

evolution of matters in the United States. Paris, Bonn, and other European governments are faced with the most unpredictable problem of all—the weakening of President Reagan and his policies at a crucial moment of European history. Since 1984, the West German SPD, the Mitterrand regime, and their liberal and socialist international allies have awaited the moment that President Reagan would be made into a “lame duck.” That moment seems to have arrived, and has seriously confused the political-strategic debate in Europe.

Britain's recent government agreement to join in SDI masks the fact that while individual industrial contracts have been allocated to European firms in the fields of optics, robotics, lasers, and guidance systems, there is no European consensus on this question. The level of British agreement is itself suspect—whether the U.K. adheres to the global concept initially brought forth by Reagan in 1983, merely to aspects of SDI, or, as is known to be the case with some leading Englishmen, seeks to sabotage the program from within. It is said that Margaret Thatcher “has gone a long way” toward understanding SDI, but how far has she really gone?

At the same time, the government debate in Germany over SDI is becoming interminable, the FDP attempting to drag out any government agreement until “the next U.S./Soviet summit.” The present French government is entirely hostile. The next will be favorable, but France will be confronted with a dual power situation, an RPR-led legislature, but a Socialist President, which will not make for a quick resolution of the debate.

And, Europeans, like Americans, now wonder if the Strategic Defense Initiative is actually real? In one sense, it is real, of course: The year 1985 saw amazing technological breakthroughs in a whole number of areas. It took over two years for the U.S. Department of Defense and all the talents of Lt.-Gen. James Abrahamson to achieve these results. But now, even these are threatened by the recent weakening of President Reagan and the budgetary cuts imposed on the U.S. defense budget by the Gramm-Rudman bill.

Should Europe strongly commit itself to something the U.S. government appears unable to commit itself to?

Europe will follow America's lead, not the other way around, and were the United States to fall back to mere development of a limited point defense system, as political pressures and “budgetary constraints” may well produce, the past two years of effort will have been largely in vain. Europe cannot financially afford to develop an SDI on its own, nor do Europe's present governments have the will to confront the Soviet Union at a moment of U.S. retrenchment and vacillation. This is true of all areas of policy, not merely SDI.

The political instability factor inherent in the European election years 1986-87 is thus only a feature of the instability of the West as a whole. Seen from Moscow, where the new leadership under Gorbachov is firmly entrenched—perhaps for decades—the picture of political agitation in the West is a welcome and entirely anticipated development.

In West Germany, a new policy voice

by Vin Berg and Rainer Apel

As 1985 drew to a close, the hottest issue in Bonn, West Germany, was the emergence of a new policy voice on the scene. It appeared as if out of nowhere, but suddenly was growing rapidly. “Patriots for Germany” is the name of the new citizens' organization, and it first announced its existence by placing two political advertisements in West Germany's major newspapers, Oct. 15 and Dec. 4. The ads stressed the deadly dangers posed to the country by the Soviet Union and its “decoupling” agents in the West, and by the global austerity policies of the International Monetary Fund, echoed in the economic policies of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government.

“Artfully formulated,” was a not-too-happy Christian Democrat's description of the first, Oct. 15 advertisement. It had its most immediate impact among traditionally Christian Democratic voters and activists.

Overall, the response to the non-partisan call to political action was electric, for two reasons:

First, the signatories constituted an impressive cross-section of prominent Germans—political figures, engineers, farmers, professional people, etc. They included: Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute and the Club of Life; Prof. Emil Schlee, president of the Mecklenburg Expellee Organization and vice-president of the Organization of Expellees from Central Germany; Vice-Admiral (ret.) Karl-Adolf Zenker, former Inspector-General of the West German Navy; Brig.-Gen. (ret.) Friedrich August Freiherr von der Heydte; Robert Becker, chief editor of *Reichsbanner*, the monthly magazine of the anti-fascist resistance organization, Reichsbanner Black-Red-Gold.

Together with some 60 other signatories, as seasoned observers of German politics noted, these individuals are capable of commanding the support of some 15-20% of the West German electorate—a formidable political force, if translated, for example, into parliamentary seats.

Second, their intervention into the German policy debate came as fresh air rushing into a vacuum—and the result was a shock wave.

Only a minority of Germans can support the economic policy of Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats, which is crushing all productive sectors of the German economy. On the other hand, only a minority can support the pro-Soviet policies of Willy Brandt and Johannes Rau's opposition Social Democrats, which would mean subjugating Germany

under the Russian imperial yoke.

Suddenly, there is an alternative. A backlash against the Kohl government's miserable austerity policies does not have to mean turning Germany into a Soviet satrapy. "Patriots for Germany" may harness and guide that backlash in constructive directions. The newspaper advertisements indicated which:

- A clear "no" to decoupling from the United States, the so-called "New Yalta" policy; "no" to a "Red-Green" government, a Social Democratic coalition with the neo-fascist Green Party.

- A just treaty of peace for Germany in all of its parts, in order that the German people may exercise self-determination in national sovereignty, a "no" to the original Yalta policy.

- Full, government-to-government cooperation with the American Strategic Defense Initiative.

- A policy of economic growth and opening of the German economy to a New World Economic Order, replacing the neo-colonial IMF, for industrialization of the non-developed sector.

- A cultural renaissance based on the foundations of German classical culture.

In the Dec. 4 advertisement, the Patriots also stated: "The economic policy of the IMF has forced many countries to pay their growing debts by expanding drug production. As a result, more of our children are becoming the victims of drug dealers. President Garcia of Peru and President Betancur of Colombia have declared war on drugs, and are attacking the drug mafia with military means. We patriots support the war on drugs, and we also demand, that banks, which annually launder \$600 billion, be prosecuted and brought to court!"

Political disarray

The proclamations addressed Germans at a time when the political situation of the country is in profound disarray. Chancellor Kohl's tactic of walking a tightrope between NATO commitments and appeasement of the threatening Soviets, his Free Democratic coalition partners, and the Social Democratic opposition, had jeopardized the Western alliance. His economic policies have brought his popularity to new lows.

One sign of appeasement is the fact that the year ended without a government decision to sign a German-American agreement on cooperation in the SDI. That decision is postponed to some indefinite point in 1986.

At the beginning of the year, there was hope that Chancellor Kohl would finally succeed in closing the endless debate on the SDI, and join the project officially. Although the Chancellor ran into serious problems with his Free Democratic coalition partners, who oppose the SDI, there was special reason to hope that the visit of President Reagan to Bonn at the beginning of May would break the impasse. German-American relations did reach a temporary high, but for the SDI, the moment was lost.

Chancellor's inability to grasp the strategic importance of the Reagan visit.

By the time Reagan arrived in Bonn, the official story of the economic recovery had already been discredited among the electorate. In two important state elections, in the Saar and North Rhine-Westphalia—the centers of heavy industry and mining—the Christian Democrats lost 5% and 12%, respectively, to the Social Democrats. The Chancellor's austerity policy was sawing the legs off his own chair.

In view of this, it was even more important for Kohl to capitalize on the positive impact the Reagan visit had upon an estimated two-thirds of the German population, and to go ahead with the SDI decision. But, he dared not risk a confrontation with his Free Democratic coalition partners. Kohl preferred to appease. As a result, on every key strategic issue, he has allowed himself to be held hostage by the Free Democrats' threat of withdrawal from the government. From June on, his government has hung by a thread. With each new controversy, a break-up of the government coalition was to be feared.

Into this situation came a new American ambassador, Richard Burt, a disaster. The ambassador introduced himself to Bonn in early September with the remark that the American administration could "also get along with an SPD-led government in Bonn."

The SPD had, by this time, already made public what it would do in government. On June 19, it drafted a treaty on a "zone free of chemical weapons in Central Europe" with the East German ruling party (SED), and announced a similar proposal on nuclear-free zones to follow soon. In September, the SPD sent emissaries to all ruling East bloc parties, to sign or prepare similar agreements. In October, the SPD's defense policy commission published a document proposing substantial withdrawal of U.S. troops and weapons from West Germany.

Also in October, discovery of a series of "East German spies," all of them highly placed in Bonn, shook the government. The Free Democrats and Social Democrats forced the dismissal of the head of foreign intelligence (BND), Heribert Hellenbroich, and the jobs of Interior Minister Zimmermann and his undersecretary Spranger were only saved because the Christian Democrats made a foul compromise with the Free Democrats on the SDI question: no government-level agreement with the Americans.

Meanwhile, Johannes Rau, the SPD's chancellor candidate for the 1987 elections, announced that once he were chancellor, he would revoke the 1979 agreement on the stationing of U.S. nuclear missiles.

Among Christian Democratic voters, there is a mood of revolt, which could see another victory of the Social Democrats in state elections in Lower Saxony—or, a turn to the new non-partisan citizens' action committee, Patriots for Germany.

The year 1986 will show if an extraordinary non-partisan action like this can succeed.