

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

A policy for the West, or the East?

Genscher's foreign policy is benefiting the Kremlin's strategic interests, and jeopardizing relations with Germany's allies.

The latest foreign policy decisions of Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl, taken at the prompting (or, under the blackmail) of Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher, have shocked most of his alliance partners in the West.

First, the decision to cultivate a "special relationship with Teheran." At the end of August, Genscher and his advisers, such as the Institute of Oriental Studies in Hamburg, presented an outline for an intensified official dialogue with Khomeini's Iran on economic and political cooperation in the Gulf—on the eve of a direct military conflict in the Gulf between the Western powers and the mullahs!

Iran's speaker of the parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani, has been issuing one wild threat after another against the Western presence in the Gulf, and yet, he is being courted as Genscher's "Iranian moderate."

On Aug. 31, a planning session took place in Hamburg, attended by members of the German-Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Institute of Oriental Studies head Udo Steinbach, and Jens Petersen, the ambassador to Teheran. On Sept. 2, Steinbach had a full day of meetings with government officials to discuss this remarkable and adventuresome policy.

The Genscher initiative has caused considerable irritation in London, Paris, and now, even in Washington, D.C.—if not at the State Department. Many in the foreign policy establishment in France and Britain have expressed doubt whether Genscher is still with the West—if he ever was. Of the chill that has emerged over Gensch-

er's Iran policy, cartoons in the press of France, depicting him dressed in a mullah's outfit, speak volumes.

Were this not enough, Chancellor Kohl then decided to adopt the Soviet view that Germany's 72 Pershing-IA missiles are "the key obstacle to a Geneva arms control agreement." Admittedly, Kohl attached some tough conditions to his promise to give up the missiles. But still, France and Britain view Kohl's unilateral concession as a precedent for the Kremlin to renew its demands that the French and British nuclear arsenals be discussed at the Geneva arms control talks, too.

The Pershing-IAs are a so-called "third state potential." According to an agreement between the United States and West Germany, the Germans have the U.S.-made missiles, while the Americans keep the nuclear warheads that can be mounted on them.

There are similar arrangements between the United States and other non-nuclear powers in the NATO alliance, most notably, Turkey.

These "third state potentials" have never been discussed at the American-Soviet arms control talks, and Moscow never demanded that they be. The Russians first wanted to secure a U.S. concession on the so-called double-zero option, i.e., removal of all super-power missiles with a range of 500 kilometers or more.

Just recently, as this double-zero agreement neared signature at Geneva, the Kremlin hinted at concessions on the 1,400 missiles with ranges below 500 kilometers stationed in Eastern Europe—if the Germans sacrificed their 72 Pershing-IAs. But why

should the Kremlin withdraw 1,400, or even some smaller number of missiles, to gain removal of a mere 72 missiles in West Germany?

While the intensity of Soviet arms control propaganda turned Kohl, and clearly, the closely-consulted President Reagan, into Pavlovian dogs staring at the sausage just before their noses, the Kremlin achieved the gain that, via the P-IA dispute, the only agreement directly coupling German to American defense is now up for auction.

More, Kohl's concession has, for the first time, placed a "third state potential" of the West on the arms-control agenda.

Still more, if Moscow doesn't care much about the 72 German missiles in and of themselves, it does care about the British and French missiles.

All this escaped Chancellor Kohl's attention, as he dashed ahead with the announcement after a few hours' consultation with a U.S. President who is equally blind on strategic matters. Kohl did not even consult with prominent members of the German defense lobby.

From London, the *Daily Telegraph* Aug. 27 denounced "the Chancellor's concession as benefiting the Warsaw Pact at the expense of NATO," and posing an implicit threat to the British and French arsenals. Whatever official British and French opposition remained to Reagan's zero option deal, the German Chancellor had stabbed it in the back.

This all earned Kohl no laurels in Moscow, however. On Sept. 1, Soviet Foreign Ministry speaker Grimitskych mocked the debate in Bonn on the P-IA as "too much ado about nothing." The main Soviet interest, he said, was not German missiles, but U.S. nuclear warheads: "But on these, the Chancellor has no competence to comment."