the Federal Republic of Germany will do nothing to undercut U.S. sanctions, neither will it do anything that goes against its own policy of detente.

Schmidt attacked NATO Supreme Commander Gen. Bernard Rogers for spreading "nonsense" about how the Soviet Union might attack Western Europe, according to the magazine *Der Spiegel* Jan. 14. An aide to the Chancellor confirmed this report, adding that Schmidt believes Rogers is spreading unnecessary nervousness by carelessly lumping together the Afghanistan situation with that facing NATO in Europe. The West German government wants the U.S. to exercise moderation, he said, and fears that pressure will build for some kind of military measures. Bonn fears that "self-feeding dynamics" could be set into place by the combination of economic sanctions and military moves in the Persian Gulf, and "the spark of war" could jump to the Mideast from Afghanistan, leading to full-scale military confrontation with the Soviet Union.

In another statement indicative of antagonism to American strategic posture, Schmidt referred to Spanish Premier Adolfo Suarez, visiting Washington this week

with an "excellent Middle East peace plan" that Carter might learn from.

Christopher met a second time with Schmidt on Jan. 16, and television cameras showed him trembling with rage as he left the meeting. He called an unexpected press conference at the airport before flying on to Paris, but when an impudent reporter asked "Is it true that you and Chancellor Schmidt were in complete agreement?" Christopher closed down the press conference without a word.

U.S. aims

The aim of Christopher's trip was to sound out European willingness to go along with U.S. military moves in the Persian Gulf, to undertake joint economic actions against the Soviet Union, and to boycott the Moscow Olympics. In addition, Christopher is seeking a far-ranging revision of the so-called "COCOM" agreements restricting sale of high technology to communist countries. The U.S. Defense, State, and Commerce Departments have drafted a proposal for making COCOM, a relic of the Cold War period, into a binding treaty organization, according to the *International Herald Tribune* on Jan. 16. The U.S. goal, according to high-level West German sources, would be to cut off trade to the Soviet Union while favoring China, simultaneously ending government-subsidized credits to the U.S.S.R. and sharply curtailing cultural ties.

That Washington could seriously float such a proposal shows how completely it is misjudging the situation in Europe.

Europe's policy is that detailed by French Foreign Minister Jean François-Poncet in a recent interview (published in last week's *EIR*), and elaborated by the well-informed political commentator for *Le Figaro* newspaper, Paul Marie de la Gorce, Jan. 16. "If France were to go for economic warfare," de la Gorce wrote, "it would be the first one to suffer, and not France alone but also the Europeans, and even more so the Third World. ... France will first and foremost defend its own national interests. ... If the Western economies enter a worsening depression, then the chances for war are increased. ... France will act politically, it will use its diplomacy and continue to push for detente and cooperation with the U.S.S.R."

De la Gorce described the line-up of forces in the West as France backed by West Germany on the one side, and the United States backed by Great Britain on the other, with the British government meanwhile giving full support to British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell in undercutting the U.S. boycott of Iranian oil, by concluding agreements to buy Iran's oil at bargain-basement prices.

—Susan Welsh



France

'In this affair, what must count are national interests...'

Following are excerpts of an OpEd by foreign policy commentator Paul-Marie de la Gorce which was published in Le Figaro on Jan. 16. Entitled "Controversy over Afghanistan," the article begins by locating Edmond Maire, general secretary of the Socialist Party-allied trade union confederation, François Mitterrand, General Secretary of the French Socialist Party, and, "more unexpectedly," certain circles inside the Gaullist party as having formed a "school" which is calling for France to take a harder position on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. According to this school:

... It would be necessary to respond to a major threat with reactions of the same scope—excepting war. And this reaction should be common to all the Western countries. One should avoid introducing the slightest split between Europe and America, and condemn the Soviet Union in the same manner, and in the same terms, adopt the same retaliatory measures and if possible the same economic sanctions.

The proponents of this school obviously cannot be unaware of the economic consequences this would have on France, on its foreign trade and on its international relations. But, according to them, it is more important to respond to the Soviet Union with a mobilization of all its adversaries, with a multiplication of hostile gestures....

They think that the embargo against agricultural and food products will be effective if it means that the U.S.S.R. will have to confront serious supply problems, or have to increase its investment in agriculture to the detriment of industry and armaments, or if it means that the U.S.S.R. will no longer be able to help its poorest allies, those that need food products the most like Vietnam, Cambodia, Angola, Ethiopia, and, to begin with, Afghanistan. For the most part they will admit—even if they won't willingly mention it—that the sanctions will