
Interview

Aspen: Schmidt will press Brandt policy

What follows is excerpted from an interview, provided to EIR, with a senior official of the Aspen Institute on the subject of Reagan administration relations with the West German government of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

Q: What do you expect to develop on the question of North-South policy and the Brandt Commission?

A: Schmidt will have a hard time resisting that. The Brandt Commission, oddly enough—and I had the original discussions with Brandt on this, it's not his thing, you know—has picked up steam and is getting more attention now than when it first came out. . . . An inner compulsion is growing about the Brandt report, not just on aid, but on the arms question, and the arms bill, and being able to help the North-South relationship. The introduction to that report, which Brandt wrote, is the linkage between a trillion-dollar [U.S.] budget for arms, versus the need to strengthen the South.

Also, the Germans took the lead at the U.N., and when Reagan pulled the rug out under the Law of the Sea treaty, they pulled the rug out under the process of these negotiations on resources and trade with the LDCs, they pulled the rug out from under one of the major German initiatives in the broader international scene. Schmidt will say, "Can't you review this, Mr. President?"

Q: Why should Schmidt go with anything of Brandt's?

A: There's an inner compulsion. The LDCs are not only social and political problems, but they are an enormous area for battleground and conflict. There are going to be 6.3 billion people in the world that we can't support by the year 2000. . . . We are running out of food, water, natural resources; this is becoming a tremendous national security problem, and the U.S. may not realize it yet—some people do—but Schmidt is perfectly well aware of it. . . . Schmidt will tell Reagan to pay more attention to this and say he hopes to spend their next meeting more on North-South problems, we hope you don't slash your

aid program, we hope you let others take care of fighting in El Salvador. . . .

Q: Who is pushing the Brandt Commission?

A: I had lunch with the Archbishop of Canterbury last week, and he raised the Brandt Commission by name. That wouldn't have happened a while back. McNamara is pushing it. Lambsdorff and the Bundestag members brought it up at the Princeton German-American Council meeting. . . .

Q: But Schmidt is one of those people who thinks development can solve everything, and so is Reagan.

A: Schmidt is more sophisticated than that. What's made him change his mind is that the U.S. pulled the rug from under Germany in its dealings with the LDCs. Schmidt has his own problems on this at home. He has the growth of the Green Party, and their collaboration with the people who are raising objections to the nuclear weapons and to nuclear energy . . . and I don't think he has the resilience he had two years ago.

How can they export huge amounts of equipment when they can barely pay for the oil and food they're importing? It would have to be a very large system of export credits, and I think Schmidt is smart enough to know that will not fly by itself, without what was being proposed at the U.N.

Q: But do you think Reagan will respond positively to a Brandt-type approach?

A: He'll have to, given the world situation. Haig, for one, will urge Reagan to be more open to the Brandt Commission report, and to go with it. I saw Haig a few weeks ago on this and he's opening his mind to the approach. He's very concerned not to be seen as just a militant on East-West issues, that backfired on him. Haig met with Archbishop Runcie on this and he took him pretty seriously. Many of his advisers are telling him that the issues raised by Global 2000 and the Brandt report are the real security issues; Walter Stoessel [outgoing ambassador to Bonn] is also advising Reagan of this. . . . Schmidt is a more formidable person to be discussing this with than anyone Reagan has met so far. He's also being advised by Baron von Stadten, his principal foreign affairs adviser, that this is the way to proceed with the U.S. Von Stadten is tremendously powerful, he knows all the ins and outs of Washington.

Q: What will come out of this week's summit?

A: Just a general agreement to talk further. . . . The problem will be much bigger [by the time of the Ottawa summit] . . . there are El Salvadors all over the place. . . . Mexico is going to be tumultuous, the development process is getting out of control there, and so is population. . . . Saudi Arabia is going to be in turmoil. . . .