

# Germany: Anti-Ame

By JOSEF JOFFE

MUNICH — So who is anti-American now? In the olden days, especially during the "Battle of the Euromissiles," the German left wing would routinely, sometimes venomously, attack the United States. Today, the left is sitting back with *Schadenfreude*, gleefully watching the ruling conservatives as they mutter darkly about American unreliability, if not abandonment and betrayal. What happened in Germany?

Most recently, the cause of resentment came clad in a light-blue cover, with the official symbol of the United States, a golden eagle, on top. The volume is entitled "Discriminate Deterrence," and is the brainchild of a blue-ribbon commission co-chaired by Fred Ikle, until recently undersecretary of defense, and Albert Wohlstetter, the dean of American strategy.

Although only an unofficial recommendation to the secretary of defense, the report carries the clout of such heavies as former National Security advisers Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. So the 72-page proposal for the reform of American strategy was virtually guaranteed to receive the undivided attention of the Bonn establishment.

## Nervous Germans

The defense experts in Chancellor Kohl's party and government were not amused. To begin with, the experts and their allies in the German press were not assured by the basic premise of the report, which argues American strategy should say goodbye to its traditional "Eurocentrism." U.S. planning, says the report, "should emphasize a wider range of contingencies than the two extreme threats that have long dominated our Alliance policy: the massive Warsaw Pact attack on Central Europe and an all-out Soviet nuclear attack." Hence a new emphasis on "versatile, mobile forces, minimally dependent on overseas bases."

If this evoked the specter of America's retreat from Europe, another key recommendation of the "Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy" spelled a fate worse than abandonment: Europe as venue and victim of "limited" nuclear war. The following sentence starred as Exhibit A

in the indictment: "The Alliance should threaten to use nuclear weapons not as a link to a wider and more devastating war—although the risk of further escalation would still be there—but mainly as an instrument for denying success to the invading Soviet forces."

This was sheer anathema, especially in the context of yet another ominous premise which stated: "To help our allies . . . we cannot rely on threats expected to provoke

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our own annihilation if carried out." The conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, always a reliable guide to government thinking, immediately retorted that this piece of advice drove at "the heart of NATO," implying the end of America's "nuclear guarantee."

Alfred Dregger, the chancellor's floor leader in parliament, would not go quite as far as to bemoan "decoupling." Yet the bottom line, he said, was that "the strategic systems of the United States would no longer be available to underpin the deterrence community with Europe." If the U.S. were to do away with the "risk of escalation," the Soviet Union would end up with "military dominance in Europe."

Why the excitement, and why now? After all, "Discriminate Deterrence" has hardly delivered a new message. "Massive retaliation"—the policy of the Cold War—has been dead de facto since the late 1950s. It was formally buried by the Kennedy administration a generation ago because of an inescapable fact: Once the Soviet Union had acquired a rudimentary second-strike force of its own, "massive retaliation" became a *two-way* threat. At that point, it was simply no longer credible to threaten the incineration of Moscow in response to an attack on Hamburg—unless one believes that great powers are wont to threaten suicide on behalf of allies.

So what else is new? The rattled reaction of the German center-right does not spring from a sudden epiphany but from a

# ricanism on the Right

profound unhappiness about the events of the past 12 months. Although most of Mr. Kohl's cohorts profess undying allegiance to December's treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces, they don't like it. Although the Germans themselves foisted the "zero solution" on President Reagan during the heady peace movement days of the early 1980s, they are now learning about the wisdom of ancient Greeks: The Gods fulfill the wishes of those

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whom they seek to punish.

The INF Treaty will remove the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's best and most modern weapons—Pershing 2 and cruise missiles that can reach deep into Soviet territory and give pause to a would-be aggressor contemplating a little nuclear war confined to Europe alone. The treaty leaves in place several thousand "small" nuclear weapons, the bulk of which, because of their short range, is destined to explode in Germany. Moreover, there is a glaring imbalance: 1365 short-range missiles in the East, and only 88 in the West. Last year, Bonn enacted a half-hearted battle to keep at least its 72 ancient Pershing 1a's out of the grasp of a superpower agreement. Would London, Paris, and Washington help? The answer was a polite "no" all around, on the correct assumption that Bonn would not have the stomach to modernize those systems in the face of Soviet and domestic pressure.

So now, the Kohl government is stuck. One horn of the dilemma is "singularization," the somewhat paranoid idea that "the shorter the range, the deader the Germans." This is a peculiar reconstruction of reality. If the Germans are hit, so are the 300,000 allied troops who happened to be stationed on West German soil, plus their dependents. Even the authors of "Discriminate Deterrence," moreover, do not propose to let the Soviets get away with a tightly demarcated war in Central Europe. Their emphasis is rather on "selective" and

"discriminate" strikes, terms first introduced by Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger in 1975, to "minimize Soviet temptations" to use nuclear weapons against NATO.

## Freudian Displacement

The other horn of the dilemma is political. If "singularization" is the specter, then modernization could be the solution. The Alliance could acquire missiles below the 500-kilometer range that would reach well into the Warsaw Pact territory. It could deploy airborne stand-off weapons to be targeted on the Soviet Union itself. Yet that would force West Germany's conservatives into a two-pronged battle—against anti-nuclear sentiments at home and against General Secretary Gorbachev's Russia abroad. That risk they are loath to shoulder, and thus a curious pattern of "displacement" which Sigmund Freud so well understood: It is easier to strike out at the U.S. than to deal with the real sources of frustration.

Political wisdom nonetheless demands that the Alliance, and the U.S. above all, takes note of these frustrations. In the Age of Reykjavik, the West Germans have come to feel vulnerable again. Wholesale nuclear rearmament, which they are too weak to resist, has reminded the West Germans of their uniquely exposed position in the heart of Europe. Their new security fears vis-a-vis the West must necessarily feed temptations emanating from the East. Perhaps, they feel, there will be less need to rely on the West if the consistent conciliation of the East can remove the sting of Soviet power. Yet too much "reinsurance" in Moscow will endanger Bonn's primary insurance policy in Washington where the exasperation is growing.

West Germany cannot go it alone, but neither can the Alliance afford having Germany go it alone. The London Economist has it right: "There is an air of disappointment in West Germany. And a West Germany disappointed and yet conscious of its new power could make the 1990s a most uncomfortable decade."

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