

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

The 'chicken wars' again?

West Germany fears that trade war with Europe is only a prelude to U.S. troop withdrawal.

American Special Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter's announcement of new import tariffs on numerous agricultural goods from Western Europe, as well as on machine tools and other high-technology machinery, interrupted the last days of the German election campaign. While Chancellor Helmut Kohl was still campaigning about his alleged "ground-breaking economic success," forecasting "another good year" in 1987, his own minister of economics had to tone down the forecast.

Minister Martin Bangemann, who presented his yearly economic report for 1986, told a Bonn press conference on Jan. 14: "In spite of our solid policy, the domestic economy may be affected by outside disturbances." The minister assured the population: "In case there is an unexpected downturn of the economic conjuncture, the government is prepared to counteract without delay."

Although Bangemann remained vague, it is no secret that trade war will break out between the United States and Europe by Feb. 1. It is no secret, either, that the just-accomplished revaluation of the German currency will increase the pressure from the United States on the Bonn government. It is expected that the Americans will react with demands that the Germans lower their interest rates, and by another round of letting the dollar value fall.

Apart from the immediate effects on the export-import relations between Germany and the United States, some political analysts in Bonn fear that the Americans may bring up the

question of their troops in Germany. "There are about 200 trade amendments on the agenda of the newly elected U.S. Congress," said a Social Democrat in Bonn, "and these include several amendments calling for a new share of the troop stationing costs, and other such things."

"The most recent upvaluation of the deutschemark," remarked another source, "provides a welcome pretext for certain people in Washington to demand renegotiations on the troop stationing costs. If the deutschemark goes up, the dollar goes down, the way it is now."

A defense expert of the Bonn opposition Social Democrats—no friend of the Americans—said: "It reminds me very much of the early 1960s when we had trade war with the Kennedy administration. One day, they simply came up and threatened us with troop withdrawal, if we didn't back down."

The latter comparison was also drawn by more pro-American analysts. Fear that the trade war might be accompanied by troop withdrawal, was expressed in newspaper commentaries, which appeared in two influential dailies, the Bonn *Generalanzeiger* and the West Berlin *Tagesspiegel*.

Both wrote, in background reports that grabbed a lot of attention, that the "present mood" in the U.S. Congress made them recall the time when Sen. J. William Fulbright held a gun to the head of the Europeans at the high point of the "chicken wars," which developed over European tariffs on chicken imported from the States. Fulbright warned in 1963: "Either you let our

chicken in, or we take our troops out!"

The Europeans backed down to this blackmail—the troops stayed, and the chickens were let in.

What Senator Fulbright was then, in 1963, Sens. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Bill Roth (R-Del.) are today. Participants in a seminar, which took place at the German Military Academy in Hamburg two years ago, recall a presentation by Senator Roth which contained a list of threats, including troop withdrawal. A Social Democratic military expert who listened to Roth's presentation, which portrayed an American strategic future in the Pacific Basin, told *EIR*: "People then said that Roth was crazy. Maybe he was, but it looks as if his views become official policy in Washington now." The expert took Roth's presentation as proof that the budgetary argument was "just presented as a pretext to promote a policy which had been decided some time ago."

The same could be said of Zbigniew Brzezinski's recent remarks at the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee run by Senator Nunn. "You cannot simply pull out one full third of all the U.S. troops in Europe, and redeploy them to the Persian Gulf or Mideast," said one military expert, "without changing the balance in Europe." "This is not like taking troops back to the United States and bring them back for maneuvers. If you want to send troops to the [Persian] Gulf, all of their equipment has to go with them, too. Once the equipment leaves, the Europeans know it will never return."

While these experts are haunted by fears that the United States may wage another "chicken war" against Europe, the pro-Soviet currents in Bonn rejoice. "If the Americans go," one of them told *EIR*, "all of the Establishment here which has ruled post-war Germany, will go, too."