

German chancellor calls the anti-nuclear bluff

by Donald Baier

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt emerged from a bitterly fought meeting of his Social Democratic Party's (SPD) top leadership Feb. 11 threatening to sweep aside the party's radical environmentalist wing, led by SPD Chairman Willy Brandt, and govern on the basis of broad support for his own pronuclear nation-building policies across party lines.

This was the dramatic implication of the remarks Schmidt made on national television Feb. 13. Schmidt emphasized to the citizens of the Federal Republic that as chancellor, his responsibility was to the welfare of the nation. If his own party's policies contradicted that, Schmidt said, he could defy them and call for a vote of confidence in parliament.

Herr Schmidt has his own style, but his bold assertion of republican nationalist principles reminded observers of the late Charles de Gaulle in his prime.

The message could not be misunderstood by the Brandt radicals. Two days earlier, at the SPD executive committee meeting, Schmidt had demanded a change in the party's wishy-washy official position on nuclear energy and failed to get it. Schmidt had argued forcefully that the *federal constitution required him to support nuclear energy, because it mandated the chancellor to prevent damage to the nation*. And without nuclear power, Schmidt pointed out, there will be serious damage to the national economy.

The clear import of Schmidt's televised "vote of confidence" remarks was therefore to call the bluff of the Brandt SPD "greenies," by threatening to take the nu-

clear issue and similar matters outside the party for a decision by parliament and the nation at large, just as de Gaulle used to do when he was challenged.

These developments, documented below through quotations from Schmidt's recent speeches and interviews, have been completely blacked out in the American press. In fact, the *Washington Post* Feb. 15 headlined its coverage of the Federal Republic: "Bonn's Leadership Fails to Follow Through on Nuclear Power Policy." The article cited a speech given by Chancellor Schmidt *last November* to prove how he has been forced to moderate his support for nuclear energy, as a result of party pressures in the Bonn coalition. The *Washington Post's* publisher, Katharine Graham, is an associate of Willy Brandt, a member of Brandt's North-South Commission and a collaborator of the German Marshall Fund.

A strategic shift

Chancellor Schmidt's new feistiness constitutes an important shift with potentially far-reaching international strategic consequences. Since Schmidt was re-elected as chancellor in a landslide vote last fall, the Brandt wing of the party, whose loyalties are to the Socialist International and the zero-growth oligarchy which runs it, has pinned Schmidt down, sabotaging his policies, attacking him personally, and blackmailing him with threatened loss of parliamentary support at every turn.

Countless newspaper articles have spun scenarios of a formal split in the party, leading to the fall of

Schmidt's coalition government, or alternatively the desertion of the SPD's coalition partner, the liberal Free Democratic Party, after Schmidt was discredited by repeated cave-ins to the Brandt forces. The same contaminated news sources have repeated endlessly the theme that "the chancellor is tired, the chancellor is demoralized, the chancellor is depressed."

In all this, the Brandt crowd and their puppet-masters have been playing on Schmidt's psychological profile as "the super-manager of the best-run international trading firm in Europe," a man who, they believe, will quit in disgust at this harassment rather than "break the unwritten rules" of parliamentary politics in the Federal Republic established by the the British during the Allied occupation of Germany after World War II. According to the British "ground rules," mobilizing the republican-nationalist spirit of West Germany's citizens is "outlawed," and that quality of political leadership is equated with "Hitlerism."

Earlier this month, however, a wild card was injected into the situation in the form of a proposal by European Labor Party Chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche. Calling on all patriotic progrowth Germans to rally to the chancellor's support, Mrs. LaRouche proposed a de facto "grand coalition" of members of Germany's major political parties, including the opposition Christian Democrats, in support of economic development within the framework of the European Monetary Fund and aggressive promotion of nuclear energy.

Brandt sabotage

Schmidt's fighting statements this week were an invitation to such cross-party constituency support for his policies. That support is badly needed to crush the Brandt faction in the SPD.

The SPD executive committee resolution drafted at this week's meeting "supports" the chancellor like a rope supports a hanging man. Defense Minister Hans Apel, a close associate of Schmidt, said bluntly, "This is a formal compromise, no more—the debate in the party will be continued."

The resolution endorsed the standing SPD position adopted in 1979, on nuclear energy as the last resort when coal, "alternative technologies," and all else fails. SPD leftists are trying to rule out nuclear energy altogether. When Schmidt and his supporters demanded a clear statement favoring nuclear energy over coal, they were blocked by Brandt and his erstwhile ally Herbert Wehner.

Brandt also blocked a move to debate the expulsion from the party of ultraradical parliamentarian Hansen for his attacks on the chancellor. When Schmidt's supporters tried to get this onto the agenda, Brandt abruptly concluded the meeting, saying that as it was 3 a.m., everyone was "too tired" for further discussion.

Documentation

Helmut Schmidt on the constitutional mandate

From an interview with Chancellor Schmidt Feb. 13 on ARD television.

Schmidt: The scope for action of the federal chancellor or the federal government has not been impaired or endangered in any way [by the Feb. 11 resolution of the Social Democratic Party's executive committee.] Within the Social Democratic Party there were some who loudly and openly presented their criticism or their dissatisfaction, and it was indeed useful to discuss this and ascertain just where the majority of the party stands. This has been demonstrated and has usefully clarified things.

ARD: Meaning the majority of the party executive. Is this identical with the majority of the party in your view?

Schmidt: Certainly. I believe that the more we tap the base of the SPD membership and particularly the electorate which returned this party with the FDP to the government in October 1980, the more clearly we will see that the electorate and the party membership agree with the party and with the policy of the government. I have not the slightest doubt of this. . . .

As for the freedom of action of the federal government, it must naturally go beyond the resolutions of past party congresses. That has always been the case, during Adenauer's time and during Brandt's. The federal chancellor and the federal government have a constitutional mandate which they must uphold. Naturally they govern themselves as much as possible by the views of their own party, as expressed by party congresses. But their mandate goes beyond that. And it can certainly happen that a government or a chancellor would have to act against decisions reached by a party congress a year or two previously. . . . The federal government has not been jeopardized, but one cannot exclude that problems could crop up in the Bundestag [federal parliament]. This has happened before in the past.

ARD: What would you do then?

Schmidt: I have no intention of resigning—I won't give you more of an answer—but I have sometimes thought of calling a vote of confidence in the Bundestag. This occurred in past years, and might become necessary in the future.

From a Feb. 14 interview with Chancellor Schmidt on the Westdeutscher Rundfunk radio station.

WDR: You and the French president warned recently against striving for military superiority and called for moderation in political behavior. Was this addressed only to Moscow, or was it the position of the Western European allies vis-à-vis the new American government?

Schmidt: It was the position of France and Germany toward everyone. So was the point that one need neither accept a position of inferiority, military weakness, nor should one strive for a policy of superiority or military strength. This too is addressed to everyone. And I am very glad to see that, at the beginning of this week, the Social Democratic parliamentary caucus at its meeting in Berlin unanimously endorsed this joint German-French declaration.

From an interview with Chancellor Schmidt in the Kölner Stadtanzeiger newspaper on Feb. 17.

KSA: Do you believe on the basis of new evidence that the option of rejecting nuclear energy is now out of date?

Schmidt: I think it is extremely improbable that it could ever be rejected . . . yes, extremely improbable. I see the gigantic programs of the Soviet Union, East Germany, France, Belgium, and other countries. These are by no means crazy countries. These governments are of different political composition, but they are all trying to get an accurate conception of what the future world energy supply will be like.

KSA: You said that the situation has changed so much that for you personally the option of rejecting nuclear energy is very improbable or out of the question. This naturally marks a point of contention with not an insignificant portion of your party, as well as undoubtedly a portion of the voters.

Schmidt: Unfortunately, this is the case. But I would indeed be a bad chancellor and a dishonest man if I were to conceal what I believe to be the truth.

The newspaper Mainzer Allgemeine Zeitung Feb. 13 described the position Chancellor Schmidt took on nuclear energy at the Feb. 11 meeting of the SPD executive committee.

In the debate on nuclear energy Schmidt declared: "Nuclear energy plants will be built in every country, East and West." He indicated that he is committed to the party resolution, but that over and above that he is responsible to the whole population and is bound by his oath of office to prevent damage to the German population. And Eppler's policy [Erhard Eppler is a leader of the party left] would damage the German population.

Brokdorf: a key to industry's future

by Rainer Apel

In what is being described in West German political circles as probably the greatest challenge for Chancellor Schmidt and the alliance of West German industry and labor for nuclear energy, the left wing of the chancellor's own party, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) is mobilizing in northern Germany against the construction of the Brokdorf nuclear power station. The completion of the eight-year-old project is not only important for the city of Hamburg and its energy supply, but is vital to the industrial future of all of northern Germany, and has become a symbol for both the pro- and anti-industrial factions in West Germany.

A highly explosive mixture of left-wing SPD members, radical socialists, postindustrial kooks, and youth gangs is mobilizing for a demonstration Feb. 28 of at least 50,000 at the construction site of Brokdorf. The demonstration is intended to give the public kickoff for a nationwide destabilization against the labor-industry alliance that is backing Chancellor Schmidt and his government in Bonn. The idea behind this mobilization, which is supported by the Willy Brandt current of the SPD, is to poison the political climate in West Germany to such an extent that construction of nuclear power stations is halted on a national level, and part of the SPD is rallied against its own chancellor in Bonn. The mobilization against nuclear energy is, therefore, the driving momentum behind what was recently described to *EIR* by U.S. sources as a general destabilization of the Bonn government, a period of "social convulsions of the 1967-68 variety."

Indicative of the high-level coordination of this campaign against Chancellor Schmidt and his allies is that three SPD members of the Willy Brandt faction participated in the December 1980 Washington conference of the Socialist International—Brandt himself, Ulrich Steger, and Horst Ehmke.

This Washington conference decided to mobilize the SPD left wing against Schmidt, France's Giscard, and U.S. President Reagan. Steger and Ehmke both belong to the SPD energy commission that tried to prevent Schmidt from making secret agreements with the gover-

nor of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, where the Brokdorf plant will be located. A letter written by Ehmke warned Schmidt against moving ahead with the Brokdorf project, since this would "certainly unleash the greatest antinuclear-power violence ever experienced in past years."

On the evening of Feb. 2, the day when the Hamburg SPD was meeting to vote on the financing of Brokdorf, Hamburg experienced the heaviest street fighting since 1968, between 2,000 antinuclear demonstrators and police. In this riot situation, a 56 percent majority of the SPD delegates decided to oppose the construction of the Brokdorf plant. Hamburg Mayor Hans-Ulrich Klose, who heads the antinuclear faction in the Hamburg SPD, then used this "majority" to rally seven of the city's senators behind his line one week later, and declared that Hamburg would "delay" for three years making a decision on helping to finance the Brokdorf project. A Feb. 17 meeting with the Christian Democratic governor of Schleswig-Holstein, Gerhard Stoltenberg, to discuss again the future of the project, failed when Stoltenberg refused to give up the project. This situation creates a high level of uncertainty over the energy future of the city of Hamburg, since Mayor Klose has repeatedly stated that he wants a combined program of energy conservation, coal, and alternative energy generation to provide the city with the energy it needs.

Competent experts say that under these conditions the industrial future of the city would be called into question since existing environmental laws make it virtually impossible to build the three new coal power plants in Hamburg that would be required to fill the gap left by failure to construct Brokdorf. The city would have to pay penalties to Schleswig-Holstein for breaking contracts signed for the project until 1983—penalties which are said to reach a total of up to a billion deutschemarks! Klose, however, is convinced that Hamburg citizens would rather pay that sum than "waste two billion for investments into such an unsafe technology as nuclear power."

It remains doubtful whether the majority of Hamburg's citizens will follow Klose's lead. Not only is the majority of the Hamburg SPD rank and file—despite the Feb. 2 decision against Brokdorf—considered to be in favor of nuclear energy, but also half the city parliament's 69 SPD members are said to be willing to dump Mayor Klose, if this is the only way to secure an energy future for Hamburg. On Feb. 24 the city parliament will vote on a motion by the opposition Christian Democrats, to override the three-year moratorium. It is believed that this vote will constitute a two-thirds majority against Klose. If Klose sticks to his policy, events would then move toward a vote of no confidence against the mayor, with new elections likely for the city parliament later this year. This whole process of voting down the city admin-

istration will add to the destabilization of SPD-governed cities and states, like West Berlin, whose government fell earlier this year.

Cross-party potential

The Hamburg situation creates, on the other side, a potential for building a cross-party alliance for industrial progress and nuclear power. In a statement given immediately after the Feb. 2 SPD vote in Hamburg against Brokdorf, Governor Stoltenberg said that "there is no need for stalling on the project, because our state government, the federal government, and the chancellor in Bonn, industry and labor in the north of Germany are all for the completion of the project." Stoltenberg said that a cross-party alliance for nuclear energy is developing against parts of the SPD around Klose and others who oppose nuclear energy. It is no secret in the Federal Republic that Stoltenberg, though a member of the Christian Democratic Party, which is also in the opposition in the Bonn federal parliament, is in close agreement with Schmidt to go ahead with the Brokdorf project even if the Hamburg SPD or administration keeps stalling. Consequently, the Young Socialists—the SPD's youth organization—in north Germany announced at a strategy meeting for the Feb. 28 mass demonstration that their campaign would be directed against both Stoltenberg and Schmidt, as well as "industry and labor interests."

This group of "party dissidents," which forms a minority in the party as well as in the parliamentary caucus in Bonn, is now getting extensive media support. The most prominent media hype is in the Feb. 16 issue of the Hamburg magazine *Der Spiegel*. Fifteen pages of features reviling nuclear energy as a mere profit-making invention of industry characterized the technology of the high-temperature reactor as not feasible, and topped it off with an editorial by the magazine's editor, Rudolf Augstein, who claimed that mankind must choose between nuclear war and the industrial destruction of the biosphere. Augstein claimed that the latter form of doomsday was the more dangerous one, and endorsed the radical environmental resistance against "industrialism," against the interests of industry and labor in Germany.

Chancellor Schmidt's recent statements on the constitutional necessity of nuclear energy are seen by political insiders as the first public attempts by the chancellor to force the party back to the pro-fission line it had until 1975, before the first major violent demonstrations against nuclear energy. Unlike 1977, when the SPD leadership and Schmidt compromised with the antinuclear wing of the party, this year's environmentalist violence will meet stiff opposition from Schmidt that has the potential to defeat the drive for "social convulsions" in West Germany.