

## London Tries To Poison NATO

Beginning with the NATO consultations in Brussels early this month, a number of leading individuals and newspapers in the West have been intent on giving Warsaw Pact and other observers the impression that the European NATO allies are hardening their military posture and preparing for a replay of the Cold War. The effort has been partially successful. Whereas the proper topic for public discussion this month should have been prospects for peace and economic development in the Mideast following the Sadat-Begin initiative — to name just one urgent issue — instead NATO has been enmired in a damaging debate over the new “cruise missile,” while West Germany has been rocked by another of its world renowned spy scandals.

This attempt to poison the international atmosphere was initiated by the government of the United Kingdom but it has also received substantial backing from U.S. President Carter’s national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, West German opposition defense spokesman Manfred Wörner, and such newspapers as the *London Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Frankfurter Rundschau*. British coordination of the campaign was partially exposed this week when one West German newspaper openly called for a drastic curtailment of British influence in the NATO power structure.

Although the question of the “cruise missile” — a glorified version of the old V-2 rocket — has been an agenda item in NATO for some time, this month’s staged debate originates from British Defense Minister Fred Mulley, who at a meeting of NATO Defense Ministers this fall in Rome warned the U.S. against making concessions on the cruise missile during the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). An even stronger version of the same warning was issued in a Dec. 4 West German radio interview by Manfred Wörner, Christian Democratic defense spokesman and a member of the London Institute for Strategic Studies. Wörner further demanded that European leaders should stop stalling on the “neutron bomb” question and approve its use on the continent. Although Wörner currently has no influence over West German defense policy, the *New York Times* brazenly claimed Dec. 5 that his opinions are so influential that they would swing the entire round of upcoming NATO consultations.

The fact that the NATO Defense Ministers and heads of state did not produce any major policy statements in Brussels left the way open for an intensification of this phony debate. “Fears Grow Among European NATO Group over American Plans for Arms Limitation Pact,” headlined the Dec. 6 *London Times*. Citing no evidence, the same newspaper wrote Dec. 9 that “Both Britain and West Germany have warned the United States that they want to become more closely involved in the strategic arms limitation talks.” While British officials ostentatiously did nothing to dispel this impression, West Germany’s Defense Minister Georg Leber protested vigorously, stating his full trust in the United States’ position on SALT. But Leber’s protests went largely unheard, and on Dec. 22 the *Washington Post* was still rumoring that Brussels “was the scene of the first quiet

but concerted push by the European allies to demand that Washington protect European interests” in the SALT talks. Zbigniew Brzezinski is known to support this view.

The attempt to portray West Germany in an alliance over the “cruise missile” issue is part of a general British diplomatic offensive against what they call the “Finlandization” of Europe. In this effort, they are eagerly pursuing both a British-German and a British-French alliance, in hopes of undermining the ongoing French-German alliance for detente and economic collaboration with the East.

Part of the actual story in NATO was revealed Dec. 20 when Adalbert Weinstein, military correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, wrote an unprecedented attack on the British. Referring to the well-known discrepancy between what Britain contributes financially to NATO and its representation on NATO bodies, he wrote, “It is horrible how little Britain does for NATO.... It is grotesque that the British try to play the role of the big second power in NATO.... Great Britain is the weakest part of the alliance.” Weinstein then reemphasized Defense Minister Leber’s year-old call for more West German influence at NATO’s top levels.

The article immediately unleashed a storm of protest from the British press, the *London Times* calling it “intentional blackmail.” Misguided circles in the East have swallowed the bait and leaped to Britain’s defense, with East German radio accusing Weinstein of “aiming to destroy the British economy.”

The British will, of course, try to play on Soviet fears by portraying any West German attacks against Britain as further evidence of a revival of “German militarism.”

The Weinstein attack was preceded by the revival of an old spy scandal concerning the leakage to East Germany of secret NATO documents from the West German Defense Ministry. The Dec. 20 issue of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* revealed that Renate Lutze, a former secretary at the Defense Ministry who was arrested last year on suspicion of espionage for East Germany, had had access to top secret documents detailing NATO contingency plans in the event of war, as well as estimates of Warsaw Pact capabilities. The internal Defense Ministry memorandum on which this information was based had been given to the newspaper through the office of Federal Prosecutor Rebmann, who subsequently described the case as “more serious than the Guillaume spy affair” which led to the fall of Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1974.

Defense Minister Leber, at an ensuing press conference, adequately defended himself against any accusations of negligence in the affair and vowed to find the individual who leaked the memorandum and charge *him* with treason. But though there is nothing pointing to Leber’s responsibility, rumors were spread through *Der Spiegel* magazine and the *Frankfurter Rundschau* that Leber will, or ought to, resign from his post. Added to this were rumors that NATO headquarters is angry at West Germany’s lax security, or that the Pentagon is

angry at NATO headquarters for not having informed them of the seriousness of the case. The *Frankfurter Rundschau* even reported that British intelligence services are considering withholding sensitive documents from West German authorities.

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt indirectly expressed his anger over all this yesterday when he cut short a meeting with NATO Supreme Allied Commander Alexander Haig. According to the *Washington Post*, Haig had been planning to discuss the entire affair with Schmidt.

Experienced observers of Bonn politics have remarked that if this spy affair had been intended merely to weaken Schmidt and his cabinet, it would have been

more effectively unleashed just prior to the national congress of Schmidt's Social Democratic Party in November. But the real target, as the "cruise missile" debate indicates, has been West Germany's emergence as a major influence in economic cooperation with the East and in ensuring peace in the Mideast. It is still unclear precisely why Soviet leader Brezhnev has repeatedly postponed his trip to Bonn, but Bundestag Vice-President Annamarie Renger stated last week that there are "no political reasons whatsoever" for the delay, and that, contrary to certain rumors, West German-Soviet relations are excellent. Chancellor Schmidt will travel to Egypt Dec. 27 for talks with President Sadat, and is expected to offer a major economic development package to the Egyptians.