

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

New China policy emerges in Germany

Leading circles here are debating a change in their approach to Communist China, and a reorientation toward Taiwan.

“Nothing will be like it was before, in China,” declared a lead editorial July 12 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* signaling a change in West Germany’s approach on the China issue.

The Tiananmen massacre, the daily wrote, has shattered all the illusions built up over the years concerning Red China. Businessmen had been dreaming about a giant Red Chinese market of 1.2 billion consumers, and rushed into Beijing—but only found minuscule contracts. “In doing so, they overlooked that there is a real market in Taiwan, which is powerful.

“The Chinese themselves,” it continued, “never believed in their party dictatorship. Now, after the massacre, the people openly detest the party and state leadership.

“People are, for the time being, bowing down under the totalitarian terror regime, seeking ways of surviving in this world of lying propaganda and denunciation. But the seeds of a future, perhaps even violent revolution are already there. The terror regime has lost its legitimacy. The tradition of China knows the right to resistance against a regime which was falsely believed to have the ‘mandate.’ But the current regime has definitely lost this *mandate from heaven*.”

The so-called “China card” policy, the editors reasoned, proved to be flawed, a new China policy is now required.

The editorial reflects the combined impact of currents among the overseas Chinese, of the LaRouche-

inspired campaign for a fundamental change in the Western approach on the Chinese issue, and of considerations among conservative politicians in West Germany to re-emphasize relations with Taiwan. No decision has yet been made, the debate has only just begun, but a change is undoubtedly under way.

This was also reflected in a discussion I had in Bonn recently with Hans Stercken, chairman of the foreign relations committee of the Bundestag, the West German parliament. Stercken, a Christian Democrat, already in his June 15 speech in a parliamentary debate on China, declared categorically that he will not “sit again at the same table with those blood-curdling murderers” from Beijing, and consequently called off a meeting with Red Chinese parliamentarians members set for July 4.

In that June 15 speech, Stercken warned of temptations in Beijing to strike for military adventures abroad, in a potential replay of China’s *punitive expedition* into Vietnam in 1979.

Stercken strongly reiterated to me his commitment not to meet with any of “those who are responsible for the [Tiananmen] massacre,” and emphasized that any alleged “return to normalcy” of the political situation in Red China, such as a decrease in the number of public executions, would not be read as an improvement of conditions. A key indicator of a change—but unlikely to occur under the current Red Chinese regime—would be the liberation of the judicial system from control by the party apparatus, a fair trial

for every Chinese citizen, and the right to defense in court.

In response to a question about his view of Taiwan, Stercken said: “For years, I and others have tried to get more official relations established between Bonn and Taipei—consular, air traffic, for example. . . . This has been recommended by the government there and the opposition alike.”

But the question of relations with Taiwan, Stercken said, “has always been rated low, because it was standing in the way—or at least it was thought it would stand in the way—of relations with Beijing.” He would not go further than that in criticizing the Bonn government’s current China card policy, but the message Stercken gave was clear enough.

What about the future of Hong Kong? By and large, Stercken declared, the British have met their legal obligations from their rule over Hong Kong and the respective agreements with the Red Chinese for the year 1997, but “these agreements make sense only on the basis of specific conditions, and if these conditions are no longer met by the government in Beijing, if the [Communist] Chinese assurances about Hong Kong’s future are threatened, then we’ll have to tell our British friends that there must be a thorough review of all these agreements, naturally. It won’t work any other way.”

Not openly advocating, but not ruling out economic sanctions against the Red Chinese regime either, Stercken emphasized that “humanitarian and food aid will not be affected; this has always been our policy irrespective of the political conditions.” For the time being, a political embargo against Red China on the government level should be kept, “until we see there are new discussion partners in Beijing to deal with.”