

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### Bonn's defense planning

*Does it exist, and if it does, does it depend on the Soviet Union's consent?*

What if the Soviets decided to carry out a surprise attack against West Germany in the coming weeks—even if it were only a conventional attack and the U.S.S.R. strategic forces blackmailed the United States into non-use of nuclear weapons, as they did in the Cuba Crisis of 1962? If this scenario of limited sub-nuclear war in Europe became real, would the West German army, the Bundeswehr, be able to meet its task, which is to hold the NATO front line against the Warsaw Pact long enough for the United States to fly reinforcement troops into Europe?

While this kind of scenario can become real only within a "New Yalta" agreement already settled between Moscow and Washington, the question posed as to German military strength is real. A report prepared for the defense ministry by the inspector-general of the Armed Forces, General Altenburg, concludes that the army will face some very nasty weaknesses over the coming years: A liberal regulation for draft resistance which allows an excessive flow of the nation's male youth into civil rather than military service and the decline of birth rates in the late '60s and early '70s will leave the army 20% short of its present level of 495,000 soldiers. There is hardly any modern air surveillance and air defense on West German territory, a weakness demonstrated again and again during the numerous border violations by Soviet MI-24 gunships flying at low altitudes up to 40 kilometers into West German airspace without being detected by NATO radar stations.

The West German government bought the U.S. "Patriot" air defense missile system, but it has no appropriate modern electronic reconnaissance and guidance systems available to exploit the potentials of the system. The country's armed forces have no neutron weapons to fight a massive Soviet tank attack, and ammunition stocks are inadequate.

To sum up, West Germany cannot be defended even in case of a conventional conflict with the Warsaw Pact!

All of that is known, but there has been no public debate on how to solve the problem. By the time Defense Minister Manfred Wörner was to present proposals at the beginning of 1984, the KGB's scandalmongers drew him into the "General Kiessling Affair" which kept him busy three to four months. The only military subject Wörner got really engaged in during this period was his public denunciation of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) at the NATO summit in Cesme, Turkey, in mid-March.

While giving speeches alleging that "the Soviets don't want a war in Europe," Wörner told the military that German participation in the SDI was bad, because it would allegedly "soak up expenses from conventional efforts into space." But when asked by concerned military what he intended to do about the country's known conventional weaknesses, Wörner said there was no money. He did not even pick a fight in the Bonn Cabinet against the minister of finance, "austerity pope" Gerhard Stoltenberg. When concerned military pressured him for a statement on the debate over decou-

pling and U.S. troop withdrawal from Europe launched by Henry Kissinger and U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) in April, Wörner did not come out in defense of full military presence of U.S. troops in Europe. There is no secret about this weird non-action on the part of Wörner: A friend of Nunn for more than 10 years, he is on the phone with the senator regularly. Wörner told the perplexed generals in Bonn that "my friend Nunn assured me that whatever he does in the Senate, it will help to improve Europe's position within the Alliance."

Another reform project Wörner has skirted is the needed change of theoretical training of the country's officer corps. The replacement of classical training curricula by sociology and psychological techniques, introduced at the end of the 1960s, has been criticized by concerned military with statements such as the famous one of Gen. Franz Uhle-Wetter, who said: "The Bundeswehr is well on its way to training the most uneducated officer corps in German history—namely officers who have never read [classical military theoreticians] Clausewitz and Manstein."

Wörner has also decided to send 1,300 "older officers" aged 46 to 55 into early retirement by 1986, to "make room for the younger ones." Well, the "younger ones" are those who have never read Clausewitz, and the ones who will have to go are those who have—at least some of them. The more competent current of the West German military is up in arms against Wörner, but they don't dare to speak up in public.

Why not? The Soviet propaganda alleging "resurfacing of German militarism and revanchism," together with the official appeasement policy of the Bonn government, has jammed the military into a corner.