

Brandt's Relations With Soviet Union

By Arthur J. Goldberg

RECENTLY there has been a spate of press stories reporting misgivings by a number of eminent Americans about Chancellor Brandt's Soviet policy. Among those who apparently disagree with West Germany's efforts to achieve a better understanding with the Soviet Union are General Clay, Amba-

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sador McCloy, Secretary Acheson and Secretary Ball. All of these former high ranking government officials are men of distinction who have served their country well and all have had experience in times past with our German policy.

While I respect them personally, I nevertheless am impelled to express complete disagreement with their approach to this grave problem.

Their theme, as reported, is a common one: Brandt will be "entrapped by the Russians" to engage in diplomatic adventures with the Soviet Union that could loosen West Germany's firm Western ties. Chancellor Brandt's new policy of trying to arrive at understandings with Moscow should be slowed down. If pursued, it may result in a potential West German swing away from the Atlantic Alliance toward Moscow. Brandt is not receiving enough concessions from Moscow and the speed with which he is proceeding may be detrimental to the status of West Berlin and is prejudicing the four-power talks now under way.

I do not believe these criticisms of Chancellor Brandt's policy are valid and I fear that this cacophony of prestigious American voices may have the grave consequence of undermining Chancellor Brandt's government, which is a tenuous coalition at best. It also may have the serious consequence of convincing the cold warriors in the Kremlin that our country is not genuinely interested in a detente with the Soviet Union on vital matters of mutual interest and concern, particularly the SALT talks now under way.

In light of the Soviet's overriding concern with the German problem, this could easily follow, particularly because of ambiguity as to whether these expressions by important private Americans have tacit administration support.

I believe, therefore, that it is necessary to point out some obvious and elementary truths.

WILLY Brandt's opposition to totalitarianism of any kind is a matter of record. He stood up against the Nazis and chose exile rather than collaborate with Hitler's regime. As leader of the Social Democratic Party, he is sophisticated about the Soviet Union and its policies. He is not taken in by communism any more than he was taken in by nazism. I can see no good reason for lecturing him about the character of the Soviet regime; he is well aware of how such a regime operates and of the dangers inherent in dealing with the Kremlin leadership.

Brandt's dedication to West Berlin as a bastion of freedom also scarcely needs reaffirmation. He was Mayor of West Berlin and was a stalwart defender of its ties with West Germany and its allies. It stretches credulity to believe that he has changed his mind in any fundamental regard concerning the future of West Berlin.

Willy Brandt is seeking a detente with the Soviet Union in the interests of West Germany and the cause of peace and security in Europe and throughout the world. He believes that the mutual self interest of Moscow and Bonn and its allies will be served thereby. I assume that he also believes that such a detente will have profound effects beneficial to the West in East Germany. I share this belief with him, and apparently Ulbricht does also since he and his colleagues in Communist East Germany have viewed the negotiations between Moscow and Bonn with grave apprehension. It is indeed interesting that this apprehension should be shared both by the Americans I have mentioned and by the East German Stalinist Communist leadership.

THE SIMPLE fact of the matter is that 25 years have elapsed since the end of World War II. Basically what Brandt is trying to do is to adjust West Germany to the realities of the situation. The status quo in Germany cannot be changed except by force or agreement. I do not know any responsible statesman who would recommend force; Brandt, therefore, is seeking an agreement which will ease the tensions that have arisen throughout the past 25 years with respect to Germany and Berlin. These tensions have affected not only Germany but all of us.

I think Chancellor Brandt should be praised and supported for his courage in seeking an understanding with the Russians. And I think, also, that the United States should not be more German than the Germany of Willy Brandt in the effort he is making in this most important area.

Finally, I do not think the United States can have it both ways. We have pressured West Germany to adhere to the non-proliferation treaty because of our justifiable interest in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and also of achieving agreement between the two great super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, on disarmament measures. In other words, we have asked West Germany to accommodate itself to the realities of the nuclear situation. Why, therefore, should we object to West Germany's seeking a reasonable detente with Moscow, as we are attempting to do.

It would be the gravest of matters if, as a result of even subtle intervention on our part, Chancellor Brandt's regime were to topple. I can conceive of no action by our country more detrimental to the hope of a reasonable accommodation in Europe and the cause of a detente between the Soviet Union and the West if this were to occur.