

Report from Bonn by George Gregory and Rainer Apel

The next round

The Social Democrats' whirl in Kissinger circles to create further destabilization of West Germany.

Just as the dust from the first round of the West German generals' affair (the "Kiessling Affair") had settled, Bonn's Social Democrats have begun to set up the next round of destabilization of the government led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats. When SPD chairman Hans Jochen Vogel lands in Washington, D.C. on the first leg of his three-nation jaunt which will include Canada (Pierre Trudeau) and France (François Mitterrand), the fact that he will meet both Secretary of State George Schultz as well as Undersecretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger is seen in Bonn as feeding the credibility of all of the "decoupling" talk going through the circuits of Henry Kissinger, his Aspen Institute, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Eagleburger stated point-blank a week ago that America was turning away from Western Europe.

That was apparently enough to start a pilgrimage of West German Social Democrats, beginning with SPD Mayor of West Berlin Harry Ristock, into Eagleburger's office. Eagleburger's decoupling talk was played up in the West German media, obviously as a kick in the teeth to the Kohl government's commitment to the Atlantic Alliance; the U.S. decoupling circuit courting the West German decouplers is tantamount to welcoming with open arms a future Social Democratic/Green Party environmentalist government coalition in Bonn that would take West Germany out of the Alliance, and make Western Europe indefensible.

Since Pierre Trudeau has also appealed for canceling the stationing of Pershing II missiles in West Germany, Vogel will be in good company on that leg of his tour.

When he lands in France, Vogel will be joined by Willy Brandt's crony Egon Bahr, whose own efforts are aimed at decoupling the Franco-German relationship. Despite France's outsider role in the military command of NATO, Franco-German military-defense relations are very close.

One week ago, Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Archipov showed up in Paris offering a guarantee of \$1.2 billion worth of Soviet imports from France in 1984. The Soviets offered the "carrot" in person to France; now Egon Bahr is setting up a stunt to play the role of the Soviet "stick" to drag French President François Mitterrand away from his support of the Kohl government and the stationing of American Pershing II missiles in West Germany.

Egon Bahr put out an "explanation" for the Soviet deployment of new high-accuracy and low-yield nuclear short-range missiles, the SS-21, SS-22 and SS-23 in the pages of the weekly *Der Spiegel* magazine. According to Bahr, the Soviets are deploying the new mobile missiles because they have to establish a "preemptive strike capability against the Pershing II." The magic of this nonsensical "explanation" on behalf of the Soviets' build-up and modernization of their nuclear forces stationed in East Germany and Czechoslovakia is to tell the French

that the Soviets are now also threatening them with the 1,000 km range SS-22 "only because" of the American Pershing IIs in West Germany. The truth is that the new Soviet missiles have been ready for stationing for two years, and that even the older generation of Frog, Scud, and Scaleboard missiles are quite enough to launch a "preemptive strike" against nuclear missiles in West Germany, as well as to strike targets in France and Great Britain.

Nevertheless, Bonn's decoupling Social Democrats are bent on playing havoc with the Franco-German relationship and on driving a wedge between François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl. Right on time, *Der Spiegel* leaked what it claimed to be a "confidential memorandum" from the West German Embassy in Paris reporting that Mitterrand has criticized Kohl's leadership in Europe.

The Feb. 7 London *Times* jumped on the opportunity to point out that "the chancellor [Kohl] can ill afford any open differences with France, with whom he hopes to revitalize the European Community." The *Times'* correspondent, Michael Binyon, was naturally well-primed for his article titled "Israel Flap and Kiessling Scandal may lead to Kohl's political demise," since he had just emerged from the Aspen Institute's meeting in Berlin on the subject of decoupling the United States of America and continental Western Europe.

What makes this campaign to create a rift in Franco-German relations look ridiculous and contrived is that Mitterrand himself is quoted on the front page of the West German newspaper *Die Welt* on Feb. 7 declaring, "A common military strategy of the nations of the European Community is unthinkable without greater political and diplomatic unity."