

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Does Bush want the SPD back in power?

U.S. decouplers are endorsing options for a Social Democratic government in Bonn.

The rise of two neutralist currents in Berlin, first the Green-Alternatives, and now the Republikaner party, to full parliamentary status, occurred with the blessings of U.S. diplomacy. Official U.S. contact with the neutralist Greens and Republikaner dates back several years. Deputy Berlin Mission chief John C. Kornblum kept this contact for the State Department.

Kornblum already played a role when a Green delegation visited the States in July 1983. The trip was sponsored by U.S. Ambassador to Bonn Arthur Burns. Kornblum, serving at the European Affairs desk at the State Department under Richard Burt, arranged the Greens' schedule. He and Burt also had a key role in contacts with the German Social Democrats, who shifted toward overt neutralism in 1983-85.

Both diplomats were promoted to key posts in Germany in 1985: Richard Burt became ambassador to Bonn, John Kornblum became deputy head of the U.S. Mission in Berlin.

German Social Democrat Egon Bahr's late-February visit to several administration and congressional offices was in line with this policy of special German relations. Bahr, who often travels to Moscow, got high-profile treatment at the NSC, the State Department, and the Senate and House committees on foreign affairs and defense. Among others, Bahr met Brent Scowcroft and Robert Blackwell of the NSC, Rozanne Ridgewaand y, Ambassadors Holmes and Lehman at the State Departm. He also met Senators Sam Nunn and Les Aspin and Representatives Tom Foley and Lee Ham-

ilton, all Democrats.

As Bahr reported back to Bonn, his U.S. discussion partners voiced particular interest in a potential "Red-Green" coalition between the Social Democrats and the Greens in Bonn after the next national elections in November 1990. Bahr said that the officials he met wanted to know whether there were "realistic" or "moderate" Greens to deal with in 1991 ("moderate" meaning not openly anti-American). He told the Americans there were such "moderates."

More concretely, Bahr discussed the option of a Red-Green coalition to rule West Berlin. He said he found the U.S. officials "very fair" on the Berlin question: "This is to say, the Americans respected what has emerged in Berlin. . . . They not only listened, but accepted." Against this background, it came as no surprise that Bahr's interlocutors also told him they would accept a "return of the SPD to the West German government."

A Social Democratic return to power in Bonn would be handy for the U.S. politicians who want to "decouple" from Europe. Any combination of political parties with the SPD, not just a "Red-Green" coalition, would enhance the tendency toward neutralism that has been waxing since the INF Treaty. The basic scenario would be for the first two years of an SPD-led government coalition in Bonn to overlap with the pullout of the U.S. nuclear missiles in compliance with the INF Treaty. Fueled by many signals and arms control proposals from Moscow, the strategic debate in Germany would orient toward options of

a post-nuclear era of defense. Looking for a non-nuclear future would mean talking of a future German defense without the Americans.

Given the solid strain of anti-Americanism, especially in the SPD and Green party, sentiments against the alliance with the United States would turn very aggressive. The staged public outcry in West Germany against the U.S. after an unheard-of series of air crashes involving U.S. military aircraft in 1988, was a foretaste of what to expect, should a "Red-Green" coalition rule in Bonn after 1990.

Naturally, all of this would provide a welcome pretext for U.S. politicians like Sam Nunn and others to call for a pullout of troops from West Germany. Such threats of troop withdrawal, and allusions to the mood among Germans against U.S. military air flights, were already aired at the 25th International Munich Wehrkunde Meeting Jan. 28-29 by prominent American lawmakers like Les Aspin and John Glenn.

It should be recalled in this context that again and again, the SPD has announced that once back in power, it would "renegotiate" all relevant alliance treaties with the United States, from the 1955 troop stationing agreement to the 1986 SDI cooperation treaty. The SPD has kept in close contact with Henry Kissinger over the years; it has always endorsed his proposals for a "new NATO structure" and U.S. troop withdrawal, from the infamous one in *Time* magazine in April 1984, to the most recent report he gave to newly elected President George Bush at the White House Jan. 28 this year.

There's even an anniversary: In February 1969, Bahr and Kissinger discussed a five-year plan for the pullout of U.S. troops from Germany, in the context of U.S.-Soviet talks. The agenda is the same, 20 years later.