

German minister looks to Eurasian, U.S. ties

by Michael Liebig

On Nov. 6, German Defense Minister Volker R ue delivered a remarkable speech in Berlin. The speech must be seen as an *institutional* response of Germany's foreign/security policy establishment to the recent American-Chinese summit meeting.

An important faction in the German political class is realizing that Chancellor Helmut Kohl's obsessive fixation on the Maastricht European Monetary Union project is driving Germany into a state of self-marginalization, in respect to the fundamental strategic issues of world politics today. While Germany's physical economic base has been weakening since the commitment to the "Maastricht" process in 1991, in the foreign policy realm a dangerous "Europeanist provincialism" has set in. There has been an evident lack of *substantial* policy initiatives toward Russia, China, India, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia—and, toward the United States. Germany's foreign policy profile has become increasingly blurred and nebulous, as it allowed itself to be pushed into the sidelines of world politics by Britain, France, and the European Commission. This problem of Germany's self-marginalization was emphasized by Lyndon LaRouche, at the Nov. 5 *EIR* seminar in Bonn-Bad Godesberg (see *Feature*, in this issue).

At the same time, German-American relations have visibly deteriorated. The historic opportunity of President Clinton's summer 1994 offer for a "special relationship" between the United States and Germany was missed. Kohl recoiled from a clear commitment, fearing to "offend" London and Paris. During the Balkans War, Germany stood at the side of the United States, but never dared to openly draw the line against British machinations to prolong the war, and Britain's anti-American obstructionism. Thus, the "atmosphere" in U.S.-German relations became increasingly poisoned. Secondary and tertiary issues, like those involving Scientology, intelligence frictions and incidents, environmental disputes (such as over reduction of "greenhouse gas" emissions), sanctions, and endless media campaigns on alleged "neo-Nazis" in Germany, seemed to dominate the relationship.

Long-standing political friends of the United States in the German foreign/security policy establishment—"Atlanticer," as they are called here—have almost despaired at the foul political mood between the United States and Germany. When meeting the "new type" of senators and representatives

of the post-1994 era in the U.S. Congress, they were shocked at the increasingly prevailing attitude of utterly "self-confident ignorance." In German politics, there always has been the almost ritual reference to the "overriding importance" of the relationship to the United States, but, increasingly, one wondered, what, after all, was the substance of this relationship? This vacuum, the lack of strategic ideas shaping the U.S.-German relationship, is the real problem.

Important strategic realities seem to have faded into the background. America's economic, not merely financial presence in Germany, remains very significant. Some 80,000 U.S. troops are still stationed in Germany, more than anywhere else in the world. The American Army garrisons, the vast depots and other logistical facilities, and the air bases in Germany, remain the backbone of U.S. power projection into the western half of the Eurasian landmass and Africa. And, conversely, it is its relationship to the United States, that alone keeps Germany from being ground down by the endless squabbles, frictions, and conflicts looming in both western Europe (dominated by London and Paris) and eastern Europe, and in Russia, Central Asia, as well as the Mediterranean-Middle East region. Also, it must be emphasized, that in the German population, the basic mass sentiment is clearly *pro-American*.

Germany's 'most important ally'

This is the background for R ue's Berlin speech, which largely avoids the empty stereotypes, usually characteristic of official German utterances in the realm of security policy. R ue emphasized in the strongest terms the strategic importance for Germany of the relationship with the United States. For Germany, he said, "The U.S.A. is *our closest and most important ally*. It is the undisputed lead power of the Western alliance." R ue's second focus was the shift of the global strategic center of gravity to South Asia, China, and India, in particular.

R ue makes the "link" between the "Euro-Atlantic," the "Eurasian," and the "trans-Pacific" strategic situation. China and India are the two principal "emerging world powers of the 21st century," a fact which is already "shifting the strategic balance" globally, he said. "*China's future is the key for future stability not just in Asia but worldwide*." Toward China there must be "constructive engagement"—in political, economic, and strategic terms. "Neo-containment" and "antagonistic marginalization" by the West would lead to "confrontation," which must be averted at all costs. Human rights matters in China must be approached in a "subtle" and "careful" manner.

Volker R ue as a political personality is a rather complicated, if not controversial proposition. He had almost "crown prince" status as successor to Kohl, when he became defense minister in April 1992, after having served as general secretary of Kohl's Christian Democratic Union party. Their relationship has since markedly cooled. R ue is not much liked



Germans celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall, October 1990. The opportunity for Germany to participate, along with the United States, in a Eurasian-vectored global economic recovery program, which was sabotaged by Margaret Thatcher, George Bush, and François Mitterrand, is being raised once again by German Defense Minister Volker Rühle.

within the German Armed Forces, because of his rude and harsh behavior, and his instinctive antagonism toward other strong personalities. However, Rühle does have a highly developed sense for political opportunities, which he usually seizes on, not caring about losses among friends and foes alike. Rühle favors a “Grand Coalition” with the Social Democrats to succeed the present Kohl-led coalition of Christian Democratic and Free Democratic parties.

Rühle’s speech, entitled “Security Today Is Indivisible: Stability Policy Before New Tasks,” was printed in the Nov. 7 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which, together with the state-run *Deutschland Radio Berlin*, co-sponsored the Berlin event which Rühle addressed. We reprint here the second part of Rühle’s speech:

III.

In the region of Central Asia, our stability policy is still at the very beginning. The long-term challenges in this region have still barely been taken seriously in Germany. However, the deployment of German soldiers to monitor the cease-fire in Georgia has shown the growing importance of the Euro-Asiatic corridor. The implosion of the Soviet Union has led to the creation of eight sovereign states, with a very complex ethnic composition, and even more open-ended nation building, with strong nationalism and many unresolved territorial questions. The arc of crisis extends from Abkhazia through Chechnya and Nagorno Karabakh to Tajikistan — in a region,

which already provided considerable potential for disorder; one only has to think about Afghanistan and Iran.

Within this force field of poorly consolidated neighboring states, internal destabilizations, which can spill over onto the entire region, cannot be ruled out. Our policy therefore, has to focus on the stabilization of this still young constellation of states, on fostering good neighborly relations and the peaceful overcoming of conflicts. Self-sustaining stability is not only important for the states of the region as such; it will also exert influence on the regional structure as a whole.

In practical terms, this leads to three conclusions: The strengthening and consolidation of national independence and sovereignty of the core states in Central Asia is one of the important tasks of Euro-Atlantic policy. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are accorded special significance in this context. A program of targeted international investments and economic support should form an essential element of regional stabilization. The enormous natural resources in this region offer a sensible economic starting point. This, however, is only realizable through a total approach, which has to be coordinated with the key powers for the region: Russia, China, India, and naturally, above all, with the United States of America.

IV.

After all, in the Far East — the region today with the greatest dynamic worldwide — the balance of power has dramati-

cally shifted since the end of the Cold War. Some powers have gained new strength, others have suffered a loss of influence. New risks, but also new chances for cooperation have arisen. A compelling comparison can be made with the beginning of this century: Then, as now, new powers were on the rise, which were to make their imprint on the world of tomorrow. Back then it was Japan and Germany. Today it is above all rising states like China and India, and also Indonesia and Korea. What is occurring is a shift of the strategic balance. Whoever lives only moment to moment, may be overlooking this. However, those who see the strategic lines, have to think about the consequences.

India, as the leading regional power in South Asia, with its smart policy of market opening and technology promotion, is on the way to becoming a leading industrial nation. Bangalore is the Silicon Valley of India. It still hasn't been decided which road the country will follow in the future: whether it will seek a close alignment with ASEAN, the U.S.A. and Europe, or alignment with China; whether it will continue to pursue its policy of non-alignment, or whether it will decide for a diffuse combination of these various alternatives.

In any case, we have to conduct more intensively our strategic dialogue with India. My visit to New Delhi a year ago served this purpose. This purpose is also being served by our regular [Defense Ministry] staff discussions. And it was also served through our first trilateral security dialogue, which was held recently, involving Indian and Chinese representatives, at Petersberg, near Bonn.

The suspense-filled question has yet to be answered, whether China or India will become the first to acquire the status of a world economic power. In the long term, however, the future of China is the key to future stability in Asia and worldwide. Three provinces of this gigantic landmass are each larger in area than all of Germany.

There are two schools of thought: The first assumes the continuation of rapid economic growth in China for the next 20 years, combined with its growing military strength. China would thereby achieve strategic dominance in East Asia. The other school of thought sees the strategic ambitions of China, but also those of its strong neighbors—India, Japan, Russia, a possibly re-united Korea, and above all, the United States as the leading power in the region. Regardless which of these schools turns out to be right: It's a matter of locating China's place as a future world power in the international system. It's a question of whether and how we reach a constructive relationship with China—a relationship which reflects on the one hand our political, economic, and strategic interests, and, on the other hand, appropriately reflects our system of values.

There cannot be a policy of mere walling off or one of neo-containment. A policy of antagonistically shutting out leads to confrontation. Political cooperation and intensive economic exchanges on the other hand serve to constructively

integrate China. Balancing both of these things with careful and cautious reminders about human rights—that is the task lying before us.

V.

There is a quote from the late Indian Prime Minister Nehru, which is still valid today: "You cannot invent new instruments with old ways of thinking." On the threshold of the 21st century, we need new ways of thinking—thinking in the categories of dialogue and give and take, regional and global cooperation, the meshing together of economics and politics; a way of thinking spanning the many dimensions of security and a strategic view for the challenges of tomorrow. Otherwise, the instruments we invent today will not be sufficient for the challenges of tomorrow.

Managing a peaceful transition to a new stability-based order in the international system is our trial of strength. It demands a tight closing of ranks by the Western democracies. Only a strong and united Atlantic Community can wisely and constructively shape the next years of rapid change. In this, the task is not primarily a military one; it's a question of a total strategic approach, combining the economic, political, and military instruments into an effective whole.

A year ago in New Delhi, I called for a strategic dialogue between India and Germany, which would reflect the growing interdependence of our two regions. In Tokyo, in May, using the words of our Federal President [Roman Herzog], I called for a German-Japanese "Partnership in Responsibility"—to a dialogue which explains our policies to each other, which portrays our political visions, and which paves the way for a common policy. What was discussed in both visits is currently being implemented in my ministry. It reflects what is meant by a policy of stability in the age of global interlocking.

Our approach extends even further. The bilateral dialogue with strategic powers worldwide must be embedded in a close synchronization with the United States of America. The U.S.A. is our closest and most important ally. It is the indisputable leading power of the Western Alliance. We therefore need a continual and systematic dialogue with the United States, which encompasses all strategic challenges on the international agenda: our joint efforts for peace and stability in North Africa and in the Mediterranean; our support in the formation of Africa's own peacekeeping force; stabilizing the precarious state order in Central Asia; and especially, our long-term strategy toward China.

The ever-recurring differences of views in our respective policies toward Iran and Turkey show how necessary this transatlantic dialogue is. Wherever Europeans and Americans make policies, not with one another, but against one another, this only serves third parties. Again and again, the German government will be seeking this dialogue, in concrete matters—to synchronize positions, to coordinate policy and to fine-tune joint initiatives.