

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### Illusions of a Franco-German defense

*The so-called "post-Reykjavik process" is like a Pandora's box, from which one evil after the other emerges.*

**T**he propaganda for the "zero option" and "security partnership" with the Soviet Union, a deal cut between West Germany and Gorbachov's Russia in the era of *perestroika*, has been followed by yet another version—the idea that a merger between the armed forces of France and West Germany would suffice to defend Europe against Soviet aggression.

Prominent decouplers, like German ex-chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French ex-President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, have campaigned for a "Franco-German defense alliance," which they said would be capable of taking over the role of the United States in Europe. Schmidt and Giscard say that if France's nuclear strike forces would extend their umbrella over West Germany, this would suffice to deter any Soviet aggression.

This illusionary proposal, which does not take the slightest notice of the new Soviet armaments, has found support among prominents in Germany and France. In France, ex-Premier Laurent Fabius, the two former Foreign Ministers Couve de Murville and Roland Dumas, the former Justice Minister, Roger Peyrefitte, and others signaled support for the Schmidt-Giscard plan.

In Bonn, the role of Alfred Dregger, influential head of the Bonn parliamentary group of the Christian Democrats, is most noteworthy. He said June 18 that with the "zero-option" pull-out of U.S. missiles, also the future of the U.S. troops stationed in Europe was uncertain. Dregger called for a "reorientation of German defense policy," recommending a

"European security union" based on Franco-German defense cooperation.

Schmidt and Giscard have pointed to the "unfinished agenda" of the Franco-German Treaty of Jan. 22, 1963. As today, the threat of U.S. disengagement was haunting Europe in the early 1960's. But the strategic situation of the West toward the Soviets was much better in 1963, when France's President Charles de Gaulle and West Germany's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer launched their vision of a Franco-German alliance for European defense.

In 1978, Giscard (then French President) and Schmidt (then German Chancellor), launched their first initiative for a Franco-German pact. Facing mounting conflicts with U.S. President Jimmy Carter, their idea was to have Western European "self-assertion" against the United States, but after Giscard's defeat in the presidential elections in France of May 1981, this Franco-German vision failed.

Another effort was made in February 1982, when Schmidt and the new President of France, François Mitterrand, signed an agreement on security cooperation. This was not the old concept of 1963, nor the 1978 one either. Mitterrand intended to have more cooperation between the arms industries, rather than a real pact for Franco-German defense. By October 1982, Schmidt was ousted from office, and the new Chancellor in Bonn, Helmut Kohl, was on a strict pro-American line.

The situation changed after the Reykjavik meeting between Reagan and Gorbachov, when senior U.S.

diplomats, including Ambassador to Bonn Richard Burt, pressured Kohl to give in on the "Europeanization of defense." Statements by the outgoing NATO C-in-C in Europe, Gen. Bernard Rogers, leaked in recent discussions with influential newspapers in Europe and the United States, confirmed that the Reagan administration has left no stone unturned to coerce European governments into "supporting an INF agreement that would crown the career of the U.S. President." The price of this crown on Reagan's head would be the exposure of Europe to absolute Soviet military supremacy, warned Rogers.

Much attention has been paid to his statements in Paris and Bonn, as well as to parallel warnings issued by U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche in many personal meetings with influential persons in France and in West Germany.

On June 21, Franz Josef Strauss, chairman of the Christian Social Union in Germany, attacked the zero option as a "dangerous idea" that would make war in Europe possible again. "We are resolutely opposing this," stated Strauss, announcing that his party would put up a fierce fight in Bonn over the issue. Strauss is the foremost spokesman of the "military-industrial complex" in West Germany.

On June 22, France's current Defense Minister, André Giraud, said a clear "no" to the idea that an extended French nuclear umbrella could replace the one of the United States. And on June 23, Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl called the umbrella debate "absolutely misplaced," warning that it would "just be the worst thing to do at a moment when only neutralists and decouplers can profit from that."

For the moment, the Franco-German debate has been halted, which means a strategic setback for the decouplers.