

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### SDI battle out in the open

*The long-awaited showdown between the Chancellor and his foreign minister seems just about to explode.*

**F**inally, the faction fight between the arms-control mafia and the proponents of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative has broken out into the open here. Over the weekend of Nov. 2-3, Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his obstructionist foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, moved into a long-overdue clash over the question.

At immediate issue is a "framework agreement" with the United States on SDI cooperation. The British government signed such an agreement on Oct. 29, which undoubtedly encouraged the Christian Democracy/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) of Chancellor Kohl to move faster toward a decision.

A nationwide mobilization for SDI cooperation by the new bipartisan organization, Patriots for Germany, helped to increase the pressure on the Chancellor.

The CDU/CSU began to urge the government to sign an agreement before the beginning of the Christmas parliamentary recess in mid-December. Especially the CSU of Bavarian Gov. Franz-Josef Strauss and the "pro-SDI hawks" in the CDU around Deputy Jürgen Todenhöfer warned that German industry would lose precious SDI contracts if Kohl continued to tolerate Genscher's stalling tactics. Todenhöfer himself was in the United States during the third week of October, and brought home the clear message that everything depended on a governmental agreement.

This led unavoidably to confront-

ation with Genscher and the arms-control mafia, which went to action: The country's leading scandal-weekly, *Der Spiegel*, wrote on Nov. 4 that Genscher and his ministry wanted to block SDI cooperation for at least several years, reporting at length on Genscher's "deep conviction" that Mutually Assured Destruction is a moral doctrine of deterrence which would be ended by SDI. The message was clear: Should Kohl insist on SDI cooperation, the coalition was finished.

Also on Nov. 4, the country's largest daily, *Bildzeitung* (5.3 million circulation), printed excerpts from Soviet leader Gorbachov's letter to Kohl of early September: "Stay away from the SDI, or else!" The leak of this secret dispatch to *Bildzeitung* added fuel to the building coalition crisis. A few hours after *Bildzeitung* and *Der Spiegel* hit the newsstands, a reportedly "very, very angry Chancellor Kohl" called Martin Bangemann, Free Democratic chairman, on the phone, and demanded that he clarify once and for all his party's position on SDI and whether the *Der Spiegel* story signaled desertion from the coalition. Bangemann was taken by surprise, and assured the Chancellor of the FDP's loyalty.

Then, Kohl got on the phone with Genscher, confronted him with Bangemann's statement, and demanded that he return to coalition discipline. Advisors of Kohl later hinted that the Chancellor had threatened Genscher

with dismissal, and that the conversation exploded into a "shouting match." Genscher announced that he would give a "personal declaration" later that afternoon (Nov. 4). Meanwhile, Franz-Josef Strauss had called CSU leaders into special session to pass a resolution for "a decision in favor of a German-American SDI agreement now." Strauss then told a press conference: "Nothing will come out of Geneva, one way or the other. It is nonsensical, therefore, to construct any linkage with the SDI, which concerns research that must be done, with or without Geneva."

This was the situation when Genscher delivered his "personal declaration" to the press in Bonn, unconvincingly emphasizing his loyalty to Chancellor Kohl, but repeating the line that "no doors to the East must be closed." It didn't work. *Bildzeitung's* publication of the Gorbachov letter made clear that there are no "open doors" in Moscow.

Genscher resorted to threats and blackmail again. The FDP's defense policy expert, Deputy Olaf Feldmann, told the press that if an SDI agreement were signed with the U.S.A., he foresaw "a real coalition crisis."

This is risky for Genscher. It is no secret in Bonn that FDP chairman Bangemann would eventually strike a deal with Kohl in favor of the SDI, if the Chancellor offered him Genscher's job.

Genscher is in flight-forward mode. On Nov. 6, he had Feldmann call national security adviser Horst Teltschik a "megalomaniac," and call for his dismissal. Teltschik was commissioned by Kohl to head the official West German "SDI fact-finding" delegation to the U.S.A. Sept. 9-13. This is throwing down the gauntlet to the Chancellor. If he ever seriously considered dismissing Genscher, this would be the moment to do it.