

## Schmidt's counter-options to Washington's folly

by Rachel Douglas, Soviet Sector Editor

Secretary of State Alexander Haig left a track of destruction behind him in West Germany, where he wound up a weekend trip to several European countries.

Haig had only words of understanding, and even justification, for the antinuclear demonstrators who poured into the streets of West Berlin as he arrived there on Sunday. These were "honest people," said the Secretary, and their actions were based on the kind of "objective assessment" that properly flourishes in a democracy.

The demonstrators assessed the city of West Berlin serious property damage and injuries to 80 policemen, when 1000 of the 30,000-strong crowd rampaged in street battles against the police. Their cohorts in Frankfurt assessed the American consul general the blast effects of three fire bombs hurled at his house.

Today, in the climate engendered by Haig's visit, terrorists nearly assessed Gen. Frederick Kroesen, the commander of United States forces in Europe, his life. Gen. Kroesen survived a grenade attack on his car, ambushed by assassins wielding guns and an antitank grenade launcher.

Haig expressed his "deep satisfaction" for the terrorist mobs, declaring: "It has not escaped my notice that my presence here today has brought into the streets West Berliners who think less well of me and my country than I wish. In a sense, I obviously regret those demonstrations, but in a far more important sense, we should all draw deep satisfaction about the strength of democracy and a commitment to democratic institutions in this part of Berlin. All the anguish, the struggle, the determination that the Allies, the Federal Republic, and West Berlin

have expended over the years to keep this city free have been worth the price." Haig went on to praise the mob's Jacobinism by quoting the leading Jacobin ideologue of the French Revolution: "Many years ago, Voltaire, in speaking of another revolution said, 'I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.'"

### Whose side is he on?

Are Haig and the terrorists on the same side of the barricades?

In the conventional portrait of European-American relations, the version painted day after day in American newspapers, the bold foreign and defense policy of the Reagan administration is challenged by neutralist tendencies in European governments and pacifists in the streets. Haig, you may read, is the American official most sensitive to Europe's need for a modicum of independence and its stake in East-West relations, and therefore the best salesman of administration defense policies to the European market.

Forget this tale for the credulous. Haig went to nudge continental Europe (England requires no pushing) into line behind British-American military and economic strategies that spell disaster for Europe, and for NATO.

In this endeavor, Haig's worst foe is not the environmentalists and terrorists, but West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, their target. To topple Schmidt, as intended by German radicals from the British intelligence-spawned terrorist cells to the Socialist Interna-



*In Washington this May: whose side is Haig on?*

tional-sponsored left wing of Schmidt's own party, would suit Haig's Anglo-American preferences quite well.

### **Schmidt in Italy**

As Haig flew in from Yugoslavia, Chancellor Schmidt was in Italy countering Haig's strategic lunacy in a country whose Socialist defense minister has been very amenable to Haig's agenda of rapid deployment forces, confronting the Soviet navy in the Mediterranean basin, and banking on highly accurate medium-range nuclear missiles for war-fighting in the European theater.

Schmidt's own backing for the 1983 installation in West Germany of new American Pershing and cruise missiles—weapons denounced by Moscow as "first strike" tools that would lower the boiling point for world war—has always been contingent on two things: that another continental NATO member accept them too, and that the alliance pursue negotiations with the Soviets about medium-range weapons, even while the new arsenal is in production.

At a Sept. 13 joint press conference with Italian Prime Minister Spadolini, Schmidt urged caution on arms development and the Reagan administration's manner of making its defense policies. Asked about the enhanced radiation warhead, the so-called neutron bomb, Schmidt observed, "Countries like Germany and Italy, that have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, have a right to expect of the nuclear powers not an increase, but a reduction of their atomic arsenals. . . . If

the United States, before announcing the decision to produce the neutron bomb had consulted us, we both would have advised not to take such a decision at that moment." Said Spadolini, "I completely agree."

Schmidt also turned his Italian press conference to the great danger to the West he has highlighted in recent interviews, the danger of economic collapse under the burden of high interest rates dictated from the United States Federal Reserve. "American economic policy," said Schmidt, "has really disastrous consequences for all of our economies."

Schmidt placed the interest rates on a par, as a cause of the economic crisis, with the famous "second explosion of oil prices in 1978," an event often cited as proof of the West's strategic vulnerability.

### **A missile adjustment**

Network television news shows on the evening of Sept. 12, followed by the Sunday Washington Post the next morning, floated the possibility that the Pershing missile deployment might be delayed by four months, until April 1984. The cruise missile, relayed the Post from Department of Defense sources, was in even worse trouble; neither Belgium nor Holland would finalize its acceptance until late in 1982, and Schmidt would not take them alone.

Schmidt's spokesman quickly denied that there had been any West German-American consultations on such a postponement, but German papers suddenly attributed to Haig a certain softening on the missile issue. According to their stories, Haig had moved from insisting that "it is useless to talk about an option of not stationing [the missiles] at all," to the more flexible: "an option of not stationing is included in our talks with the Soviets."

Later this month Haig meets Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in the United States, and preliminary talks on medium-range missiles are supposed to be on their agenda. Haig guaranteed hostility from the already skeptical Soviets, however, when he took the occasion of his West Berlin stop to unveil a new accusation against Moscow: violation of bans on biochemical weapons development.

Under these circumstances, Schmidt will not leave it to Washington to handle NATO ties to the Soviet Union. "The United States is not the only country in the world," he said in Rome. "We also have interests elsewhere . . . Japan . . . East Europe, and these interests of ours cannot depend on the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union."

At the end of this year, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev will come to Bonn for talks with Schmidt. Just before Haig arrived, a Schmidt ally rose in parliament to reiterate the government's position that the Brezhnev visit will be "a very important one."