

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

A 'war of words,' or something more?

Chancellor Kohl tries to get the arms embargo against Bosnia lifted, as the Entente Cordiale denounces Germany.

The direction which the discussion about Bosnia took at the June 21 European Community summit of heads of state and government in Copenhagen, showed the alliance against Germany in action. When Chancellor Helmut Kohl presented an initiative to have the arms embargo against Bosnia lifted, he was overruled by the other 11 European leaders. Not even the fact that he was in possession of a special dispatch from President Clinton encouraging him to bring up the embargo issue at the summit, moved the others; Kohl was isolated.

At the core of the "isolationists" are France and Britain, as a remake of the Entente Cordiale, which played a catalytic role in the outbreak of two world wars in this century, and which is becoming ever more visible.

At the Copenhagen summit, Kohl and British Prime Minister John Major reportedly had a heated exchange, during which Major had the gall to declare that, as he hadn't received any letter from Clinton, the matter was not one that should be put on a "strictly European" summit agenda.

Then, France's President François Mitterrand intervened with a proposal that verbally endorsed Kohl's call for lifting the arms embargo, but only on condition that the entire U.N. peacekeeping mission be ended first. A U.N. pullout would take weeks, so adoption of the Mitterrand proposal would mean keeping the arms embargo intact into late summer, at which point the state of Bosnia may have vanished altogether, with all Bosnians expelled by Serbia.

It was easy, therefore, for the Eu-

ropean Twelve to adopt the "alternate" Mitterrand proposal for a joint resolution that offered "money and troops" (without any specifics) for a future United Nations peacekeeping force deployed to protect the two or three "safe havens" for the remaining Bosnian civilian population.

Commented the German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, in a June 23 editorial on the summit: "But in the group of EC states, Great Britain and France determine the Bosnia policy—a policy not only of omitted, but even of sabotaged aid." The Mitterrand proposal, the article charged, was "never meant seriously; it only was to cover up the deadly commitment not to act at all."

Among the German media, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* has been most outspoken in addressing the existence of the new Entente Cordiale against Germany. A hard-hitting article by Viktor Meier, the daily's Balkans correspondent, published on June 9, sparked a fierce and polarizing debate on the issue. Meier charged that from the start of the "peace talks process," British diplomacy, beginning with the mediation efforts of Lord Carrington, has encouraged the Serbs and discouraged the Croats and Bosnians. Mitterrand's spectacular trip to Sarajevo about one year ago, which preempted and ruined an option for a western military intervention, properly highlighted the role of the French on the side of the British, Meier wrote.

The main blame was to be put on London, as being the driving force in this Anglo-French alliance, Meier said, reporting that senior British dip-

lomats openly blame Germany for this Balkans war, showing where the core of the pro-Serbian front lies.

The frankness with which Meier took on the British problem provoked the Anglophiles in Bonn, one of whom, Christian Democratic Union spokesman on foreign affairs Karl Lamers, mailed an angry letter to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, which was published June 15.

Lamers—who has, in recent debates about a European defense organization, been an advocate of the view that a senior British role in any future such organization was indispensable—not only criticized Meier for his article, but insisted in his letter, that because such articles would aggravate German relations with London and Paris, the newspaper should impose "self-criticism."

It came as no surprise, then, that Lamers was among the few Germans who supported U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's German-bashing remarks in his June 18 interview with *USA Today*. Christopher opined that Germany "bears particular responsibility" for actions that may have accelerated the war in Bosnia. Germany's quick diplomatic recognition of Croatia and Bosnia was "the beginning," said Christopher.

Lamer said that while Christopher's "tone" was wrong, his "facts" were right.

As if anticipating Christopher's June 18 attacks, Meier had already warned in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* of June 17 against "deeply rooted prejudices in the English-speaking world" on the Serbian issue. Among Anglo-American propagandists for the Serbian cause, Meier singled out the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. as being firmly in the hands of the "Serbian Mafia." The center is a key supplier of policies for the State Department.