

Will Germany's Chancellor Kohl be toppled by Genscher, too?

by Rainer Apel

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl is on the verge of being toppled from power—by exactly the same coalition of forces that toppled Helmut Schmidt from power on Oct. 1, 1982. An operation against Kohl, should it come, will be aided and abetted by the U.S. State Department, in particular, the European Desk of Assistant Secretary Richard Burt. The result will be a West Germany governed by a Soviet puppet government, effectively out of NATO and incorporated into the Soviet sphere of influence. Should Burt, as is now strongly indicated in the United States, be named the next U.S. ambassador to West Germany, Kohl's ouster and West Germany's assumption of satrapy status in the Soviet empire are assured.

The public opinion polls done on Chancellor Kohl's popularity, which show a drastic decline of support in the population, are only one indicator of the threat to his government. Another is the dense flow of rumors and counter-rumors about coming government reshuffles, about ungovernability, and even a new Socialist-Liberal coalition which may replace the Christian Democrat-Liberal coalition that is Kohl's government.

The forces which work for the overthrow of Kohl are the machine of Willy Brandt among the Social Democrats, which is pro-Soviet, and the Free Democrats of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who are also pro-Soviet. This combination of political forces, which controls, if counted together, almost half of the votes in the national parliament, has kept the country in a virtual state of indecision and ungovernability. They helped the neo-Nazi Green Party, recipient of massive funding from the East bloc, into the parliament in the March 1983 national elections, and the Greens have paralyzed all essential parliamentary work ever since.

The Social Democrats now vaguely hint that they could "launch a vote-of-no-confidence" against Chancellor Kohl "at any convenient time." The Social Democrats can threaten Kohl in this fashion, because the Chancellor's minor coalition partner, the Free Democrats, are withdrawing support from him on several vital policies, most fundamentally, his support for the American Strategic Defense Initiative.

Among the few who warned Kohl against tying his fate

to the traitorous Free Democrats, was the national chairwoman of the European Labor Party, Helga Zepp-LaRouche. A few days after Kohl took power in October 1982, she warned in a broadly circulated statement that Kohl would see the day when his new coalition partner Genscher would topple him like he toppled Chancellor Schmidt. Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche warned of the deepening economic depression, of the global confrontation course pursued by the Soviets, and of backstabbers in the West around decouplers like Kissinger. She warned that Kohl was brought to power not to become a strong Chancellor, but only as a caretaker for a period of transition into a new, pro-Soviet constellation of forces in Bonn. As Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche warned in October 1982, Kohl would likely prove to be incapable of handling the crises built into his relationship with the Free Democrats, and his government would be ruled by Foreign Minister Genscher.

Comparing the developments since with the prognosis, one is forced to recognize that everything turned out to be even worse. Kohl has not capitalized on marginal maneuvering room he temporarily gained, mainly due to initiatives originating in the office of the President of the United States. Kohl has not been clever enough to use favorable cards against the intrigues of Genscher.

Kohl is a politician with no background in economic, foreign, or military policies. He had expected that his moment of maximum popularity in March 1983 would last a while longer. But the economic crisis, rising unemployment, and spread of the "new poverty" are nothing to build popularity on. Most of the two million unemployed Kohl inherited from his predecessor Schmidt have become "Kohl's unemployed." Over the 32 months he has been in power, an additional 1.5 million have joined the unemployment lines. The fact that the Chancellor is bound—by his coalition with the Free Democrats—to a strict austerity policy, means more unemployment, cuts in the national budget, and cuts in subsidies to unstable industries such as mining, steel, construction, and ship-building.

Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democrats lost all recent state and local elections, and the opposition Social Democrats in the main reaped the political harvest.

In spite of this disastrous economic policy showing, Kohl has had the majority of the population on his side on questions of national defense and German-American friendship. The May trip of President Reagan to Germany created a real political momentum for Kohl. The same voters who oppose the economic policy and other domestic policy lines of the Kohl government, also oppose the pro-Soviet course of the Free Democrats and Social Democrats. Kohl could have capitalized on the strong pro-American ferment the Reagan trip created; he could have employed this ferment to push Germany into direct participation in the SDI. He didn't. This allowed Genscher and Brandt to regain ground they had lost through Reagan's trip.

Consent of the State Department

Especially the European Desk at the U.S. State Department, headed by Richard Burt, has given out the line that Chancellor Kohl is a "lame duck," and that "the Americans are not married to this specific government in Bonn." Burt maintains close contacts with Brandt's Social Democrats, especially those who are in charge of the most intense contacts with East bloc leaders: Egon Bahr, Horst Ehmke, Karsten Voigt, and the official head of the SPD caucus in parliament, Hans-Jochen Vogel.

With the open consent of the State Department, Foreign Minister Genscher and other ranking Free Democrats have been able to intensify their own diplomacy against the SDI in Europe, and to fill their schedules with travels to Warsaw Pact capitals. Whatever Genscher does, he does in "close consultation with the Americans"—that is, the State Department.

The pattern of diplomacy, and the statements made by Social and Free Democrats on the SDI, on East-West relations, and on "European independence," are now virtually indistinguishable. A coalition on central questions of foreign and defense policy has thus emerged between the Free Democrats and Social Democrats. The "new coalition" everybody in Bonn is already talking about has dominating influence, and paralyzes Kohl. It only remains for the "new coalition" to become the official one.

The Reagan factor

The hesitancy of Brandt's Social Democrats and of Genscher's Free Democrats to overthrow Kohl may be motivated by tactical considerations. It may have to do with the fact that President Reagan might not sit by, merely watching the government of his foremost ally in Europe be overthrown and replaced by a government which would be on better terms with Moscow than with Washington. The combination of forces which is out to topple Kohl is not totally unknown in Washington, and neither are their contacts to Moscow. The overthrow of the German Chancellor would be read as a first-rate signal that the Soviets have made the decisive step toward

decoupling Western Europe from the United States. Whatever can and must be said about Reagan's weaknesses—his failure to clean out the nest of traitors in his own State Department, for example—Reagan is in a much stronger position in the United States than Kohl is in Bonn. But most important, Reagan has proven that on issues which matter to him—SDI, Grenada, Nicaragua—he is capable of decisive action, overriding his "advisers."

There is no doubt that the Soviets are also aware of the danger President Reagan represents to their best laid plans. On something so important to them as Germany, they do not wish to act precipitously.

Thus, more than any domestic factor, it is the pro-American orientation of Chancellor Kohl and his good personal relationship with President Reagan which have saved his neck. If anything has won Kohl respect in Moscow, it is his support for Reagan's SDI. There have been numerous commentaries in the Soviet media expressing Moscow's rage at this fact: "If Kohl didn't support Reagan, no one in Europe would." Moscow's tactical dilemma—wishing Kohl out of the way, but hesitating due of his ties to Reagan—has so far saved the Chancellor.

Kohl may survive in this fashion for some time, maybe even until February 1987. But the chances grow smaller each day he continues his Friedmanite economic policy.

Overthrowing the constitution

One who has profited a lot from this paralysis is State President Richard von Weizsäcker, a politician whose heart beats in Central Europe rather than in the West. His father, Ernst von Weizsäcker, co-authored the original draft of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939, and there are many in Germany who suspect that his son would be willing to strike a similar deal with Moscow today. For the time being, Richard von Weizsäcker makes all-too-visible efforts to usurp functions reserved for the Chancellor by the German constitution.

Foreign Minister Genscher has stated his loyalty to Weizsäcker's policy principles rather than to Kohl in recent interviews. Should the German Chancellor survive until the next national elections in February 1987, Weizsäcker might succeed in eroding the country's constitutional system and emerge as the new strongman in German politics, were no new cards thrown into the game.

There is, however, a political card which doesn't comply with any of the rules which the pro-Soviet cabal has so far been able to determine. The European Labor Party will launch a series of nation-wide leafleting campaigns to unmask the plot against Kohl, and the party's chairwoman, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, has already announced her candidacy for the chancellorship. Many German voters will remember that she was the one to predict in October 1982 that a Chancellor Kohl whose fate depended on Genscher's good will, would paralyze the country.

Genscher charged with sabotaging the SDI

This commentary by Herbert Kremp, "Where Is Genscher Going?" was published in the daily Die Welt on June 3. The excerpts published here were translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service:

Do we have a foreign policy? If so, what does it look like? Who is directing it and in what direction is it moving? Recently there has been good reason to ask these questions. Last weekend the FDP Executive [the Free Democratic Party of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher—ed.] against the F.R.G. "participating alone" in the U.S. antimissile defense project. The FDP came out on the side of Mitterrand.

Although the chancellor expressed interest in the European technological community (Eureka) during his talks with the French president in Konstanz, he in no way rejected participation in SDI. Kohl and Genscher have held conflicting positions on this subject for months, and they are causing confusion in Bonn. However, one thing is crystal clear—the foreign minister does not want to have anything to do with a defense system in space.

This disagreement is not limited to arms; it also applies to Eureka. The foreign minister's definition of European cooperation in the technological field is at odds with the chancellor's views. Genscher focuses on the economic goal "of maintaining Europe's leading position as an industrial area," as was decided by the party Executive acting under his influence. There is no mention of military research and joint participation in SDI. . . .

What is the reason for this double-dealing in Bonn? How did it come about that the chancellor did not receive Nicaraguan Vice President Ramirez—who requested such a meeting—while the foreign minister welcomed the guest and assured him of his support for the revolutionary system within the framework of the economic cooperation that the EC is trying to set up?

During a friendly meeting with Ramirez, Genscher rejected the trade embargo recently imposed by the United States on Nicaragua in such a way that Ramirez later asked publicly why Bonn's development aid for his country was

still frozen if there was so much willingness to compromise. The question was logical, but there is no logic to F.R.G. foreign policy. Why is the foreign minister "cultivating" a nation that is a declared enemy of the United States and that violates human rights? Why does he not leave such action to the opposition? Genscher did not distance himself from Washington's policy as much as Willy Brandt has, but he did place himself between the "two superpowers" and has had his party's Executive Committee call for "concrete negotiating proposals as soon as possible" in Geneva. The FDP resolution sounds like a government statement from the time of the Social-Liberal coalition. The resolution states that the goal of the negotiations should be "to prevent an arms race in space and to end the one on earth. This corresponds to the desire of all peoples, as does the goal to limit and reduce nuclear weapons, and to secure strategic stability."

If you get rid of the fluff and consider the crux of the matter, you find that Kohl's coalition ally is on the old course of "pressuring" the United States. After all, who is supposed to listen to such appeals? Perhaps the Soviet leadership that is making a renewed and concentrated attempt to separate the West Europeans from the United States, and is doing so openly for everyone to see?

While Genscher is pressuring the United States, he is above all pressuring Kohl to pressure the United States. Genscher does not like the course of U.S. policy at all. The foreign minister, without clearly saying so, fears that Washington's plan to replace the strategy of the threat of mutual destruction with a strategy of missile defense will endanger the Geneva talks on arms limitation, unhinge the Western alliance, and destabilize (in particular West European) security. . . .

Anyone who knows his way around Washington and Geneva knows that the United States will not allow itself to be pressured. In any event, what is primarily involved in Geneva is the excessive Soviet arms buildup in the field of intercontinental and intermediate range missiles.

It is extremely improbable that Moscow under Gorbachev is prepared to make any important concessions beyond the level of propaganda. The reasoning of the communist superpower does not allow for a renunciation of military superiority once it has been achieved. The only thing that Moscow really fears is a technologically superior antimissile defense system in the West that could reduce the effectiveness of offensive capability. The Soviets returned to Geneva with only one goal—to fight against this project with every political and propagandistic means at their disposal. It is their aim to kill the U.S. SDI project with the direct or indirect help of the West Europeans.

This is what they want, not détente. Genscher is returning to worn-out and disproved formulas. Moscow used the years of détente for an excessive arms buildup. Kohl must be careful that Genscher does not use a smokescreen of confusing terms to conceal a return to the previous foreign policy course.