

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### 'Decoupling' faction strengthened

*The new government's foreign policy is tilting toward Moscow, as U.S. troop cuts loom.*

In the aftermath of the January elections in West Germany, which returned Chancellor Helmut Kohl to power and strengthened the hand of his foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the advocates of "decoupling" the Western alliance have lost no time in shaping the foreign policy of the new government. While their continuing calls for U.S. troop withdrawals from Europe receive high publicity, an intensified diplomatic courtship with Moscow has begun.

The latest in the chorus of disengagement calls was a letter by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to the editors of the daily *Die Welt*, published on Feb. 25. The senator announced: "All efforts to reduce the [U.S. budget] deficit will inevitably lead to a close review of defense expenditures, which absorb 25% of the total federal budget." Mentioning the calls for troop withdrawal by Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, McCain predicted: "Therefore, I think it is likely that the United States will withdraw troops from Europe in the next years."

The same view predominates in the office of Chancellor Helmut Kohl. His national security adviser, Horst Teltschik, sided with the U.S. disengagement faction, in an interview in the Feb. 21-22 edition of the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*: "In the U.S.A., a debate has already begun, whether 40 years after the Second World War, it wouldn't be time for the U.S. to reduce its engagement in Western Europe—this is understandable, given the richness of nations in Europe. Why

should an American accept, in the long run, that an annual budget of \$125 billion be spent for Europe's defense, while the budget deficit of the United States is reaching astronomic dimensions?"

Arrangements are well advanced for Moscow to fill the vacuum left by the United States. Teltschik himself will confer with Soviet Central Committee secretary Anatoli Dobrynin in late April, and the agenda will deal with "prospects of extended economic cooperation." The ground for this arrangement was laid by trips of ranking representatives of German industry to Moscow during the previous month.

At the end of January, Otto Wolff von Amerongen, president of the eastern trade division of the German Industry Association, traveled to Moscow. He met with several top-level Soviet officials, including Yevgeni Pitogranov of the Moscow Chamber of Trade and Commerce. Pitogranov is known as a KGB general, whose main assignment it is to build political contacts to businessmen in the West.

Amerongen and Pitogranov talked about Gorbachov's reform program and the so-called Peace Forum which was to take place in Moscow in mid-February. The two agreed that attendance of a high-powered delegation of West German industry at this forum's economic panel was most welcome.

The delegation, which was put together within days after Amerongen's return from Moscow, listed top names of German industry and banking: Ernst Pieper (Salzgitter Steel), Joerg Henle

(KloECKner Steel), Werner Dieter (Mannesmann Steel), Berthold Beitz (Krupp), Friedrich W. Christians (Deutsche Bank), and Amerongen himself.

Topics discussed included joint projects in the nuclear power sector, cooperation in monetary affairs, and transfer of Western high-technology products to the Soviet Union.

Back from Moscow, Christians and Amerongen gave interviews to the press, to advertise Gorbachov's new economic policy as a "great chance for German industry." Christians said on German TV on Feb. 17: "I consider the Soviet Union the big market of the future."

In an article published on Feb. 19 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Amerongen reported that his Soviet discussion partners had mentioned plans to "make the ruble at least partly convertible." In another interview, published the same day by the weekly *Stern* magazine, Amerongen denied the propagandistic character of the Moscow economic forum, portraying it, instead, as a welcome "framework for discussion between the international world of business with the relevant people who work on the reforms here." Christians, in another interview with the weekly *Der Spiegel*, revealed on Feb. 23 that the talks in Moscow had dealt "with very concrete projects," notably "cooperation in the nuclear technology sector."

These interviews provided the context for the ongoing Bonn coalition talks on the new government's policy toward Moscow. Suddenly the Christian Social Union of Franz-Josef Strauss withdrew its opposition to Genscher's pro-Soviet policy, and the three Bonn coalition parties agreed to "continue the illusion-free, realistic détente policy of the previous government."