NATO: 'out of area' or out of business?

Michael Liebig analyzes the continental European governments' response to Anglo-American pressures for genocidal wars on the South.

The NATO Foreign Ministers meeting on Dec. 17-18 in Brussels engaged in yet another bitter debate on NATO adopting an "out of area" strategy. The Bush administration again employed masssive pressure tactics against continental Europe to have NATO adapt to a new "out of area" role within the "New World Order." Still, the gathering produced no such strategic reorientation for NATO.

Since the late 1970s, various American administrations and the Thatcher government of Britain had tried to enforce such a change. This campaign culminated first around the Malvinas War in the spring of 1982. The principal reason for the continental European rejection of a reformulation of NATO strategy toward out of area deployments was the profound fear that an armed conflict in the Third World involving NATO forces could potentially spark off and detonate the vast accumulation of Warsaw Pact and NATO military forces in Europe. It should also be remembered that NATO as a military alliance did *not* get involved in the 1956 Anglo-French-Israeli Suez war, the French colonial war in Algeria, the sequence of "minor" British, French, and Belgian colonial military actions throughout NATO's history, nor the American war in Vietnam. Thank God, one may say retrospectively.

During the winter 1989-90 it became obvious that as a consequence of the Central-East European revolutions, the Soviet Union would indeed militarily disengage from Central-Eastern Europe. In February 1990 the Soviet Union accepted in principle German unification *and* sovereignty. In historical terms, at that moment the bottom fell out from under NATO. Paradoxically enough, at the moment when the Soviet Union accepted the NATO membership of the unified Germany, NATO's fundamental reason for existence was gone. NATO had been created and has existed since as a military alliance in the context of the East-West confrontation of a divided Europe and specifically a divided Germany. In the unforgettable words of NATO's first Secretary General Lord Isamy, NATO is there "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down."

In historical terms, NATO did play a decisive role for 40 years in containing and militarily deterring Soviet Russian expansionism. As long as a vast offensive Soviet military capacity existed in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, large conventional and nuclear forces of the United States in Western-Central Europe were vital, for Western Europe *and* the United States. Basic strategic self-interest—not humanitarian concerns—of the United States dictated a U.S. military presence in Germany. By keeping large military forces in Western Europe America was able to deny the Soviet Union *global* military-strategic domination. But the winter 1989-90 saw a historical phase-change. With the Soviet Empire going through a life-and-death crisis and at least partial disintegration, the basis for the Soviet claim to world domination *and* the basis for a superpower "condominium" faded away. Consequently, the private talk in Washington's corridors of power—and in much of the Anglo-American media—changed "We are the only superpower left!"

Parallel to this historic phase-change of the underpinnings of NATO, within the alliance the debate about the need to give NATO an out of area orientation re-erupted with an outright frenzy. Margaret Thatcher especially made herself the public standard-bearer for a NATO out of area strategy. Led by Supreme Allied Commander John Galvin, regiments of generals, politicians, and think-tankers called for a new, out of area NATO strategy. The Bush administration used its means of political coercion towards continental Europe to have the July 1990 NATO summit in London adopt an out of area strategy for a "new NATO." But the NATO summit did not adopt an out of area strategy.

While Bush and Thatcher could not politically convince or coerce continental Europe in London, they were already busy engineering a crisis in the Gulf, which was and is supposed to create the "facts" that are meant to transform NATO toward an out of area strategy. Once Iraq was successfully lured into invading Kuwait, Gen. Volney Warner's old war plans from the late 1970s for the "U.S. Rapid Deployment Forces" to fight a war in Gulf were implemented. Barely noticed by the public, and vastly superseding anything that was agreed upon at the Vienna talks on Conventional Force Reduction in Europe, an estimated 60-70% of U.S. forces in Europe were transferred to the Gulf. Meantime, the Soviets transferred vast amounts of troops and equipment to the Soviet Central Asian republics, especially Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, und Turkmenistan, the "Southern TVD" of the Soviet

High Command.

Depopulation wars

"Operation Desert Shield" was meant to be a *fait accompli* for NATO. No more "old and sterile debates" (James Baker III) for or against an "out of area NATO"! Take it or leave it! *Hic Kuwait, Hic salta!*

Two typical quotes—endlessly repeated with slight variations—sum up the Anglo-American position on the role of an "out of area NATO" in a "New World Order." One is from NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner, who is technically speaking German, but since a long time the qualification "NATO minded" needs to be added. Woerner's "soft" personality always makes him most receptive to what he perceives to be the dominant—usually the Anglo-American—line. On Nov. 29, Woerner said, "Along the southern perimeter of NATO, there is to some extent an arc of tension from the Maghreb to the Middle East. . . . Tensions are exacerbated not only by the ambitions of dictators like Saddam Hussein, but also by population growth, resource conflict, migration, underdevelopment, religious fundamentalism, and terrorism. Clearly, threats to NATO's territorial integrity from beyond Europe cannot be downplayed as out of area threats."

The other statement is from James Baker III, who on Dec. 18 said in Brussels, "Iraq's aggression in the Gulf represents no less a threat to West Europe than a threat against the NATO treaty area as such. . . . If we allow ourselves to remain paralyzed by formalistic logic and therefore prevent ourselves from adapting the alliance to this type of danger, we will repeat the deadly mistakes of past generations."

The role of Western Europe—especially France and Germany—in respect to the Anglo-American war policy in the Gulf since August has been one of tormented vacillation. Continental Europe's governments have issued a long sequence of mutually contradictatory declarations vis-à-vis the Anglo-American war drive in the Gulf. They launched a variety of genuine peace initiatives, yet they back the U.S. military buildup in the Gulf logistically and endorse the Bush administration at the U.N. and other diplomatic occasions. France has sent a 20,000-strong expeditionary corps to Saudi Arabia, yet claims it is strictly independent and in a defensive disposition only. Germany expresses "political support" for the Bush administration, but categorically refuses to send any military forces—now or in the future—to the Middle East. West European governments have over the past months exhibited diplomatic pragmatism and confused "realpolitiking" vis-à-vis the Bush administration that is plainly self-defeating.

Genscher: NATO may break apart

Yet, France and Germany are steadfastly rejecting the adoption of an "out of area" strategy for NATO. The rift between the Anglo-American positions on an "out of area"

complex were so bitter, that on Dec. 18, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher spoke in public about "the danger that NATO may break apart."

The December 1990 NATO meeting in Brussels clearly demonstrated that the question of the Anglo-American war drive in the Gulf and the adoption of an "out of area" strategy for NATO must be seen in the context of other—equally or more important—issues, which profoundly divide NATO:

● the American-European trade war, epitomized by the collapse of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade talks;

● the vastly differing attitudes toward the deepening crisis in the Soviet Union;

● the emergence of new European security structures outside NATO.

The Anglo-American attitude vis-à-vis the life-and-death crisis of the Soviet Union is essentially, "Let them stew in their own juices." A more or less cataclysmic economic and political breakdown of the Soviet Union is viewed as an "historical inevitability." *After* some sort of—bloody—"historical catharsis" of what used to be the Soviet Union, an internally "neo-Stalinist," but externally much-weakened new "entity" is envisioned. Such a "new Soviet Russia" is then to be given its place in the "New World Order."

The continental European—and first of all German—view is diametrically opposed to this. The European design is a more or less stable transition of the present Soviet Union into a politically and economically radically reformed post-Soviet "Confederation." The German government calls it a policy of "all-European responsibility and stability." A key feature of this approach is a large program of immediate "winter aid" to avert complete economic breakdown and chaos *cum* neo-Stalinist backlash in the short term. In the medium term, large-scale economic assistance to the Soviet Union and cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe are envisioned. The key notion of this policy is "economic security" between the Atlantic and the Urals. This policy is *not* the LaRouche Productive Triangle strategy for Europeanwide economic reconstruction, but a mere pragmatic and confused approximation of it.

Nevertheless, what the governments of continental Europe have done so far toward Eastern Europe, has, together with the worsening European-American economic and trade relations, "broadened the Atlantic," in the words of German Foreign Minister Genscher.

Since early 1990, within the countries of Western Europe, a debate about European security has erupted not seen since the mid-1960s. The focus of these discussions is not NATO interestingly, but autonomous "European security structures" like the Western European Union (WEU), the "security dimension of the European Community," and the CSCE (Helsinki Accords). The parameters of this debate are:

● American troop and nuclear weapon withdrawals from Europe;

● the crisis of the Soviet Union, its military disen-

gagement from eastern Central Europe, the future character of the Soviet Armed Forces;

 • German unification, the absorption of the former East German Armed Forces;

 • France searching to find its new place within Europe;

 • Britain's new "inside" role in Western Europe under the Major-Hurd regime;

 • the "Single European Community Market" and the approaching "political union" of the EC;

 • the Gulf crisis and Mediterranean security;

 • the future security policy of the former East European "satellites" and the political, economic, and ethnic crisis potential in the Eastern Europe-Balkans area;

 • the future role of the European Free Trade Association states, like Sweden's "revolutionary" application for EC membership.

A convoluted debate

The new European security debate is exceptionally convoluted. The various European nations are deeply divided among one another, and within, on the content and the insitutional character of a European security. Some favor expanding the "security dimension" of the European Community in the context of the "Political Union," which would gradually transform the EC into a "European Confederation." Some, especially the Major-Hurd government in Britain, have since Thatcher's demise adopted the WEU as a fallback option, a sort of "ersatz NATO." France and Germany too favor a strengthening of the WEU, but emphasize its independence from NATO. There exist also proposals for a "neo-Gaullist" continental European "Defense Union" outside the WEU, the EC, and NATO, obviously the most intelligent concept. An appropriate and revealing characterization of the muddled European security debate is a statement of the German government. It proclaims that European security should be achieved by a *Geflecht ineinanderkreisender Institutionen* ("a weave of institutions which are circling around each other") (sic), that is, a not-specified goulash of EC, WEU, CSCE, and NATO plus something new.

Yet, beyond all this awesome confusion, there is a net strategic vector: Europe *is* in the process of *transcending* NATO. The historical rule, that military alliances exist as long as the sum of common interests supersedes the sum of conflicting and divergent interests, applies for NATO too. This equation for NATO has moved into the minus. The sneaky and potentially devastating British adaptation to a "pro-WEU" position and no longer betting everything on NATO is symptomatic. De facto, in historical terms, NATO is fading away. Beyond NATO, the future of European-American relations in economic, political, and military terms is being wrecked by the Bush administration's neo-imperial policy of the "New World Order" and the indecisive, confused response of West European governments, which utterly lacks any Grand Design.

Immediate 'Iraqi nuclear bomb' is hoax

by Joseph Brewda

Within a week of the publication of several national opinion polls showing that the U.S. population thought that the possible development of an Iraqi nuclear bomb was the most (and maybe even the only) convincing argument to go to war, George Bush began raising the specter that Iraq might soon have nuclear weapons. Speaking to U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 22, Bush claimed, "Those who would measure the timetable for Saddam's nuclear program in years may be seriously underestimating the reality. . . . Every day that passes brings Saddam one step closer to realizing his goal of a nuclear weapons arsenal."

Having found that talk about "Saddam . . . worse than Hitler," "protecting Saudi Arabia," and "creating jobs," didn't make it, Bush's propaganda advisers had hit on a new ploy. Whatever the Iraqis may ultimately do, the timing of the "Iraqi bomb" scare has everything to do with manipulation of Western public opinion, and the London press which began the drumbeat around this issue has as much as admitted that.

The Iraqi government says that it has no intention of developing a nuclear bomb, since it has already developed a chemical bomb, a "poor-man's nuclear bomb," a better weapon, as Iraqi spokesmen have put it, than a nuclear bomb in some respects. On the other hand, it is well known, and even admitted by the Bush administration, that Israel has nuclear bombs—perhaps as many as 20—as well as chemical and biological weapons. Its arsenal had been developed by the U.S., beginning with the Johnson administration.

Even before Bush's assertion, the London *Sunday Times* launched the propaganda campaign. "Iraq may have a nuclear capacity in two months," the paper claimed on Nov. 18, supposedly based on its access to a secret U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency report. This DIA estimate, says the paper, "has caused serious concern in Washington. If Iraq does get a nuclear weapon before war breaks out, the United States will inevitably have to revise its war plans. . . . Some Pentagon officials now argue that any further delay in going to war will allow Saddam time to 'go nuclear.' " According to the paper, the DIA claimed that Saddam has launched what it calls "Iraq's Manhattan Project," in a desperate attempt to acquire a nuclear weapon.

Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher also warned the House of Commons that week that Iraq was close