

The deadly consequences of West Germany's 'realpolitik'

by Michael Liebig

In West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's "major" government restructuring of April 1989, the only federal minister who was fired, was the only one still willing and able to look at the strategic realities facing Germany without going into a cold sweat. With the removal of Rupert Scholz, a clique of substanceless, opportunistic functionaries has established itself in Bonn, among which Kohl himself is not the most important. His continued presence in Bonn, through the summer, is highly unlikely. Wolfgang Schäuble (Christian Democratic Union, new minister of the interior) and Theo Waigel (chairman of the Christian Social Union, new minister of finance) are the real and zealous "movers" in Bonn politics in the spring of 1989. This clique has developed an oh-so-clever "*realpolitik* strategy of survival" that has potentially fatal consequences for the Federal Republic.

- The Federal Republic is blocking any form of modernization of NATO's operational tactical nuclear weapons, not only of the Lance successor models but also air-based distance weapons. This is providing the administration of U.S. President George Bush with its longed-for pretext to push forward the reduction of the U.S. troop presence in the Federal Republic.

- Out of pure opportunism, the extension of military service from 15 to 18 months has been canceled, which means concretely that the present strength of the Bundeswehr at 495,000 cannot be maintained.

- Gerhard Stoltenberg, the former finance minister and IMF apologist, will, as "savings commissioner," further reduce the already underfinanced defense budget.

- The Bonn visit by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov in July is being awaited with breathless anticipation; new conventional "disarmament proposals" will be announced, along with "glorious prospects" of economic cooperation with the Federal Republic.

- The Federal Republic will pull out of nuclear energy, and there will be no recycling of nuclear fuel; reprocessing of nuclear fuel will be taken care of during the transition period by France and the Soviet Union.

- The Federal Republic will submit without protest to the emerging global crises—a combination of energy, food, and "environmental" crises—that are presently being prepared under the leadership of the Bush administration.

It is extremely doubtful that Chancellor Kohl will be in the position to implement this political program. It is also doubtful that the above-mentioned "movers," Waigel and Schäuble, will be in the position as alternatives and successors of Kohl to translate the program into action. The "gentlemen behind the scenes" from the large banks and heavy industry have also made their preparations here. In case of an international crisis, the way is cleared for a "national emergency" Grand Coalition that would be based on Social Democrats Hans-Jochen Vogel and Oskar Lafontaine, and Christian Democrat Lothar Späth.

Naturally, not only West German political functionaries and bankers are involved in these plans. The superpowers are not merely observing, but are strongly influencing this process. The ostentatious friendliness being shown for Vogel and West Berlin's new mayor, Social Democrat Walter Momper, in Washington, D.C. and Moscow simultaneously, or the extra-friendly commentaries in the British press on Späth are not the most important signals.

Kissinger's 'new order' for Europe

In the April 16, 1989 issue of *Welt am Sonntag*, Henry Kissinger presented his plans for the Federal Republic. The views presented are not private to Kissinger, but reflect the conception of the majority of the Anglo-American Establishment. This was made quite clear at the annual meeting of the Trilateral Commission in Paris April 8-11. Kissinger is known as a pathological liar, and so presented *his* plans for a condominium of the superpowers on Central Europe as a consideration of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Then, outraged, he rejected the idea that the United States is intending a "New Yalta." However, immediately thereafter, Kissinger wrote, "A confidential dialogue [on Central Europe] between Moscow and Washington will therefore, in its ultimate effect, not only be unavoidable, but is even desirable." No time can be lost, for "if anarchy [in Eastern Europe] breaks out and the tanks roll," it will then, perhaps, be too late.

With reference to the Western European side of his planned "new order" for Central Europe, Kissinger is, as usual, much more restrained. He stated, with a pessimistic, even fatalistic undertone, that the "denuclearization" of the Federal Republic and the parallel withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Fed-

eral Republic are unavoidable, and thus are to be introduced in negotiations—for example, those in Vienna—as long as something is received from Moscow in return.

Kissinger stated here in no uncertain terms, for any who would hear, that the “erosion of NATO” is, in fact, irreversible, that the “survival of the Alliance” can no longer be assumed. Kissinger’s historical perspective is, consequently, “Soviet hegemony in a denuclearized Europe.”

The established parties’ “survival artists” in Bonn are performing exactly as Kissinger’s script provides. But they are also behaving in exactly the manner desired by Moscow. The Soviets have made known their interest in Kissinger’s plan through Gorbachov and through diplomatic channels. This will also be discussed in the May 10-11 meetings in Moscow between Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Gorbachov’s visit to Bonn

The Soviet leadership desperately needs breakthrough successes in Western Europe, especially with regard to the Federal Republic. The domestic situation in the Soviet Empire is desperate. Granted, Gorbachov did succeed in disciplining the ruling *Nomenklatura* under his personal command, but simultaneously the objective economic and national-political conflicts broke out with an intensity that exceeded the wildest expectations. Gorbachov is presently pursuing sheer crisis management in his empire, but the situation is not at all under his control.

We must therefore expect that Gorbachov will submit a glorious-sounding “unique proposal” during his visit to Bonn July 12-15. Gorbachov wants, of course, to accelerate the withdrawal of U.S. troops from West Germany, and will therefore announce further “troop reductions” in East Germany and other Central European countries. Additionally, it may be expected that new, glorious offers of “cooperation” in the economic sphere will be made, just as previously, in 1978, Gorbachov’s predecessor Leonid Brezhnev, did so effectively on German television. It is also conceivable that Gorbachov will drop a few touching words on the “special relations”—absolutely nothing, however, along the lines of a “reunification”—between the two German states.

It is not speculation to assume that Gorbachov’s Bonn announcements will find agreement ranging from profound to hysterical among the established party functionaries. The points made above on the most recent “*realpolitik* accommodation” of West German policy will find their complete “confirmation.” And not only the established party functionaries: The new careerists around Franz Schönhuber’s Republikaner party and its supporters will observe with satisfaction that we can “do business” with the Russians in every way.

Günther Kiessling, who just published his book *Neutrality Is Not Treason*, must be placed in the last category. The content of the book is perfectly revealed by the title: Everything, including reunification, can be gotten from the Soviets

if we are willing to pay enough. If the right political, military, and economic price is paid to Moscow, then reunification will be in Moscow’s own interest, and will be immediately guaranteed by the Communist “reformer” Gorbachov. The Federal Republic of Germany must submit itself to Moscow’s political, military, and economic rule, and for that will receive “stepwise reunification.” This scenario of submission is repeated to the reader over and over again in a ghastly way, illustrated with equally repetitious observations that are in part obvious, in part banal.

Weakness in Washington

The Soviet leadership is not so dumb as not to see that, exactly like the Bonn contortions, the Kissinger offers with regard to a “new ordering” of the situation in Central Europe are the expression of a profound weakness of the Bush administration. No firm policy is coming from Washington, D.C. that takes account of the crisis in the Soviet Empire and the rebellion of the suppressed peoples of the East. Indeed, the opposite is the case: Washington is pursuing a strategy of “controlled withdrawal” from the European continent that will downgrade NATO and reduce its forces. The U.S. budget deficit provides one pretext for this; another is the current dispute over modernization of the Lance short-range nuclear missiles.

The crisis in the Alliance reached a peak on April 24, when West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Defense Minister Stoltenberg arrived in Washington for a five-hour meeting with Baker and Defense Secretary Richard Cheney. Genscher and Stoltenberg demanded that the United States forego modernization of the Lance, and agree to negotiate with the Soviets the elimination of all short-range nuclear missiles from Europe—the so-called “third zero” option. Baker issued a terse statement after the meeting, which one foreign diplomat said “is a clear indication that things went very badly.” Cheney charged that those advocating negotiations with Moscow on the “third zero” option were falling into a “dangerous trap.”

Cheney and Baker’s comments are the height of cynicism, since the Bush administration has been trying every trick in the book—including the Lance issue—to get rid of Kohl, and bring the Social Democrats to power.

Radio Moscow happily noted the clashes between Bonn and Washington in a broadcast April 25, praising Stoltenberg for his “resistance against the Lance modernization.” The talks produced “severe differences between the United States and West Germany,” the broadcast gloated.

The Genscher-Stoltenberg policy drew angry fire from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who warned Bonn on April 25 not to break with the United States over the missile issue. Thatcher is expected to meet with Kohl in Germany on April 30.

The crisis in NATO will come to a head at the NATO summit meeting in Brussels at the end of May.