

## Report from Bonn by George Gregory

### Tripping over the SDI

*Social Democrats announce that those who swallow the SDI bait "will find themselves hooked by the program as a whole."*

Up to the early days of April, the dominant and official line coming from any West German government representative was, "only if we participate in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) can we hope to bring our influence to bear to assure that European security interests are considered in the development of the program."

That obviously cut two ways. Some wearing that mask were sincerely interested in the technological spin-offs of beam-weapon defense; some to developing defenses against medium- and short-range Soviet missiles in Europe; and others to overthrowing Mutual Assured Destruction and its derivate Flexible Response (but only privileged "sources" were willing to admit that insight into the SDI had developed so far). All of that does correspond to European security interests.

Others wearing the same mask, however, were merely convinced that a niche on the inside of the program was a most comfortable position for sniping and sabotage.

Horst Ehmke, the Social Democrat who chairs the opposition Social Democratic Party's committee on "Disarmament and Arms Control," has announced that the niche on the inside does not effectively exist. In a recent resolution of the Committee, we read that, "involvement in the research phase of the program (SDI) immediately entails responsibility for the armament phase. . . . Those who swallow the bait of the technology will find themselves hooked by the program as a whole."

Ehmke's Committee merely says publicly what the Free Democrats' foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, has been saying in private: "Once we get into it, there will be no way out." According to the coalition arithmetic of the Kohl government in Bonn, there is only one "scenario" in which Kohl can be heaved out onto the streets before general elections in 1987: if the small FDP coalition partner, and its strongman, the longest serving foreign minister among Western nations, Genscher, leaves the government.

Caspar Weinberger, Lt. General Abrahamson, and the President's Science Adviser George Keyworth have not only invited the Federal Republic to participate in SDI, but have also invited German scientists, industry representatives, and military people to look at SDI work in depth and on site. Bonn has yet to answer the invitation; officialdom is behaving as if it did not know where to pick up the plane tickets or find the hotel reservations. The reason: Christian Democratic Bonn is trying to propitiate Genscher.

Genscher, in turn, makes no bones of the fact that he enjoys a far deeper "strategic meeting of the minds" with Moscow's internal German propaganda chorus, Horst Ehmke, Egon Bahr, Willy Brandt, etc., than the government he ostensibly serves at present. Genscher would just as soon drop his mask completely, and let the government fall.

All of this is so obvious and blatant, that some people have begun to

figure out that Genscher is turning Bonn into the sort of place for which Caspar Weinberger may not be able to find the address (like New Zealand) the next time he passes out invitations.

Max Streibl, an executive member of Franz Josef Strauss's Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), writes in a recent issue of *Bayernkurier*, "There is no choice for Germany and Europe but real participation in Reagan's SDI. Food for thought for the Chancellor is that Genscher has hauled him back onto the foreign policy line of his predecessor Helmut Schmidt. . . . A foreign policy of the still-serving Foreign Minister Genscher in the tow of Bahr and Brandt is intolerable and impossible." Theo Waigel, the chairman of the CSU Parliamentary Group in Bonn, insisted on numerous occasions that "the SPD rejection of SDI makes no sense. . . . They are more concerned for the security of the Soviet Union than ours or the West's." That shoe is designed to fit Genscher as well.

The knives are out for Genscher's hide. Theo Waigel and a growing lobby in the Christian Democratic parliamentary group insist that "defense against short range missiles is possible, but only if we participate in the program. First, we have to give our fundamental 'yes' to the project, then we can worry about the conditions and the form of our participation." Others on the inside in Bonn are bombarding the chancellor and his Christian Democratic cabinet members with facts: By waiting, German industry loses short-term chances for 1 billion DM in initial research contracts. The SDI organization is making decisions on the shape of the strategic defense program every day, "and if we wait six months, we will either have missed the boat, or it will be at least very, very hard to get on board."