

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

A war that most people do not want

With opposition growing, the government is at pains to justify the NATO air war against Serbia.

Even among Germans who are supportive of the ongoing NATO air war against Serbia, one finds many who think that this war comes “several years late,” and that the atrocities against Kosovar ethnic Albanians attributed to Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic’s militia, could have been prevented by appropriate Western intervention years ago. But the sabotage of such decisive action can be traced back to those very same geopolitical circles in London, Washington, Paris, and Bonn that are in the forefront of pushing the new NATO doctrine designed to turn NATO, a defense alliance with a clearly defined Euro-Atlantic area of responsibility, into an institution for globalized interventions against so-called “rogue nations.”

Sadly, this aspect of NATO policies is being blacked out from broader public debate. Besides *EIR* and the LaRouche movement, little has been done by others in Germany to spark a debate on the new NATO doctrine. But the air war on Serbia has stirred many “peaceniks,” who now pose a grave problem for the red-green Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Green Party coalition government.

Both parties maintain a nominal commitment to the “principles” of the anti-war movement, but it was much easier for them to protest NATO policies when they were in the opposition and the Christian Democrats were in the government. Now, many Social Democrats and Greens have a big problem: The government is practicing solidarity with a NATO that is doing things diametrically opposed to the views of the anti-war movement. Worse, most of their own leaders are

making special efforts to show that they are as pro-NATO-minded as any of the other politicians who have previously been in government.

For people who know more about the rise to power of the red-green alliance last year, it comes as no surprise to see those Green party leaders, whose march into the government was applauded by the geopolitical cabal around Gore-Blair-Albright, back the “new NATO” strategy, and do so at the sacrifice of former “peacenik” views of the Green movement. However, their Newspeak, which uses all the misleading vocabulary of the “new NATO,” calling air raids on Iraq and Serbia “humanitarian interventions,” comes as a great shock to the average, usually ill-informed Greenie. They are infuriated at this “sell-out” of peacenik positions, and this is dangerous for the government. The longer the war in the Balkans drags on, the more opposition will emerge from within the SPD and the Green party. And, the more mistakes the red-green government makes, the more opposition it will create.

The scene in Bonn on March 26 was illustrative: Aware of the unpopularity of the NATO air war in the Balkans, SPD and Green leaders conspired with the Christian Democrats and Free Democrats to avoid a public debate in Parliament, and to instead work out a joint resolution in support of NATO intervention. Meanwhile, the scenario read, Parliament would begin its plenary session that day with “less controversial” topics—for example, banning graffiti. But when the debate was about to begin, Hans-Christian Stroebele, a founding mem-

ber of the Greens in Berlin and a member of their parliamentary group in Bonn, called the outline of the graffiti debate a scandal, and insisted that the Balkans war be discussed right away. Since it was not possible to suppress the debate, a fake “short debate” was arranged between the leaders of the parliamentary groups.

The pro-NATO current nominally prevailed, but it soon proved to be a pyrrhic victory: On the following weekend, the first big protests by Green party members began against their own party. For example, in Bochum, 200 Greenies marched to the local party headquarters, demanding that the party pull out from the government’s support for the NATO air strikes. In Berlin and other cities, local Green leaders quit their party membership. In Hamburg, party dissidents issued a call for an extraordinary party convention for a debate on the NATO war on Serbia.

The pressure forced the Green party executive on March 30 to try to calm the waters, with a statement that “should the air strikes prove unsuccessful,” a “halt in the military operation” might be “desirable,” conditional on Serbia’s halting its military operations in Kosovo. Within four days, the official view of the Green party executive had changed almost 180 degrees, but this will not restore lost confidence among Green party members and supporters. The Greens can be glad that there are no elections until early June, because they would result in a disaster far worse than the elections for the Hesse state parliament on Feb. 7, which saw the loss of almost 40% of the Green vote.

But the government may fall long before June, because the “new NATO” issue is driving a deep wedge into the Greens, and seven Green parliament members, Stroebele being one of them, disagree with the government.