

New evidence that Germany's Barschel was murdered comes to the fore

Seven years ago, one of the most ominous affairs in Germany's postwar history hit the political scene, when the body of Uwe Barschel, a senior member of the Christian Democratic Union, was found in the bathtub of a Geneva hotel room. In the late hours of Saturday Oct. 11, 1987, his life had come to an abrupt end, the first medical report determined. After much back and forth for several days over the question whether this was a murder or suicide, the media and the leadership of the Christian Democrats, including the government in Bonn, decided not to wait for the forensic investigation to be concluded, and declared his death a "suicide."

However, the hasty decision to close the book on Barschel, the timing of his death, and other peculiar circumstances surrounding it immediately raised strong suspicions: Many believed that Barschel had been killed after months of media scandal-mongering against him. Barschel, a senior Christian Democrat whose career as the nation's youngest governor—in the northern coastal state of Schleswig-Holstein—had broken off when he resigned in mid-September 1987, amidst a new barrage of unproven accusations.

What made a number of people suspicious about Barschel's death in Geneva, was, most of all, the fact that the Beau Rivage Hotel, where he had checked in on the afternoon of Oct. 11, was widely known as a favorite meetingplace for international arms and drug dealers, who prefer to deal in secrecy. Furthermore, crucial forensic evidence, such as photographs taken by police, blood and tissue samples, and other evidence mysteriously "disappeared" in the weeks after his death. Finally, Barschel's widow Freya has never given in to the "suicide" propaganda line that spread through the media and power corridors in Bonn: From the first news of her husband's death on, she has maintained that he was killed, and, in numerous interviews, she voiced her strong suspicion that he had "run across something dangerous, like illegal arms deals or something like that," and that this had caused his death in Geneva.

There is also the fact—pointed out by only a few insiders—that the Baltic sea ports of Schleswig-Holstein had played a crucial role in illegal and sizable arms transfers between East and West from the early 1980s on. A good deal of the "arms-for-hostages" agreements that Ollie North and Maj. Gen. Richard Secord carried out with the Iranians, with assistance from numerous East bloc agencies, ran through the ports of Schleswig-Holstein as well as those of East Germany, which bordered West Germany in that coastal region. The

Kavelstorf secret arms depot of the East German foreign intelligence agency's dirty tricks division, located near the East German port of Rostock, was a major arms hub, as documented in late 1989, shortly after the communist regime collapsed, when local citizen committees stormed the site and found giant stocks of arms and ammunition along with files indicating what illegal activities had been carried out there by East German agencies.

Furthermore, in mid-May, Barschel had nearly been killed in a mysterious plane crash, when his private jet went out of control and plummeted to the ground. There is also the fact that his own media aide began leaking to the press soon after the crash stories about how he had allegedly been ordered by Barschel to launch scam operations against the opposition Social Democrats, to discredit them for the state elections that autumn.

'Suicide and nothing else'

But in spite of all the additional pieces of information that have found their way into the public view over the last seven years—especially leaks about the existence of quite a few secret files about Barschel in the archives of the former East German foreign intelligence—the controlled environment by the political class in Germany which maintains that it was "suicide, and nothing else," could not be broken. Now, new, spectacular developments have begun to send shock waves through Germany that may finally help to unveil the dark secrets behind that murderous Geneva weekend in October 1987.

First, *Bildzeitung*, Germany's largest newspaper with a daily circulation of more than 5 million copies, published excerpts from a new book by former Israeli Mossad operative Victor Ostrovsky, which claims that the Mossad murdered Barschel. In *The Other Side of Deception* (published in the United States by HarperCollins), Ostrovsky reports that a Mossad agent whom he calls "Ran H." was deployed to Geneva in October 1987. As reported in *Bildzeitung's* excerpts: "Using the pseudonym 'Robert Oleff,' this top agent lured Barschel from the Canary Islands [where he was vacationing] to Geneva. Little time was left. Barschel wanted to testify before the investigation committee in Kiel [referring to upcoming state parliamentary hearings]. The Mossad had only two days to make him change his mind—or to kill him. The killer squads of the 'Kidon' special units were waiting in the 'Beau Rivage' hotel."

Ostrovsky reports that "Ran H." tried to convince Barschel, who had earlier that year run afoul of top-secret arms deals involving West German and Israeli foreign intelligence with Iran, became infuriated over them and tried to block access for the arms-dealers to the ports of Schleswig-Holstein. At the meeting in Barschel's hotel room on Oct. 10, Barschel told the Mossad agent he would not change his mind, but, rather make the entire scandal public. This, according to Ostrovsky, was Barschel's death sentence: He was killed by a combination of spiked wine, sleeping pills pumped into his stomach, and a fever-inducing drug inserted into his rectum, following which the agents placed his body into ice cold bathwater in the hotel room.

One might believe that Barschel was assassinated and still discard Ostrovsky's story as not fully trustworthy, because he leaves out all aspects of East German foreign intelligence, which has its own accounts of Barschel's numerous trips to the former East bloc, and because Ostrovsky omits the role of Oliver North and that side of the East-West arms deals in the early 1980s, in collaboration with the East Germans and Israelis (and others, like the British).

Toxicologist speaks out

Another spectacular development early in October 1994 provides definitive evidence that Barschel was assassinated: a recent, unpublished forensic medical investigation carried out by Prof. Hans Brandenberger, of Zurich, Switzerland. Brandenberger, vice chairman of the International Association of Forensic Toxicologists, came to the conclusion that Barschel could not possibly have taken the lethal drug himself because, by the time the lethal doses were administered, he was already in a deep coma. This seems to corroborate hypotheses in the immediate aftermath of finding Barschel's corpse: Certain perforations that were discovered in the outer lining of Barschel's stomach were typical of effects created when tubes are artificially inserted in somebody's stomach. Moreover, no remains of medication were detected in his salivary tissues and his esophagus, which would have been the case had he orally ingested the drug.

Brandenberger's report compelled two senior members of the German Christian Democratic party's parliamentary group in Bonn, Horst Eylmann and Josef Hollerith, to call for Barschel's remains to be exhumed, in order to conduct a more thorough forensic medical investigation. To do so, and find evidence of what caused his death, would still be possible: Traces of lethal substances can be found even after decades after an individual has died.

Waiting for the full text of Brandenberger's report to be made public, and noticing a certain nervousness emerging in the German political establishment, which can no longer maintain its "it was suicide, nothing else" line, this author and others are eager to learn more about this dark affair in the coming weeks. The true scandal has only just begun to come to the surface.

China's nuclear test: Empire smiles back

by Ramtanu Maitra and Susan Maitra

The Oct. 7 underground nuclear test by China, carried out in the desolate Lop Nor region, has posed a dilemma for China-watchers in Asia, and especially for those who have been promoting a changed image of China based on the liberalization and globalization of its economy. Although the latest test, the 41st by China and the third of its kind in one full calendar year, is part of China's continuing effort to upgrade its nuclear arsenal—Cold War or no Cold War—its timing would appear paradoxical.

The test explosion, scheduled months before, occurred only three days after Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen signed agreements in Washington with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on missile proliferation and cooperation on weapons-grade fissile materials cut-off. Both these were analyzed by some commentators as a sign of Beijing's increasing willingness to accept Washington's policy doctrine on nuclear and missile issues. The test explosion toppled that appellation. The Beijing leadership did not abandon its test plan even though China's foreign minister was in the process of conveying a different image in Washington.

For its part, the Chinese official news daily *Xinhua* reported the explosion in a most matter-of-fact way. But in the rest of Asia, a few were rudely awakened. With the clock for acquisition of Hongkong ticking away, China's shadow is looming larger over the so-called economically fastest-growing area in the world.

New Delhi, by contrast, reacted like a bemused spectator. In 1962, India was led into a nicely laid trap by the Mao-Zhou combine, through some quickly maneuvered military forays along the undelineated Himalayan borders, with the ostensible purpose of exploding the myth of India's growing stature as a non-aligned nation as well as to reveal the pathetic state of the Indian Army, brought about by Nehru and his defense minister, Krishna Menon. Since then, Indian cynicism about Beijing leaders' "good will" has kept it in good stead. It is understood by most Indian policymakers that Beijing never gives away its winning cards for something non-tangible and, instead, will use them to extract concessions, in the economic, political, or military sphere. The Oct. 7 test is looked at in that light in India.

Method in confusion

During the second session on disarmament in 1992 at the United Nations, China had said it would consider joining the