

but the explosion of the financial crisis would put such negotiations more or less on the back burner for a time.

The main impetus for a "panicked rush to Reykjavik," has been the previous, relatively milder degree of the economic crisis up to the recent weeks. Seeing his "economic agenda" in ruins, and heavy pressures to cut back U.S. military expenditures, and the added burdens of "Irangate," President Reagan has acted as he has done. In West Germany, German industries and their bankers have become desperate for Soviet orders.

The prospect of an early general financial collapse in the West, blows "Reaganomics" out of the water, and puts the economic motives for large deals with the East on the back burner. What is the sense of looking for needed added busi-

ness in Moscow, if the firms might be wiped out by a financial collapse at home? The financial and economic crisis in the West now takes first priority, by an overwhelming margin.

If I had to make a guess, I would think the most probable line-up is the following. Späth as the Chancellor of a CDU-CSU-SPD coalition government in Germany, with Schmidt as the new foreign minister. A shift in the SPD leadership, toward something approximating the SPD under the former Schmidt government, and a Ruhr/Baden-Württemberg/Bavaria center in the CDU-CSU. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing as the next President of the European Parliament, and probably support by these forces for the reelection of François Mitterrand as President of France. These are just good guesses, but they indicate the way deals are being cut at this time.

Debate on Spanish bases is a threat to NATO

U.S. Defense Secretary Weinberger was in Madrid early in the week of March 16, in what looks like an attempt to convince the Spanish government to soften its "anti-Yankee" position with regard to the presence of the U.S. bases on Spanish territory.

The United States has four big and strategically important bases on Spanish territory, plus nine smaller communication and observation outposts. Of these bases two, the air base of Torrejón, near Madrid, and the navy base of Rota, are crucial. In Torrejón, 79 fighter bombers are located, 72 of which are nuclear-capable F-16s, whose mission is to reach the front line in the Central European theater in case of a Warsaw Pact attack. It goes without saying that the Spanish bases have the additional importance of representing the natural bridge for logistical supplies from the United States in case of war. In these bases, a total of 12,545 military men and 1,869 civilians are deployed.

In 1988 the present agreement on the U.S. bases expires, and a new agreement must be reached by November of this year, or else, with the expiration of the old one, the bases will have to be removed. In 1986 the Spanish Socialist government called and won a referendum to keep Spain in NATO, on condition that no nuclear weapons be deployed on its territory and that the U.S. bases would be "substantially reduced." That referendum, an incredible piece of ideological manipulation, set the stage for a lengthy debate, which is still going on, over whether or not the United States will leave Spain, and whether and how much

the bases should be reduced.

The debate, like the referendum, has nothing to do with reality and is purely ideological manipulation of "public opinion." As Weinberger reportedly stressed during his visit, in case of reduction of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces in Europe, the conventional forces had better be upgraded rather than downgraded. From the military standpoint it is ridiculous to propose to dismantle or "significantly reduce" military bases of crucial importance for the defense of Central Europe.

Nothing is known publicly about the Spanish-U.S. negotiations. The only thing known is that according to the Spanish government, the United States is not proposing an adequate "substantial reduction" of its forces; while according to the U.S. version, if the Spanish keep demanding too big a reduction, the United States will prefer to abandon their bases in Spain to keeping them so reduced.

There is the hypothesis, circulated in the press, that the most crucial base, the one of Torrejón, could be removed to Morocco or Portugal. In this case, little would change strategically. This hypothesis is denied by the United States, probably for negotiating reasons.

Recent polls indicate that 48% of Spaniards favor closing down the bases, while the United States and the U.S.S.R. are perceived as similar threats to world peace. The publication of such polls, who knows how authentic, is in itself a manipulation of public opinion.

The neutralist policy which the Socialist Spanish government is increasingly pushing is the best possible policy to be pursued to the advantage of Moscow. Spain is a NATO country, the Socialist government is "socialist," not "communist"; so if Spain turns increasingly neutral, to the point of expelling U.S. bases, this would create a precedent for other "social democratic" NATO regimes.

—Leonardo Servadio