

American lawmakers seek end of NATO

by Kathleen Klenetsky

When this magazine warned last year that the Intermediate Nuclear Forces agreement would serve as the pretext for the decoupling of the NATO alliance, and the end of the U.S. defense commitment to Western Europe, defenders of the Reagan-Bush administration vociferously denied the charges. But a slew of recent developments proves beyond doubt that *EIR's* analysis was right on target.

The most important of these was President George Bush's public admission, at his March 5 White House press conference, that he is perfectly willing to open up the floodgates of U.S. economic assistance to the Soviet bloc, in exchange for an agreement from Moscow to cool down its military operations in Central America.

Asked what his position is on "linking Soviet good behavior, particularly in Central America, to granting them technological transfers and economic credits," and whether, "if Gorbachov helps you in Central America, specifically Nicaragua, are you willing to help him economically," Bush replied: "Look, the more cooperation we can get [from the Soviets] on regional objectives . . . the better it would be between relations. So there is linkage."

Although Bush didn't specify what exactly the United States would be prepared to do for the Soviets in exchange for such "cooperation," his remarks were interpreted as an important signal to the Kremlin that he is on board the "New Yalta" plan outlined by the late Soviet President Yuri Andropov in 1983 in an interview to West Germany's *Der Spiegel* magazine, under which the Soviets would cede Ibero-America to the U.S. sphere of influence, in exchange for the recognition that Europe is in theirs.

Bush's comment intersected not only the opening of the CFE talks (the new negotiations on East-West force reductions in Europe), which lent it even great importance, but a new round of "decoupling" moves on Capitol Hill.

Troop withdrawal

The leading edge of the congressional anti-NATO effort is the resolution, which Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.) and Rep. Andy Ireland (R-Fla.) introduced into Congress at the end of February. Slated to be proposed as an amendment to the Defense Department authorization bill, the measure mandates the removal of the 25,000 or so American troops cur-

rently assigned to service the Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles, now outlawed by the INF treaty.

According to spokesmen for both congressmen, the resolution enjoys widespread support on the Hill, and a version is expected to be introduced soon on the Senate side.

Schroeder, of course, has been among the most vocal proponents of reducing America's contribution to NATO; she has introduced bills in the past calling for a 50% reduction in the U.S. troop presence in Western Europe, and chaired the House subcommittee last year that issued a report castigating European NATO members for not contributing their fair share to alliance defenses. But her latest initiative has two important new elements: 1) she now has a sponsor for her decoupling policy who describes himself as a "conservative hawk"; and 2) the resolution ties troop reductions to the INF agreement.

"Schroeder's gotten much smarter," said one U.S. defense analyst. "Her previous troop withdrawal proposals were too radical. But by saying, in effect, that there's no reason to keep the INF troops in Europe, once the weapons they're responsible for are eliminated, she's appealing to a lot of conservatives and moderates who are just waiting for a sensible-sounding proposal to jump on board the decoupling bandwagon."

The debate over the measure itself is sure to exacerbate the already tense situation existing between Washington and its European allies. Ireland gave a taste of what the tenor of that debate will be, in a commentary in the *New York Times* published March 7. Ireland contended that the United States has been paying through the nose to defend a bunch of ungrateful foreigners, who have repaid their benefactor by launching a savage trade war against it. Washington's "40-year entitlement program in Europe must end," wrote Ireland. Despite his ostensible hawkishness, Ireland also pointed to Mikhail Gorbachov's promise to withdraw 500,000 Soviet troops from Europe as a reason for Washington to cut its military commitment to the continent. "Defensively, the United States has absolutely nothing to lose by exercising the same fiscal conservatism with the defense budget that we conservatives demand with the domestic budget."

One cynical tack which the decoupling gang will almost certainly use to try to enlist popular support behind their suicidal policy of dismembering NATO, will be to claim that American troops withdrawn from Europe will be redeployed to Ibero-America to shut down the drug traffic there.

According to a number of sources, there is "a lot of backroom discussion about this in both the administration and on the Hill." An aide to Ireland said it would be "logical" to redeploy military forces from Europe to drug-producing countries in Ibero-America. A spokesman for Bush administration drug czar William Bennett, while pointing out that unilateral deployments of this kind would constitute a *casus belli*, nevertheless admitted that it is one of several options which Bennett is considering.