

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

A battle over the German conservatives

Lyndon LaRouche and the INF Treaty cabal are the main adversaries in German policy debate.

Will the INF Treaty be ratified by the U.S. Senate or not? Is it still possible to undo that agreement for American nuclear disengagement from Europe, and can the Europeans do something to help non-ratification of the treaty?

These are some of the most pressing questions among opponents of the INF Treaty in Germany. This opposition consists of some liberal Christian Democrats (CDU), a majority of the more conservative Christian Social Union (CSU), and the majority of the military. This is the target group of a special campaign which German supporters of U.S. presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, rallied around the Patriots for Germany party, had launched before, and escalated after the INF summit, to prevent the ratification of the treaty.

Though brushed aside in official Bonn politics for the moment, the INF opposition is not small, and it will grow rapidly once those who grew demoralized when the INF deal was signed can be put back in shape.

The key to a shift in the German view of the INF Treaty is the CSU party of Franz Josef Strauss, which has continued to warn against the summit agreement. It is from the CSU that a good part of the political support for LaRouche's views in Germany has come, and it is there that the INF cabal has invested a good deal of energy to water down or destroy the opposition.

Thus, Sergei Losev, the general director of Moscow's Tass news agency, who signed a cooperation agreement with Charles Wick of the USIA on joint propaganda against INF foes, spent some days in Germany in De-

ember. He talked to friends of the Soviets in the German media, but also to conservatives, whom he told that the INF deal would "undoubtedly open a new chapter in the history of relations between the U.S.S.R. and West Germany." Knowing that the unresolved problem of the German partition is a key item among conservatives, Losev told his German discussion partners that the German Question was "still undecided."

More directly, the Soviets took on the CSU party chairman, Franz Josef Strauss, who received a surprising invitation to meet Gorbachov on Christmas Eve and flew to Moscow for three days on Dec. 28. Strauss also met Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, Gorbachov's foreign policy adviser Anatoliy Dobrynin, Deputy Premier Vladimir Kamentsev, and Science Minister Boris Tolstych.

One motive behind the "red carpet" treatment of Strauss is to capitalize on the strong rivalry between him and Kohl, who has not been invited to Moscow yet. The Soviet stick for Kohl, the carrot for one of his foremost rivals in Germany. Similarly, Moscow handed an invitation to Lothar Späth, the governor of the state of Baden-Württemberg, to visit the Soviet Union around mid-February. Späth, a CDU politician with a strong high-tech profile like Strauss, is being mentioned in Germany as a likely replacement for Chancellor Kohl in Bonn.

These diplomatic favors, which occur against the background of massive black propaganda against Germany, a dramatic, 25% decline of German-Soviet trade in 1987, and a

general diplomatic boycott by the Kremlin against the Bonn government, have the format of blackmail: If you want us Russians to be nice, behave!

The economic flank is most important here, because it helps Moscow to buy up the conservatives in Germany. Thus, the prospect of profitable high-tech cooperation contracts for Bavarian companies like MBB, MAN, Siemens, and Airbus Industries sufficed to have Strauss tell the media that his talks in Moscow had proceeded "in the most convenient atmosphere," that he found Gorbachov a very "pleasing personality," and that the INF Treaty "could mean the start of a new era in East-West security."

Strauss also revealed that Gorbachov had discussed the German Question with him, reminding him that Stalin offered reunification to the Germans in March 1952, which was rejected by Bonn Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, then. Apparently, Gorbachov meant to give Strauss a hint that "something was up" on the German Question again, provided the Germans "behaved." The vague hint served Gorbachov's aim of pulling Strauss into the camp of those Western conservatives who, like Britain's Margaret Thatcher, support the INF Treaty publicly in spite of their skepticism. The pro-INF statements of Strauss in Moscow were a great victory for Soviet propaganda.

From the American side, Strauss's CSU is being told by Sen. Bob Dole and his ilk that opposing the INF Treaty is "useless, because the Senate will definitely ratify." And in a special deployment, Henry Kissinger will give the keynote address to a CSU leadership meeting Jan. 7-9 in the Bavarian town of Bad Kreuth. He will tell the CSU: "The INF Treaty is not that good, but should be supported, nevertheless."