

Battle in Bonn over decoupling policy

by Rainer Apel

When Henry Kissinger published in the March 5 issue of *Time* magazine his prescription for a virtual strategic decoupling of Western Europe from the U.S. nuclear umbrella, he intersected an ongoing West German defense debate. That debate was being shaped at the time by a team of U.S. experts sent by U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to brief the allies on Reagan's beam-weapons policy in detail.

The West German government, which is still vacillating between support for Reagan on the beam defense issue or Kissinger and subjugation to the U.S. Eastern Establishment crowd on "conventionalization and Europeanization of defense," reacted promptly to Kissinger. The number-two spokesman for the Bonn government, Jürgen Sudhoff, and the government's undersecretary in the foreign ministry, Alois Mertes, issued harsh criticisms of the article. Undersecretary Alois Mertes termed Kissinger's analysis of the state of NATO "irrational pessimism" and refuted Kissinger's decoupling proposal to hand the post of NATO's Supreme Commander—until now in the hands of an American General—over to a European: "...in a crisis, only an American has a position of weight vis-à-vis the American President which no European could have. The fact that NATO's Supreme Commander is also an American strengthens the alliance's credibility toward Moscow."

Herr Genscher's silence

The West German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who lost no time denouncing President Reagan's decision to invade Grenada last year, chose to remain silent on Kissinger—obviously for good reasons, since his foreign policy sails along with Henry's "shuttle diplomacy." Indeed, Mertes's statement was subsequently watered down by a foreign ministry spokesman who said that "what Mertes said was what one might call the bottom line of what we as a government were forced to say." The spokesman added that "we do not disagree with Mr. Kissinger completely, you know; some of his proposals sound quite rational, some others not so much."

He went on to say that "Kissinger did not speak on behalf of his administration, he spoke as a private person—he is not a private person like other private persons, naturally, but he still is a private person, you know." Asked about Kissinger's

march back to power, the spokesman said: "I don't see that Kissinger is close to returning to the State Department; he and Reagan are at odds, and I don't see that Reagan might put him back in power. This does not mean we would object to Kissinger being back in the State Department."

Who's packing the Chancellor's bags?

The basic line especially in the Bonn foreign ministry is that "Reagan causes a lot of problems, while Kissinger has a lot of feeling for European views." And this also seems to be the line Genscher wants Chancellor Helmut Kohl to put in his luggage for his visit to the United States starting March 2. As was made known in Bonn by Kohl's chief of staff, Mr. Teltschik, Kohl wants to "speak up" in his encounter with Reagan in Washington—speak up on the feeling among Europeans that they are too dependent on the United States economically and technologically. The argument that "Europe must take more of its own share" was made public at the same time Kissinger hit the news with his *Time* magazine interview.

Kohl even went so far as to announce immediately after his return from talks with Chernenko at Yuri Andropov's funeral in Moscow that he would "use the occasion of going to the U.S.A. to urge President Reagan to upgrade efforts in the direction of a missile reduction settlement." Kohl added that he thought he had a "moral right" to tell Reagan that, "because our government pushed through the stationing of the U.S. Euromissiles."

But there is more behind this "new German self-awareness" being acted out by the Chancellor. The reform of NATO Henry Kissinger was talking about is the topic on the agenda of a "task force" formed by the NATO foreign ministers in December 1983. This task force, set up to obtain "more consultation rights for the Europeans toward the Americans" was pushed through by Genscher and George Shultz, and one of its main tasks is to curb Reagan's beam-missile defense program for alleged "violation of the 1972 ABM treaty." The task force is headed by Belgian Foreign Minister Leo Tindemans, who conferred with Helmut Kohl two weeks ago on what to present to Reagan in Washington as "the European point of view on the alliance."

Tindemans—and this closes the circle—is said to also have met for a longer discussion with Henry Kissinger during Henry's recent stay in Brussels for the Georgetown CSIS Strategy Forum.

It should also be recalled that Henry Kissinger and his business partner Lord Peter Carrington head up the latest Aspen Institute project, "East-West Relations: Past, Present, and Future," along with Robert McNamara, Cyrus Vance, former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and many others. The project, which is shunning public attention at this point, centers on canceling the beam-weapons commitment and returning to the kind of "arms control" track Kissinger is pressing for.

Henry's 'opposition card' in Bonn

Knowing that Genscher can only exert limited influence on the Chancellor's foreign policy—as was proven again by Mertes's denunciation of the Kissinger interview—Henry has been working to build an "opposition card" to be played through the Social Democratic Party, which dominates the parliamentary opposition to Chancellor Kohl in Bonn. It was among the Social Democrats that Kissinger's *Time* magazine interview was most welcomed and praised. Dietrich Stobbe, the chairman of the Social Democratic "working group on the U.S.A.," said that the aforementioned "harsh criticism" of Kissinger's proposals was "premature and incomprehensible. The proposals made by Kissinger deserve a thorough examination." He added that he was convinced Dr. Kissinger spoke on behalf of a broader American sentiment, and that the Social Democrats would discuss his proposals "in the context of our own considerations concerning Europe's self-defense."

This latter formulation refers to a "discussion paper" presented by the party's foreign policy spokesman, Horst Ehmke in early February. The paper calls for a virtual economic, technological, and strategic decoupling of Western Europe from the U.S. nuclear umbrella and provided the basic outline for the talks the leader of the parliamentary Social Democratic opposition, Hans-Jochen Vogel, had in Washington with George Shultz, George Bush, Donald Regan, Lawrence Eagleburger, Charles Manatt and—Henry Kissinger.

Vogel and Kissinger were seen in intense discussion during a reception in Washington, and the only person sitting close enough to hear what they were actually talking about was Dietrich Stobbe, who reported afterward that he would like to see Kissinger back in power, because he would favor the Social Democrats' policy line.

All this Kissinger-mongering comes with a barrage of pro-Kissinger articles like the one by the Washington correspondent of the influential West German daily *Die Welt*, Thomas Kielinger, headlined "The Background From Which Kissinger Is Speaking." It contained the revealing passage: "A second term for Reagan—if it comes—could get a sudden upswing with Henry Kissinger as the new (or old) Secretary of State." Kissinger's augmented position of power forced people to read the *Time* magazine interview with "special attention."

One of the few staunch political adversaries of Kissinger in Bonn commented, however, that "those who feel a certain nostalgia for Kissinger nowadays should be reminded of the fact that when he announced his famous 'Year of Europe' in 1973, the oil crisis followed soon after, and that started the whole mess in Europe."

The Mertes statements against Kissinger indicate, however, that a faction fight has broken out in Bonn over the issue of supporting or decoupling from the United States. Chancellor Helmut Kohl would do best if he sided with Reagan against Kissinger.

Special Report:

KISSINGER'S PLOT TO TAKE OVER THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

The surprise naming of Henry A. Kissinger to head the President's Bipartisan Commission on Central America is part of a very ugly and long-standing attempt to subvert the Reagan presidency. But Henry Kissinger's return to official life is far more significant than the Central American appointment would suggest.

This *EIR* Special Report, "Kissinger's Plot to Take Over the Reagan Administration" is essential reading for any citizen concerned about the future of the United States as a republic. Researched and written late in 1982 by *EIR* Washington Bureau Chief Richard Cohen, long before anyone else had an inkling of the Kissinger operation, the report documents a process over months, using the friendly offices of Kissinger confidante George Shultz and others, of quietly inserting "Kissinger's boys" throughout the administration.

The report also supplies background dossiers on George Shultz and Helmut Sonnenfeldt at the State Department: Sonnenfeldt, currently a "consultant" to State, has been repeatedly challenged by Senate committees as a "security risk"; he has been an intimate of Kissinger's since 1945. Further dossiers include top appointees at State, Defense, the National Security Council, and the private business associates of Kissinger, including former British Foreign Minister Lord Peter Carrington and Gen. Brent Scowcroft. Kissinger's numerous private affiliations from Trilateral Commission to the secret illegal Monte Carlo masonic lodge are also identified.

The report is available for \$250.00

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