

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Schmidt reacts violently to Chirac

"It's bullshit!" This was the impulsive reaction of Helmut Schmidt, former Social Democratic chancellor of West Germany, when asked by this reporter April 2 to comment on French Premier Jacques Chirac's proposal to transfer agricultural surpluses from the advanced sector to the most famine-stricken nations.

"Who's going to pay for it? Who's going to pay for it?" Schmidt snapped. "It is just an election balloon by Chirac."

Schmidt regained his composure when I told him that Chirac had made this the most important item on his agenda of talks with the Reagan administration earlier in the week, and that he proposes to finance it through international cooperation, much as the so-called Baker Plan proposes, which Schmidt supports. Schmidt then reverted to the diplomatic language he used in his just-completed symposium with Henry Kissinger, saying, "Well, perhaps I should study it further."

Schmidt was not alone in his violent rejection of Chirac's idea. The Reagan administration is also vigorously opposed, as a senior administration official stressed in two background briefings to the White House press corps during the Chirac visit.

Chirac's proposal "just goes in the opposite direction of the way we think you have to go, which is less government intervention in the markets and less government direct relationships

between payments to farmers and decisions to produce and that kind of thing," the Reagan spokesman said (a more technical way of saying, "It's bullshit").

After Chirac's passionate appeal to "end the selfishness of the richest nations" with the proposal, however, I asked White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater if the administration had been moved by Chirac to reconsider its position. "I'll stick with what the senior administration official said," Fitzwater said.

Schmidt pushes "Green" agenda

Schmidt was in Washington as part of a lavish promotion by the West German Lufthansa airline, which started direct service to Dulles airport April 1. His only public appearance was a seminar at Georgetown University with his long-time friend, former U.S. National Security Adviser and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Schmidt reflected a shocking accommodation to the Soviet-backed Green party in West Germany, by saying that environmental and population control issues are at the top of the "global agenda" for the future.

Schmidt, who just returned from a trip to the Soviet Union and is working with former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing in opposition to the growing constellation of nations working with the Vatican, for international debt reform, warned of the "burning off of the ozone layer" and the "greenhouse effect" on the environment, which he said "will become an insurmountable problem within 30 years" unless environmental precautions are taken.

He coupled this with dire warnings about the effects of population growth, noting that "unless something is done, there will be eight billion people by 2025."

He said that he participated in a meeting with leaders of seven world religions and political parties who "arrived at the same ethical basis" on these issues with less than a day of discussions. "They all agreed we need solidarity." On the economic front, he added, "This means equal burden-sharing between the creditor and debtor nations."

Kissinger responds to EIR

After Schmidt spoke, Kissinger pontificated on the virtues of genuine negotiations between East and West, complaining that the current negotiations for a "zero option" in Europe are destined to result in a deadlock.

This reporter was the first person to ask a question from the floor, identifying my affiliation with *EIR*. Kissinger, Schmidt, and the moderator, journalist Henry Trewitt, went into a sudden consultation, and the audience of 500 began to stir with excitement. Confrontations between Kissinger and associates of Lyndon LaRouche are legendary.

I challenged Kissinger to defend his claim of the benefits of negotiating with the Soviets in the face of U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's assertion the week before that the Soviets have broken out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. I also asked him to take a stand on Chirac's proposal.

After the whispered exchanges concluded, Kissinger paused. "As a rule, I do not answer questions from the *Executive Intelligence Review*," he said, "But I will this time."

While he answered at great length, he avoided the reference to Weinberger's claim altogether, and said he was unfamiliar with the Chirac proposal.

It was the first time Kissinger had been compelled to respond directly to *EIR* in five years.