

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Trapped by Dr. K.'s decoupling game

Lord Carrington and the West German Social Democrats are joining the push for a U.S. pullout from Western Europe.

The West Germans have reason to fear the Warsaw Pact: They live next to the Iron Curtain, and Soviet military buildups and maneuvers hint at preparations for a surgical surprise attack on the country. If the Germans were alone, decoupled from the West, they would have no choice but to surrender before the first shot was fired.

A new phase of the decoupling game launched in March by Henry Kissinger and his political collaborators in Britain and West Germany raises new uncertainties for the West Germans. Two of their "pillars of confidence," the functioning of the European Community and the reliability of the United States, were called into question.

First, the intransigence of the British government on the issue of the budget of the European Community overrode all efforts to resolve the EC crisis. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe ridiculed Bonn, which had made every effort to herd the rest of the Community into "conciliation toward Britain's views."

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher had outdone himself in self-humiliation; a few days after Thatcher and Howe said "no" to all compromise formulas presented at the Brussels European summit, he pronounced to *Der Spiegel*, concerning more austerity in Europe, that he was "pulling the same rope together with the British."

Thatcher and Howe made no secret of their desire to exploit the stra-

tegic weakness of the United States to build the British up as the new European game-masters: They told the other nine EC governments bluntly on March 27 that if they did not accede to Mrs. Thatcher, she would pull out financially and dump them into disintegration and budgetary disarray.

That evening, the incoming secretary-general of NATO, Britain's Lord Peter Carrington, appeared on West German TV to support Henry Kissinger as "the only one around I know who has any ideas about the future of NATO."

This public alliance with Kissinger's decoupling threat (issued in *Time* magazine March 5) was the first blow; next Carrington said that he does not support "those who believe that there can be cheap defense with beam weapons." Instead, NATO should upgrade its conventional armaments.

The German Social Democrats, who were the first to support Kissinger publicly one day after his *Time* magazine article appeared, undertook a propaganda drive of a special sort in the meantime.

The party's general manager, Peter Glotz, took up Kissinger's decoupling trumpet with an essay in *Der Spiegel* March 26. He wrote that the U.S. nuclear umbrella "no longer exists" and that it required a "great deal of self-delusion" to continue to believe in official U.S. reassurances to the contrary. Glotz posed the question: "What would actually happen if the Soviet Union occupied the north-

ern part of Norway, in order to gain easier access to the Atlantic? What would NATO do in case of a new Berlin crisis?"

His answer: NATO, that is, West Germany, would have to surrender, because the Americans would not defend the country. "I shall never forget the answer a high-ranking American officer gave me in response to this question in December 1981: If, in case of a conflict in Europe, the first nuclear weapon were actually used, it would lead to complete demoralization of our GIs. Those stationed here would no longer be willing or even able to fight." Therefore, according to Glotz, West Germany should pursue "common security" with the Soviets—that is, preemptive surrender.

On March 28, Henry Kissinger himself appeared on the scene to browbeat the Germans. In an interview with the weekly *Stern*, he declared that President Reagan had not said "one negative word" about his decoupling ideas, and that because of NATO's obvious lack of a viable nuclear strategy, it "makes no sense to keep half a million Americans, their families included, in Europe."

This U.S. troop withdrawal—which would mainly affect West Germany, where most of the GIs in Europe are stationed—was termed "no threat" by Kissinger; he said that he was "just describing reality."

U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger recently described what would happen if Kissinger's ideas became "reality": visiting a NATO airbase in Norway, he said that "U.S. troop withdrawal from Europe would invite the Soviets to launch a surprise attack at no risk."

The "NATO-watchers" in the Kremlin will arrive at the same evaluation, if there is no prompt official protest in the West against Kissinger and his entourage.