

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Iranian mines to go off in Bonn

Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher is still seeking the company of "moderate" Iranian terrorists.

The Irangate affair has discredited once and for all that myth of the "moderate terrorists in Teheran," who are to be courted by the West "in the wake of the post-Khomeini era."

But the same policy that led to the biggest political scandal in the United States since Watergate, is still kept alive by Bonn's Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who claims he is doing it "also on behalf of other governments in the West, including that of the United States."

What was once the relic of President Carter's Mideast policy, picked up by the "secret government" inside the Reagan administration, is official government policy in Bonn, in spite of mounting protest from other governments in the West. Thus, the British have been strongly critical though via non-public channels, when Genscher gave his consent to the accreditation of Syria's new ambassador to Bonn, Suleiman Haddad, who is known for his Soviet GRU connections.

Haddad is well-remembered in London from the time when he was military attaché at the Syrian embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus, and coordinated terrorist operations against the British on Cyprus from 1967 to 1978. Also the terrorists that assassinated one of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's closest confidants, Yusef el Sibai, in Nicosia in February 1978, received instructions and weapons from Haddad, who was expelled from Cyprus shortly thereafter.

Genscher arranged, furthermore, the accreditation of known terrorist operative Mehdi Ahari Mostafavi as Iran's new ambassador to Bonn—a

man whose name was mentioned as one of the main string-pullers behind the 1979 hostage seizure at the U.S. embassy to Teheran. Mostafavi has also been named as one of those who worked closely with GRU-trained Iranian operatives in building the network of Shi'ite terrorists in Lebanon. In December 1986, he was expelled from Austria after 18 months of serving as Iran's ambassador to Vienna. Officially a diplomat, Mostafavi, in reality, had been working to build a "European-wide terrorism network with Vienna as its control-center," as the Austrian press revealed in numerous articles.

The Mostafavi accreditation in Bonn has been attacked in the French media. The influential Paris daily *Le Quotidien de Paris* wrote on Aug. 17 that by "giving his consent to the appointment of a—and not just any—terrorist," Genscher went "too far."

In spite of heavy criticism from London and Paris, Genscher maintains that his policy is "in the interest also of other Western governments," and is currently concentrating on an initiative to make official "contacts between the Iranian moderates and the West." Bragging that the government in Bonn is "the only one in the whole West that Iran keeps official contact with at the moment," Genscher is engaged in a special effort right now to repair the "damage" caused by the Irangate investigations.

In private discussions, some among Genscher's advisers admit quite frankly that this damage is "considerable." Starting out with Genscher's infamous official trip to Teheran in July 1984, the first ever of a West-

ern government official after the fall of the Shah, contacts with the Khomeini regime were intensified. In June 1986, a meeting between German officials and "Iranian moderates" in Hamburg discussed a special initiative to end the Gulf war at the expense of Iraq.

As sources have pointed out, Genscher's pro-Iranian initiative was ruined shortly after, however, when the Irangate scandal blew up in the United States. "This affair closed down many of the carefully developed channels into Teheran," one source stated, "and it took a lot to restore the contacts, as there is deep mistrust in Teheran."

The agreement with Teheran that Genscher and his Iranian foreign minister colleague Velayati would meet in Bonn on July 23, was taken as the "long-expected signal from Iran . . . that the thread lost one year ago could be taken up again." In other words: Genscher intends to continue his Iranian policy from the point reached by June 1986. A prominent Genscher argument is, by the way, not to arbitrate "on behalf of other Western governments," but rather to bring German industry into "a favorable starting position once the war ends and reconstruction begins."

This cannot work, as relations between the West and Iran are heading for open military conflict in the Persian Gulf zone. The situation of late August 1987 is not like the one in June 1986. By aligning with Iran's terrorists so openly, as if the "secret government" inside the Reagan administration has not suffered heavy damage, Genscher has begun a very dangerous game. If his policy is continued, it will move Germany into political isolation, and likely bring down the whole Kohl government—which may be in the "interest of other Western governments," indeed.