

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Lebanese hostage crisis made in Bonn

The German hostages expose the dirty Mideast diplomacy of Herr Genscher's foreign ministry.

The international diplomatic crisis emerging around two West German industry representatives taken hostage in Beirut, Lebanon (Rudolf Cordes on Jan. 17 and Alfred Schmidt on Jan. 20), poses questions as to the Bonn government's Mideast policy.

In numerous discussions with *EIR*, terrorism experts have expressed their amazement that all Western governments have been challenged directly by Islamic terrorists in the past years, except for the government in Bonn.

The main reason for this situation has been Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's policy of tolerating Mideast extremist groups in West Germany. These favors are not for real exiles who are in political opposition to the terror regimes in Damascus, Teheran, and Tripoli. As recommended by Genscher, the Bonn government has never acted when opposition figures are killed by hit squads from Syria, Iran, or Libya, as just happened to the Iranian Ali Akhbar Mohammadi in Hamburg on Jan. 16. Most of these terrorists on official mission for their regimes, if arrested in West Germany, have been released after some time.

Genscher's argument in all of these cases has been to warn that the respective regimes might "retaliate," take "Germans hostage" to free their own terrorists from German prisons. Ironically, this kind of appeasing policy has made the Bonn government extremely vulnerable for hostage crises. As a matter of fact, some of the imprisoned Libyan and Syrian terrorists were freed in exchange for Germans

taken hostage in Libya. And the Bonn government always paid a political price in these affairs with the respective regimes: West Germany has become a key operational base for Islamic terrorist networks in Europe.

It always worked "well" for Libya's Muammar Qaddafi; the Iranian secret intelligence organization Savama has always been allowed a free hand in West Germany; and prominent Iranian weapons dealers such as Sadegh Tabatabai have even enjoyed excellent relations with Foreign Minister Genscher. It was Tabatabai, the son-in-law of Ayatollah Khomeini, who was arrested for carrying opium into Germany, and later released at the intervention of his friend Genscher.

The blackmail approach has paid off for the regimes in Damascus, Teheran, and Tripoli: When President Reagan weighed sanctions, blockade, and even military action against Libya and Syria in 1986, the Bonn government refused to support the United States. And when the French government was put under siege by Islamic terrorists in summer 1986 and asked German assistance in its "war on terrorism," Bonn refused to lend support, again.

Another important aspect of this situation is that various extremist groups outlawed in Turkey have been allowed to settle down in West Germany, where they receive funds from Iran. From here, they plan and carry out terrorist operations against the Turkish government, as the Turkish media have recently complained (see

International Intelligence, pp. 58-59).

Whenever the regimes in Teheran, Damascus, or Tripoli considered it useful to improve their operational base in Europe or to achieve a specific policy objective, pressure on Bonn proved to be most efficient. What is new in this affair around the two hostages Rudolf Cordes and Alfred Schmidt is the connection to the case of Hezbollah terrorist Ali Hamadei, who was arrested on Frankfurt Airport on Jan. 13. Hamadei is suspected of involvement in the hijacking of a TWA airliner and the assassination of an American citizen in June 1985, and is wanted by the United States for arrest and trial.

It is believed by many in Bonn that the two Germans were taken hostage just for the purpose of springing Hamadei out of German prison, but there is more involved. Learning about the arrest of Hamadei in Frankfurt, the U.S. Department of Justice requested his immediate extradition. Genscher's foreign ministry has advised the government in Bonn not to extradite Hamadei "as long as the two Germans are still in the hands of their hostage-takers in Lebanon." Bonn's reluctance provides a welcome pretext for trouble-makers on the U.S. side, especially those of the pro-decoupling faction who have an interest in blaming Bonn of having "lack of solidarity with the United States."

Right in the middle of this emerging diplomatic brawl between Bonn and Washington, Stephen Trott of the "provocation faction" at the U.S. Department of Justice appeared on West German television on Jan. 20 to warn the German government "not to delay the requested extradition of Hamadei." The crisis that is building between Bonn and Washington now is partly made in Bonn, and to be more precise, in the German foreign ministry.