

West German Naderites In Retreat

WEST GERMANY

A West German delegation to Washington led by Foreign Ministry State Secretary Peter Hermes has suddenly returned to Bonn following the Carter administration's failure to budge them or their Brazilian counterparts from the large nuclear technology trade agreement reached by the two nations. Reliable sources in Bonn are describing the break of West Germany from the Tri-lateral-Carter cabinet's "non-proliferation" strategy as final despite some continuing rumors of a concession on the crucial nuclear fuel reprocessing feature of the Brazil deal. According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* Feb. 16, top officials in Bonn are accusing the United States itself of violating Article 4 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which provides for trade in nuclear technology for peaceful uses.

The week ending Feb. 19 is the crucial one for the West German government if it is to free the country's domestic nuclear energy program from the stranglehold of "Naderite" environmentalist groups. On that date an anti-fission demonstration is to occur at a nuclear plant construction site near Brockdorf in the state of Schleswig-Holstein. That state's Christian Democratic Prime Minister, Gerhard Stoltenberg, has repeatedly called upon the federal government to decisively intervene with a clear energy development program and the muscle to back it up, and Bonn is now openly responding to this imperative.

Stoltenberg's call for the formation of a national nuclear energy commission has been taken up by Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt with his announcement of the formation of a "Council for the Peaceful Utilization of Nuclear Energy." This council will be chaired by Schmidt and will include all state prime ministers, representatives from all parliamentary party fractions and from industry, trade unions and members of the Max Planck nuclear research institute.

In the meantime Schmidt and Stoltenberg are doing everything possible to blunt the impact of the Brockdorf demonstration. The demonstration at the plant site has been legally banned, and 6,000 police from all federal states will be blocking all access roads. A peaceful demonstration will be permitted in a nearby town.

After weeks of hesitation, political spokesmen for the pro-nuclear power faction which cuts through all West German parties, have overcome their timidity and now seem willing to sacrifice internal party stability for the sake of the country's fundamental national interest: developing high-technology industry. Economics Minister Hans Friederichs, member of the Free Democratic Party, recently stated at a forum that "Zero Growth by 1985 will destroy democracy." Federal President Walter Scheel failed to observe his usual neutrality when he

stated that "We can not allow the Citizens Initiative groups to appear to have any validity in their goal of making nuclear power plant construction impossible, either by peaceful or by violent means."

Even opposition Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Chairman Helmut Kohl has agreed with Chancellor Schmidt, at least in principle, to fight "against a U.S. monopoly in nuclear energy," and the military-industrial interests who have supported Franz Josef Strauss' Christian Social Union are making it impossible for Strauss to engage in his usual sabotage of government policy. With the possible exception of some misguided lobbyists for the coal industry, West German industrialists are 100 percent behind fission energy development.

The forcing of the energy development issue in this way is now tending to split all West German political parties according to sentiments for and against industrial progress. Tension is most extreme in Schmidt's ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD), since its official chairman, Willy Brandt, is a leading advocate of a "pause" in all construction on nuclear plants. Brandt's factional ally in the Ministry for Science and Technology, State Secretary Volker Hauff, has been unsuccessfully putting heavy pressure on the ministry's labile head, Hans Matthöfer, to join Brandt. The Schleswig-Holstein SPD was encouraged by Brandt to issue an anti-fission leaflet, but one day later was forced by Schmidt's faction to withdraw it from circulation.

The situation is only slightly less explosive among the Free Democrats. The national head of the Citizens' Initiative groups and the Young Democrats FDP youth group, have issued a joint call for a complete ban on nuclear energy.

The Schmidt government knows that this conflict must be resolved quickly in order to prevent a damaging collapse in the growth rate of West German electricity capacity. At present, there are 13 operating nuclear power plants in the country with a capacity of about 6500 megawatts. Eleven plants with an 11,000 megawatt capacity are now under construction, two plants worth 2,700 megawatts are approved for construction, and plans for eight more plants with a capacity of 10,000 megawatts are going through legal acceptance procedures.

As a result of the endless legal suits of the environmentalist groups, all planned construction is threatened with serious delay and an expansion of present coal-fired electrical capacity by 8,500 megawatts is being sabotaged in the same fashion. The federal government already expects to revise downward its nuclear generating capacity target of 45,000 megawatts by 1985, which was set in the wake of the 1973-1974 oil crisis.

The program is also being held up by the state governments of Lower Saxony and North-Rhine-Westphalia. In Lower Saxony, Prime Minister Alberecht is stalling on allowing the construction of a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in his state. The plant would complement similar plants in France and Great Britain. Instead, he has ap-

pointed as his science and technology minister Eduard Pestel, a member of the zero-growth "Club of Rome." Alberecht wants West Germany to reprocess its nuclear fuel in the United States. In the key industrial state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Economics Minister Horst-Ludwig Riemer (FDP) has proposed to scrap nuclear power in favor of a slight increase in coal-fired capacity.

Like U.S. President Carter, Riemer calls for "energy savings" through such measures as increased housing insulation. West Germany's leading commercial daily *Handelsblatt* has rightly described Riemer's proposal as partaking in "dubious methods." It is designed as an "outright provocation against Economics Minister Friderichs," said the newspaper.

Helmut Schmidt: "I'm Not The Kind Of Person Who Yields To Pressure"

This week's issue of the widely read West German magazine Stern published the first major interview West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has given to the press since the inauguration of U.S. President Carter. Chancellor Schmidt begins by bursting certain lies circulated about him in the U.S. press, and then proceeds to explicate the various aspects of his actual policy for European economic development and relations with the Soviet Union. Below are extracts from the interview:

Stern: Mr. Chancellor, when people meet each other the first question is usually: How are you? How are you doing, how's your health?

Schmidt: Politically I'm fine, and my health is very good.

Stern: But around the turn of this year it looked like you were depressed and about to resign.

Schmidt: I can't confirm anything about a resignation, but the time was slowly approaching when I had to catch up on some sleep.

Stern: Does that mean that you will definitely carry on for the next four years?

Schmidt: I'm counting on it...

Stern: Still, you aren't excluding the possibility of an upcoming cabinet reshuffle. When could this occur?

Schmidt: In the course of a legislative period a head of state ought to have an opportunity to seriously consider changing his cabinet. This ought to be a normal occurrence. Unfortunately, in this country when we change a minister this is often marketed as a big sensation. That's not useful...

Stern: Former FDP (Free Democratic Party —ed.) chairman Walter Scheel said once that every coalition has to break up sometime, since the supply of common positions runs out.

Schmidt: I don't like to hear the word "supply," since I would have to polemicize against it. And I won't polemicize against the Federal President. The concept of supply is based on the static idea that you can set joint goals for a certain number of years, and that there's nothing left after these goals are achieved. That is a mistaken idea, since in reality there are always new problems and necessities. When the social-liberal coalition started

working together in 1969, for example, no one foresaw the world economic crisis...

Stern: The FDP is still over-represented.

Schmidt: That's the advantage held by the smaller coalition partner.

Stern: Do you on occasion feel politically blackmailed by the FDP?

Schmidt: I'm not the kind of person who yields to pressure...

Stern: What would happen in the coalition if Lower Saxony and the Saar do not vote in the Bundestag for the Value Added Tax hike and the pension reorganization? Is that the acid test?

Schmidt: I don't see things as darkly as you do. The coalition has already held up under a completely different stress. It won the Bundestag elections in spite of the economic crisis. In other democracies, the economic crisis — for which a part of the electorate naturally holds their current government responsible — has led to changes in governments or coalitions. Think about Italy, the USA or Sweden. The social-liberal coalition's economic policy is not unjustifiably highly estimated throughout the entire world. Finally, we can probably reckon on a real economic growth of 5 percent, and on price rises and unemployment of under 4 percent. There aren't many other countries in the world who could succeed in that. In order to take care of these problems, (Economics Minister) Friderichs and (Finance Minister) Apel belong together better than, for example, Friderichs and Kohl and Strauss...

Stern: ... or Schmidt and Kohl ...

Schmidt: ... Right. You can forget about a team like that... After the war, foreign governments were accused of having firmed up Hitler's dictatorship by having made treaties with the "Third Reich." Isn't that an accusation that could be made against us one day in relation to the Communist regime of the DDR (German Democratic Republic)?

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