Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Sabotage behind the air crashes?

What makes NATO aircraft keep falling from the skies over Western Europe?

There have always been accidents involving military aircraft, during difficult combat exercises, and also during routine flight maneuvers. Inadequate flight training of pilots, technical weak points in the machinery, or physical paralysis of F-16 pilots during a sharp curving maneuver at very high speed, are what NATO lists as "normal" causes.

It is not "normal," however, that Western air forces have so far lost some 50 aircraft in accidents since January 1988, and that the skies over Germany have grown very unsafe for the U.S. Air Force's F-16 in particular.

Many air force spokesmen, German and Allied alike, tend to say, "The pattern is abnormal, the causes are normal." But some experts are pointing to the possibility of Soviet sabotage. *EIR* agrees, bearing in mind that a massive propaganda campaign by the Warsaw Pact and its fellow-travelers in Western Europe has been under way since early 1988 against the F-16s and other modern NATO aircraft. The air accidents fit Soviet propaganda purposes.

It is very interesting to see all of Moscow's assets in Germany, including the opposition Social Democrats, fully mobilized for a "total ban on NATO air exercises." declaring the sky a "property of the people, not of NATO."

It is even more interesting to see Mikhail Gorbachov himself joining this propaganda campaign against NATO aircraft. Visiting Poland, he said in Warsaw July 13 that Moscow would be willing to withdraw "analogous numbers of aircraft from forward-based positions in Eastern Eu-

rope, if NATO agrees to drop plans for transferring its 72 F-16 fighter bombers from Spain to Italy."

In the eyes of the Red Army, the F-16 is an optional NATO long-range nuclear substitute for the Pershing IIs and cruise missiles which the INF agreement will remove from European territory. Refueled in the air, the F-16 has a range of 3,000 kilometers and can reach the western parts of the Soviet Union from Italy, England, or Spain. These are the aircraft now falling from the sky like flies.

But, can aircraft be sabotaged? Yes, they can. There have been many acts of technical sabotage against all Western armed forces over the past few years, carried out by networks working for Moscow. This is especially the case with the German armed forces, which are heavily penetrated by members of the German Communist Party and other Moscow-leaning currents.

In the French and British armed forces, there are Communist Party networks, and in the U.S. armed forces, there is the equivalent in the "Fight Back" grouping, which is responsible for numerous acts of sabotage "from inside." Agent networks can carry out technical sabotage, like cutting cables, destroying sensitive parts of military equipment, and disrupting the electronics of weapons systems.

Then, Moscow has its *spetsnaz* special forces units that can be deployed against special targets. Most experts believe that Moscow would never deploy its *spetsnaz* units in peacetime. But there is a secret report at the German defense ministry, dat-

ing from late 1986, that indicates that Soviet *spetsnaz* units have been deployed on peacetime missions in Germany repeatedly.

But the Soviets can also rely on other networks, to avoid exposure of their *spetsnaz* operations. With the formation of "irregulars" among the German environmentalist and "peace movement" extremist groups in the early 1970s, cells of "experts" in radio communications, electronics, and laser technology have emerged. Some of these cells are highly skilled and capable of constructing their own electronic warfare equipment.

Germany's police forces know the capabilities of these cells. Secret police wireless codes have been cracked and radio communications disrupted during incidents of mass rioting and street-fighting. Military computer nets have been infiltrated repeatedly by such "techno-cells."

These highly specialized "techno-commandos" may have developed, some anti-terror experts believe, the technological capability and logistics required for the disrupting of military aircraft and flight guidance systems by means of electronic or electromagnetic warfare. The depth of surveillance the political-extremist underground in Germany maintains over all key military bases, includes the precise monitoring of regular flight patterns at the air bases, and precise recognition of aircraft types taking off and landing at these bases.

Precise information of this type, compiled over a longer period and checked back with patterns of changes, is definitely required to eventually station an electronic sabotage unit along one of the seven main air corridors for low-altitude flights NATO has fixed in Germany. An in-depth surveillance of these corridors by anti-terror specialists and military experts should yield some interesting results.