

George Bush prepares to terminate NATO

by Kathleen Klenetsky

Back during the presidential campaign, George Bush made strategic policy one of the principal distinguishing features between himself and his rival, Michael Dukakis. In a series of highly publicized speeches, Bush condemned his opponent's anti-defense policies, and pledged that he would strengthen America's military capabilities and overall strategic position.

But just a little more than a year later, this same George Bush is not only tearing down U.S. defense forces at an alarming rate. He has also decided that it is the Third World, along with Western Europe and Japan—and not the Soviet Union—which represent the greatest danger to the United States, and that U.S. strategic policy should be radically restructured to reflect this insane view.

Since the Panama invasion—which followed directly from this absurd denial of reality—the Bush team has dramatically escalated the implementation of its new strategic outlook. The first casualty is slated to be NATO. The U.S. is preparing to scuttle the U.S. military commitment to the defense of Western Europe, justifying this on the grounds that the Soviet Union has become our friend, and that, in any case, U.S. budget considerations rule out any significant continuing contribution to NATO.

According to several sources, the Bush gang is carrying out hush-hush negotiations with the Kremlin to reduce American forces in Europe by an initial 100,000 soldiers—a one-third cut in current troop levels—as the first step toward a near-total military disengagement from the continent. The U.S. is said to be looking favorably at an informal proposal made by Soviet officials at the conventional arms negotiations, known as the CFE talks, in Vienna. Proffered by Oleg Grinevsky, the proposal calls for much sharper cuts in Soviet and American troops in Europe than previously offered.

The proposal is a typical Soviet negotiating gambit, in-

tended to convey the notion that Moscow, beset by economic and political difficulties, is being forced to cut back its own troop deployments in Eastern Europe, and thus, the U.S. should do the same.

The Bush administration is colluding in this fiction. According to published reports, administration officials are putting out the line that Grinevsky's proposal means Moscow is now prepared to make bigger troop withdrawals from Eastern Europe than it has proposed in the past. East German communist party chief Gregor Gysi upped the ante Jan. 6, when he called on East and West Germany to halve their armed forces by the end of next year, and urged that all foreign troops leave both Germanys by 1999. As soon as the news appeared, the Bush administration trotted out National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft to say that the U.S. would certainly consider reducing its troop strength in Western Europe beyond the 275,000 ceiling which it has proposed at the CFE talks.

The Andropov Doctrine

The Bush crew is blithely covering up the fact that even if the Soviets do pull some of their military forces out of Europe, it will be much easier for them to be redeployed back than it will be for U.S. forces—not simply for the obvious geographic and logistical reasons, but also because most of those American troops which will be withdrawn from Europe will be totally demobilized. Since even a schoolchild can figure this out, there must be some explanation for the Bush team's decision to leave Europe, other than sheer stupidity.

What in fact is going on is that Washington and Moscow are implementing the Andropov Doctrine—the global power-sharing deal put forward by Yuri Andropov in an April 1983 interview with *Der Spiegel* magazine. That plan called for the U.S. to recognize the entire European continent as

within the Soviet sphere of influence, while the U.S. would get the Western Hemisphere.

This same plan can be seen at work in the recent statements by Secretary of State James Baker endorsing a possible Soviet military intervention into Romania, at the same time that the U.S. invaded Panama. This heavy-handed *quid pro quo* was an unmistakable signal that the Bush team's strategic policy is based on the Andropov Doctrine.

The Nunn show

The latest developments at the CFE front are by no means the only sign that the U.S. is speeding up its pullout from Europe. A few days before news of the Grinevsky proposal hit the press, Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) told the Jan. 3 *New York Times* that the administration proposal to the CFE talks was inadequate; and that the U.S. should be seeking to cut its troop levels in Europe to 200,000-250,000. Nunn, who chairs the influential Senate Armed Services Committee, said the U.S. should inform its NATO allies that "what we are going to be evolving toward will include U.S. strengths, and our strengths don't include getting a huge number of heavy forces to Europe during an emergency." Although Nunn is a Democrat, and potentially a key rival to Bush for the presidency, there is ample reason to believe that he is closely coordinating his actions with the administration. He is a longtime political ally of both Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, and worked with both of them on a series of task forces sponsored by the Aspen Institute, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Atlantic Council, which called for reorienting U.S. military strategy away from the defense of Europe against Soviet attack, toward quelling Third World disturbances.

Nunn's "criticism" of the administration's official position at the CFE talks is part of a staged process, whose aim is to quickly establish a bipartisan consensus behind the kind of drastic troop withdrawals from Europe that the Bush administration is already heading toward.

At the same time that Washington's war on NATO has escalated on the diplomatic front, the budget process, dictated by what congressional candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche has termed the Gramm-Rudman-Gorbachov law, is wreaking its own damage.

During the second week in January, the White House leaked that its 1992 Pentagon budget plan will include a proposal to greatly reduce NATO troops—the *Washington Times*, an approved leak sheet for the administration, puts the figure at between 100,000 and 200,000 troops. Troop cuts will also be a principal feature of the administration's defense spending proposal for the 1991 fiscal year, which will be submitted to Congress Jan. 29. According to published reports, that proposal will request \$292 billion—\$3 billion below the current year's budget, itself a sharp decline from the spending projections laid out by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

The *Washington Times* of Jan. 9 quotes unnamed administration officials saying that the administration's 1991 military spending proposal reflects the desire of President Bush and Defense Secretary Cheney to revamp the U.S. military strategy from one based on fighting a war in Europe, to one using smaller forces in Third World or anti-terrorist and anti-drug situations. Indeed, the 1991 budget reportedly calls for allocating \$1 billion (a threefold increase) for the military to fight the "war on drugs"—presumably along the lines of the Panama model. Additionally, the budget plan will call for eliminating the F-14 Tomcat fighter and the V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft; suspending production of the M-1 tank; mothballing two of the Navy's four battleships, eliminating all of them in a few years; and dismantling two entire Army divisions.

Ostensibly to deter Congress from making even deeper cuts in the defense budget, the Bush administration plans to argue that spending levels must be kept up to pay for a projected unending string of "Panamas."

The Jan. 9 *New York Times*, noting that "government and private experts agree that the threat of war with the Soviet Union is diminishing," reported that the Defense Department will argue that a portion of the Pentagon budget in the 1990s must be devoted to "combatting drugs and being prepared to bring American military power to bear in the Third World." Specifically, Pentagon officials are citing "politically popular actions," like the invasion of Panama, as "harbingers of a new era and arguments against sharp cuts in the Pentagon budget."

Nevertheless, it is virtually guaranteed that the congressional budget axe will take big bites out of the Bush proposal, inadequate though it is. For instance, House Armed Services Committee chairman Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) said during the first week of January that only massive repression in the Soviet Union and a complete change in its foreign and security policies could reverse the momentum in Congress toward sharp defense cutbacks. "I know the Pentagon thinks that Panama is going to change the outlook on defense spending," he said. "They're looking at this as a way to argue for a robust defense budget. I don't think it will change the size of the budget, but it may change the shape."

And it seems certain that the Bush administration's putatively clever "Panama" argument will, in fact, be used by some to justify the drastic defense gouging that Bush claims not to want. Lawrence Korb, a former Reagan defense official, now at the Brookings Institution, told the *New York Times*, that the success of lightly armored Army troops in Panama points up the potential for even farther-reaching troop cuts: "This was the biggest American military operation since Vietnam," says Korb. "How many troops did we use? Twenty-five thousand. If that's the case, why do we need more than 1.5 million men and women in uniform? Why do we need a B-2 bomber? We didn't even use an aircraft carrier in Panama or the M-1 tanks."