

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### U.S. fulminates over European corps

*Franco-German plans for a European army corps could provide the nucleus of a new "European army."*

**W**hen German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President François Mitterrand signed a long-term military cooperation package, which had been initiated through the project for a Franco-German Army Corps, on May 21, the Anglo-American bloc inside NATO—Britain, the U.S., and the Netherlands—responded with ire. They are especially concerned that other European states can join the Franco-German corps, and thereby could provide the core of a future “European army.” Telegrams expressing the “deepest concern” of policymakers in London and Washington flooded Bonn.

In a six-page statement which was characterized as “highly emotional” by a Bonn official, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Zoellick complained about the “ungrateful Germans who seemed to have forgotten that America has done so much for their reunification.”

Bush National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft sent a letter to Peter Hartmann, the chancellor’s chief foreign policy adviser, warning the Germans not to “overstretch” themselves if they believed they could manage to pull France back into NATO through the Franco-German corps.

The United States was aware that France was the one that kept blocking NATO-related activities aimed at strengthening existing Atlantic institutions, Scowcroft wrote. The Germans should know that the United States would never permit a weakening of NATO structures, nor their replacement by European structures in which the U.S. role was reduced.

Other U.S. démarches made it

clear to Bonn that the Western European Union (WEU), an organization of nine European states in which the British and the Dutch protect U.S. interests, was not the channel to be worked through.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger arrived in Bonn at the end of May to talk Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel out of the “Euro-Corps” project. Kinkel left for Paris to address an assembly of the WEU on June 2 just hours later.

Because of the British and Dutch role, the WEU is far from being a tool for a genuine European defense policy. But the French-German commitment to develop European defense structures is beginning to outweigh the Anglo-American faction.

The British have adopted a “flexible” approach, pushing the WEU as the second-best option to contain the Franco-German plans—if NATO as such can’t halt the drive in Bonn and Paris. NATO requires a unanimous vote for any decision, which always provides the Anglo-Americans with a veto, but a majority of five can vote down the other four in the WEU.

The control mechanisms that have been used at NATO for the past four decades to contain “erratic” impulses from Paris (France quit NATO in 1966 because of that) and Bonn, which would challenge the dominant Anglo-American role, are not available in the WEU. That is the origin of the enmity of London and Washington, irrespective of the fact that the WEU is still an underdeveloped body that is not challenging NATO structures.

There are still pro-Atlanticist fig-

ures in the German administration, including new Defense Minister Volker Ruehe. But mistrust is leading London and Washington to treat the Bonn Atlanticists as “not very reliable,” and to overreact. This is embarrassing even longtime friends of the Americans, many of whom are switching to the European camp.

The case of Hartmut Soell, a Social Democrat who backed NATO in the fierce struggles with leftists in the debate over stationing Euro-missiles in the early 1980s, is indicative. Soell, who was elected chairman of the WEU assembly on June 1, wrote a report on Atlantic relations that harshly attacked a recent Pentagon doctrine draft for targeting Germany as one of the prime future adversaries of the United States.

Soell said the arguments in that doctrine were “too simplistic, absurd, and ridiculous,” and that it posed the question of “why the Pentagon employs such paranoid officials.” The Pentagon still dreams of a “new world order” that would cement American dominance, he said, and refuses to acknowledge that more European political-economic integration means a diminished role for the United States in Europe in the long run.

Pressed by the U.S., the British and Dutch vetoed the release of the Soell report. It had to be edited, mollifying the Pentagon, before it could be taken up by the WEU on June 2.

But the suppression of the original Soell report is creating an increasingly negative image of the United States. Indicative is the leading German business weekly *Wirtschaftswoche*, which charged in its May 29 issue that “the Pax Americana has little to do with peace.” Faced with the decline of the coercive Cold War system that guaranteed U.S. dominance in western politics, the Americans are “waging a reckless fight for political and economic supremacy in the world.”