

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Is Germany safe from destabilization?

The shooting of a cabinet minister reveals a weak spot in Germany's public security which must be corrected.

Some 22 million citizens, one-third of the German electorate, voted in six state elections on Oct. 14—in the state of Bavaria in former West Germany, and in the five restored states of former East Germany: Mecklenburg-Pomerania, Brandenburg, Saxe-Anhalt, Saxony, and Thuringia.

This test run for the December elections for national parliament turned into a landslide victory for the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, which emerged as the strongest party in five of the six states.

Although the CDU will depend on the liberal Free Democrats (FDP) for a coalition government in three of the six states—Mecklenburg, Thuringia, and Saxe-Anhalt—this victory gives Kohl's governing Bonn coalition a crucial majority of 36 against 33 votes in the Bundesrat chamber of Parliament, which has veto power over all legislation. Economic recovery and stabilization of eastern Germany calls for rapid decisions, and the Bundesrat majority will help Kohl to accelerate the process.

Another key area of state policy is domestic security. Relics of the Stasi secret police apparatus that held East Germany hostage for 45 years are still there.

The Stasi has used the year between the refugee crisis of mid-1989 and German unification on Oct. 3, to covertly penetrate institutions that have become part of unified Germany. A highly select group has merged with the West German terrorist underground, utilizing contacts that existed throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Some ex-Stasi officers signed contracts with foreign agencies that are hostile to Germany, offering to spy or do dirty tricks for them. This includes the use of discrediting files on politicians.

There is, therefore, a threefold threat to Germany's stability posed by Stasi sections that have moved into a Trojan Horse role: espionage, blackmail, and terrorism.

Police have spotted signs recently, of an increased threat of terrorist attacks on key politicians, and the BKA, the federal anti-crime agency, recommended that security measures be expanded and intensified. Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble endorsed the proposal, but the budgetary commission of the Parliament refused the plan because of fiscal austerity on Oct. 10.

The security threat that the budgetary experts played down, turned brutally concrete only two days later on Oct. 12, when Schäuble was gunned down after a CDU event in the state of Baden-Württemberg.

The attack was carried out by a 37-year-old man who fired three shots at the minister from a distance of about 2 feet. The first two shots hit Schäuble in the jaw and the chest. He underwent three operations in the first four days after the hit and has been showing signs of recovery, but he may remain paralyzed in the lower half of the body.

The gunman, Dieter Kaufmann, who was found to have a police record for drug-related crimes, was arrested at the scene. He had been sentenced to five and a half years in jail in 1983 but was released already in 1986, and

has been in psychiatric care since. Kaufmann said he wanted to kill Schäuble as a hated representative of the state that, as he put it, had "psycho-tortured" him over the years.

The fact that Kaufmann managed to get that close to Schäuble in spite of the minister's bodyguards, resembles the case of John Hinckley, who almost succeeded in killing Ronald Reagan in a similar situation in March 1981.

Schäuble is a confidant of Kohl and a key official who negotiated the German unification agreements, and has been in charge of anti-drug, counterespionage, and anti-terrorism affairs.

Some may say the case of this gunman's attack on Schäuble, and the Stasi affairs, are two different stories. They are not.

That the shooting was so easy to carry out shows a major flaw in German domestic security policy. As long as this flaw remains, terrorists will have an easy job carrying out their attacks, as in November 1989 when Deutsche Bank chairman Alfred Herrhausen was killed in a bomb attack, and happened again in July 1990 when Schäuble's assistant minister Hans Neusel survived a bomb attack on his car—this latter incident occurring only a few hundred meters from the Interior Ministry in Bonn!

Whether Kaufmann was a "lone, crazy assassin" or not, we must ask, *cui bono?*—who benefits?

Schäuble had a priority list for action in the coming weeks for 1) decisive moves against underground Stasi networks still active; 2) screening of evidence indicating recruitment of Stasi cells by foreign agencies; 3) neutralization of eastern Trojan Horse cells in the united Germany; and 4) legislation against laundering of drug money.

It is critical that these security measures be pursued with all necessary rigor.