

# EIR International

## France and Germany take charge of Soviet relations

by Vivian Zoakos



Photo: Sygma

**T**he June 22-23 Venice OECD summit represented more than a personal humiliation for President Carter, who otherwise saw himself repeatedly checkmated and forced to retreat from stated policy commitments. Despite certain diplomatic efforts at presenting a façade of unity and harmony, the summit was a watershed in the postwar history of the Atlantic Alliance. The French and West Germans, increasingly pessimistic about the chances of avoiding global war under Carter's leadership, seized the initiative and replaced the Carter administration as the chief negotiators with Moscow.

However, the French and West Germans also committed a serious blunder. Focussing most of their efforts in the area of East-West relations, they allowed the American and allied British delegations to take the upper hand in the wording of the final communiqué on economic policy. The joint communiqué states unequivocally the principle that there is no intrinsic linkage between levels of energy throughput and economic development. As analyzed elsewhere in this issue of the *Executive Intelligence Review*, this doctrine is a dangerous threat to the stated domestic and Third World economic policies of West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. Moreover, compromise with this evil economic policy, which Schmidt and Giscard implicitly know to be the main cause of the global strategic crisis, could wholly undermine their best efforts for peace. It is to condemn Third World "hot spots" to war-causing chaos.

Schmidt himself delivered an ominous speech at the summit on the state of the Third World economies. The speech was generally described as "apocalyptic." His proposal, like that of Giscard, is for centralized financing of technology transfers to the Third World, with a major focus on nuclear energy technology. Both leaders have warned in the past, as Schmidt did once again at Venice, that without prompt action the Third World will swiftly disintegrate into political and economic chaos. Schmidt's principal fear is that if such were allowed to occur, it would lead to a global war confrontation on the model of Sarajevo.

But "Sarajevo" is hardly adequate to describe what the Carter administration has already put in motion in the Middle East powder keg under cover of the Carter Doctrine. Immediately after the close of the Venice summit, it was announced that for the first time in its history Egypt would be joining the U.S. in military maneuvers within two weeks. They will occur, and will in fact be an extension of the first full-scale exercises of Carter's rapid deployment force which will take place simultaneously with the maneuvers.

---

*Chancellor Schmidt arrives at the Venice summit June 21.*

In preparation, no fewer than 400 American officers and technicians have already arrived in Cairo West—the military base used to launch the hostage "rescue" mission—in Egypt to train Egyptians in the maintenance and use of phantom jetfighters. This is sophisticated equipment which has thus far been denied to the far more stable and loyal Saudi Arabians. The U.S. has also established a military base in Egypt, in the Coptic southern region of Kena, well-equipped with the ultra-sophisticated AWACS radar system that enables the U.S. to make surveillance flights over the Red and Arabian seas.

The first practice run of these capabilities will be tested in the course of the joint maneuvers. These are significantly slated to occur over the Persian Gulf area with special emphasis on the major oil field concentrations.

These preparations alone are a glaring indication that the Carter Doctrine is in the first phase of implementation. The "doctrine," enunciated by Carter following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, declared the Middle East oil fields to be a matter of American "national security," giving the U.S. the right to use military means if necessary to protect the flow of Arab oil to the West. The "military means" are now being put in place, ready to be deployed the moment the Carter White House and its allies decide to trigger a takeover of the oil fields under cover of an orchestrated threat to the fields. At that point Gulf oil-dependent Europe would become Washington's impotent hostage.

All of this was well known to Chancellor Schmidt and President Giscard before the Venice summit convened last Sunday, and indeed they had carefully orchestrated a checkmating move against Carter and with the assistance of the Soviets. Giscard neatly preempted Carter's opening remarks on the first day by making the dramatic announcement that personal word from Soviet President Brezhnev had just reached him telling him of the first Soviet troop withdrawals from Afghanistan.

Giscard subsequently announced to the press that the plan for the Soviet withdrawals was worked out in his meetings with Brezhnev in Warsaw last month. He interpreted the move as a sign that, first, the Soviets had recognized that without a settlement to the Afghani situation there would be no stopping the worsening of international relations. Secondly, that the withdrawals signalled Moscow's wish to find political solutions.

The Soviet party's central committee plenum which just ended this week in turn signalled once again the deepening relations with Europe when it alluded to the existence of forces who can still act as guarantors of peace despite the persistently war-provoking policies of the Carter administration.

It is certain that Schmidt will pursue the line of cooperation established by Giscard at Warsaw earlier when the Chancellor leaves for Moscow on June 30. Discretely and quietly, Schmidt will work out a political program that would permit Moscow to establish an acceptable compromise for the resolution of the Afghani situation.

The core of such a program is Schmidt's proposal for a "freeze" on the stationing of medium range "Eurostrategic" missiles on European soil to allow time for disarmament negotiations with Moscow. If negotiations succeed, the NATO December 1979 decision to produce and/or deploy the missiles would automatically be voided. The Euromissiles are at the core of the Afghanistan situation. It was the Western decision to produce and deploy the missiles which weighed more heavily than any other fact in the Soviet decision to invade Afghanistan.

Carter had done his utmost before and during the summit to force Schmidt to withdraw his freeze proposal, threatening reprisals if Schmidt brought up the idea in Moscow. Schmidt refused to give in to any pressures, and subsequently wrote Carter a letter advising him bluntly that "I stick to what I have said."

Also in the subsequent NATO Council foreign ministers' meeting in Ankara, Turkey, the West Germans were joined by the French in forcing support for the freeze proposal in the final communiqué. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie had arrived at Ankara saying categorically to the press that Washington would never accept the Schmidt proposal. Nonetheless West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher rose to propose its approval at the NATO Council, much as Schmidt had done at Venice. A bitter verbal confrontation ensued between him and Muskie forcing him, like Carter at Venice, to back down and temporarily bow to the pressure.

What will be decisive now depends on whether the Schmidt-Giscard combination will follow through on negotiations with Moscow to defuse the Afghanistan situation, thereby leaving the way for further planned initiatives in the Middle East. The final Venice communiqué, as well as the general summit discussions, made a point of staying away from the controversial area of the Middle East. The White House had responded swiftly and hard to Europe's recent proposal for a global Middle East peace approach with likely Soviet involvement. A solution to Afghanistan would provide the necessary groundwork for any such peace perspective, hence the Europeans' decision to focus their firepower at Venice on East-West matters, postponing discussions of the Middle East which would in any case only have led to an insuperable brawl with the American delegation.

## The 'high' points in the Carter Venice trip

Although President Carter is notorious throughout Europe—and indeed the United States—for being a political incompetent, and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's repeated characterization of him as "unstable" is well known, never perhaps has the utter and criminal bankruptcy of the Carter administration made itself more felt than in the period surrounding the Venice OECD summit earlier this week.

Hitting only the high points, Carter put forward the following three-act performance:

**Before the summit:** Carter and his advisers talked tough about subduing the detente-prone Europeans, especially the unruly French and West Germans. Particularly targeted was Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany for his proposal of a three-year freeze in the stationing of Eurostrategic missiles in Europe. Schmidt is expected to make that proposal when he arrives in Moscow on June 30 on the invitation of Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev. Carter and national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski demanded an end to the proposal and said so in a personal letter to the Chancellor that even State Department sources described as "highly insulting." The letter also demanded that Schmidt cancel his plans to meet with East German President Eric Honnecker, and hinted that the trip to Moscow too should be called off.

Washington then leaked the letter to the press, in a crude effort at embarrassing Schmidt.

**Carter in Venice:** A far from subdued Schmidt gave Carter a 40-minute lecture on his grievances in what has been described as a screaming match—except that Carter was not allowed to say a word throughout. Afterward Schmidt announced that he will carry through with his trip to Moscow and his freeze proposal. Carter then told the press that he had changed his mind and now believed the Moscow trip would be of the greatest importance to the entire West; also that he now felt assured on the legitimacy of Schmidt's freeze proposal.

French President Giscard d'Estaing then pulled a coup at the start of the formal summit session by announcing that Brezhnev had just sent him a personal letter advising him of Soviet troop withdrawals from Afghanistan. Carter, who had intended to shape the summit around condemnations of the Soviets, at first tried to dismiss the report. But, reversing himself again under pressure from the French and shamed at having been bypassed by the Kremlin in the communication of such crucial information, Carter stated that the withdrawals may have been ordered in good faith.

**After the summit:** Carter told the press—as reported by *Le Monde* and various German papers—that there can be no freeze in the NATO decision to deploy Euromissiles. The Soviets would first have to cease their deployment of SS-20 missiles, since due to existing Soviet superiority in this field, anything less would be “an unequal tradeoff.” According to *Le Monde*, Carter hinted that if Schmidt were to go ahead with the proposal while in Moscow, he would “disown” the Chancellor. “I accept no freezing of our plans,” he said in a vain attempt at humor. Secretary of State Muskie, in Ankara for a meeting of the NATO Council, echoed the President.

Then both Brzezinski and Muskie, speaking for the administration, reversed Carter's earlier statements while at Venice and decried the Soviet troop withdrawals as a hoax. At Venice, Carter had attempted to make up for his loss of face, in that Giscard and not he had been informed of the withdrawals, by saying that American intelligence had informed him earlier about the withdrawals. Two days later Brzezinski and Muskie cited those same intelligence sources to back up their claims that in fact the Soviets had effected a net increase in troops stationed in Afghanistan.

In the midst of this muddle, Carter delivered a coup de grace to his own shredded credibility when he attempted to retake the reins away from Schmidt and Giscard in the conduct of East-West policy. No doubt commentaries in the American press such as that in Henry Trewitt's column had damaged his ego by showing him the massive blunders he had committed at Venice. Trewitt had commented, not without chagrin, that Carter had allowed France and Germany to seize the franchise in the conducting of East-West policy, an area which has always been the exclusive preserve of the American president.

So Carter took the opportunity of the banquet given in his honor in Yugoslavia, where he had travelled immediately after Venice, to dredge up his February proposal for a compromise on the Afghani situation. But this vague attempt at statesmanship was, unfortunately for him, received as yet more of the proverbial hot air. The proposal consisted of a “transitional government”

for Afghanistan, possibly backed by United Nations troops. Carter's limp encouragement to Moscow that “we are not saying that Afghanistan has to be detached in every fashion whatever from Soviet influence. We will give you some arrangements and assurances,” will hardly be considered by the Kremlin.

But if Carter had nonetheless managed to take solace in the fact that he had at least made an effort, even this consolation was taken from him. The French President held a stunning press conference in Paris on the subject of the troop withdrawals. He announced that in the course of his meeting with Brezhnev last month—derided by the U.S. press as ineffectual at the time—he and the Soviet leader had worked out an actual agenda for the eventual pullout of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. The Soviet announcement that it had recalled troops this weekend, he said, is only the first phase of the agreement reached. “New withdrawals can be expected.”

## *‘No way to handle allies, Mr. Carter’*

*The following is excerpted from the Washington Star's June 24 editorial, “To lead the allies.”*

. . . Mr. Schmidt is the key to the situation in several ways. He is finding it difficult to balance his firm commitment to nuclear-force modernization against the great popularity in West Germany of so-called *ostpolitik*. . . Mr. Schmidt is also caught up in a tough re-election campaign. . . .

Yet President Carter, as the brushes between the two men before and at the Venice conference show, has handled Mr. Schmidt's domestic political problems with impressive indelicacy. He has held Mr. Schmidt's feet to the fire publicly and as much as accused him of faltering in his December commitment to nuclear-force modernization.

For that matter, none of the European allies can any longer be treated as if dutiful vassalage to Washington were their only concern. That is a recipe for strengthening not disarming, the neutralist opinion that would have them further weaken rather than strengthen NATO solidarity.

In the absence of a clear renunciation of West Germany's NATO commitments—and there has been none—it is a fundamental tactical mistake to handle Mr. Schmidt as if he were on leading strings from Washington and had no domestic political factors to consider.

In their present form those problems are no fundamental threat to the alliance and are manageable. One way to make them unmanageable is to try to badger, rather than lead the allies.