

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Defense motivation revived

The new Defense Minister Rupert Scholz is addressing the reality of the Soviet threat.

The vast majority of military leaders in Germany feel relieved by the fact that Defense Minister Manfred Wörner left office on May 18. His sailing along with the rest of the pro-appeasement Bonn cabinet produced a scandalous defense planning package that leaves the armed forces short of some 50-60 billion deutschemarks over the next 12 years. Faced with mounting criticism from senior military leaders, Wörner went so far as to issue an order to the military not to "voice any critique in public any longer."

The ban documented, once again, the reality through more than five years of Wörner's term—namely, that the defense ministry had been under the tight control of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher the whole time.

When the new minister of defense, Rupert Scholz, took office in Bonn on May 18, the climate changed visibly. Scholz himself reopened the public debate on defense on May 4, when he said in an interview that he wouldn't invest too much confidence in Gorbachov's policy of the "joint home for all Europeans," which he evaluated as a "seductive propaganda formula that is marketed in an extremely clever way." Gorbachov's policy is ruled by "anti-American calculus," warned Scholz, remarking that the official Soviet war-winning doctrine has not been altered since Gorbachov took office.

Gorbachov's many public addresses on world peace and nuclear disarmament left Scholz fairly unimpressed, he said in another interview May 8. He criticized "a certain euphoric Gorbachovism among Western

politicians."

The chief Soviet propaganda news agencies *Pravda* and TASS responded promptly, calling Scholz a "hawk" and a man "ruled by the old enemy-image that doesn't fit in the landscape of détente and arms control."

Also, the German foreign minister and high priest of "Gorbachovism" in Germany, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, showed his embarrassment at Scholz's remarks, recommending that the new defense minister "say farewell to enemy-images" and instead "concentrate his efforts on building confidence with the Soviet Union."

Moscow's and Genscher's attacks left Scholz unperturbed, and when he was sworn in May 18, he used the occasion to address "the overwhelming military supremacy of the Warsaw Pact in Europe" and the fact that "seeming progress in the arms control talks" had caused a "general letting-down of awareness of this continued military threat, and of defense motivation in the West." Especially the younger generation—those who are scheduled to become draftees in the German army—have been influenced by this "unbalanced thought." Scholz announced that campaigning for "increased defense budgets" would be among his "prime tasks as minister of defense."

All hell broke loose in Bonn over these remarks. On May 20, the opposition Social Democrats and Green Party requested a special debate in the German Parliament, which featured harsh attacks on Scholz. Green speaker Helmut Lippelt accused Chancellor Kohl of having appointed "a man with the cold-war world outlook of the

1950s as the new German minister of defense," a characterization that was repeated by Social Democratic speakers as well. Several opposition speakers recalled that the late Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who fought for Germany's postwar rearmament in the mid-1950s, did not even take notice of public opinion polls that rated 82% of the population as being against having armed forces.

The day after that debate, which has no precedent in recent years, *Pravda* attacked Rupert Scholz again, accusing him of "arousing the old spirit of militarism in West Germany."

What the Soviets referred to was not the debate, but the May 17 session of the Christian Democratic Union's (CDU) parliamentary group, which already anticipated the change of climate expected to occur under new Defense Minister Scholz, who was to be sworn in the next day.

The session of the parliamentary group was preceded by a briefing which the inspector general of the ground forces, Gen. Henning von Ondarza, gave to the defense expert commission of the CDU. He said that outgoing Defense Minister Wörner's defense planning package for the next 12-year period deprived the ground forces of some 36.5 billion deutschemarks that were required to keep all 42 army brigades functioning in the 1990s. "Maintaining forward defense against the Warsaw Pact won't be possible under such conditions," said von Ondarza, breaking the debate ban Wörner had imposed on the military just a few days before.

On the condition that the new German defense minister sticks to his stated political objectives, military leaders and defense experts in Bonn feel free now to address the Soviet military threat again, and call for the appropriate increases in the defense budget.