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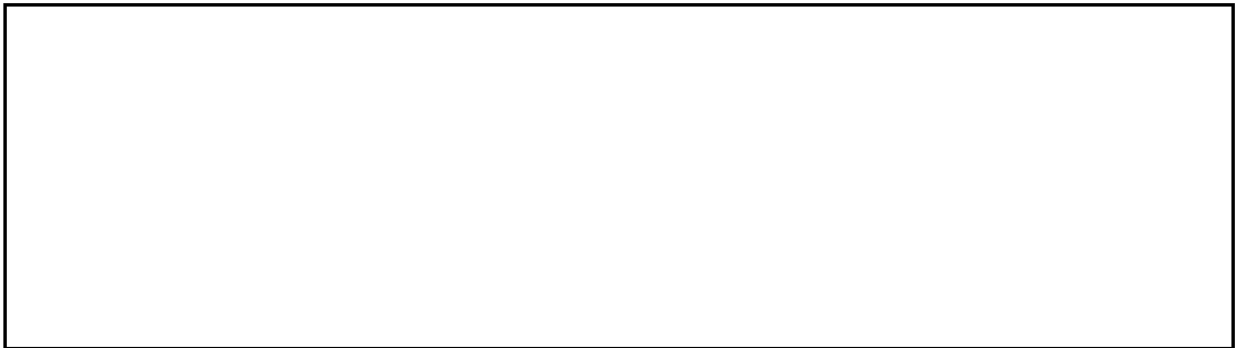
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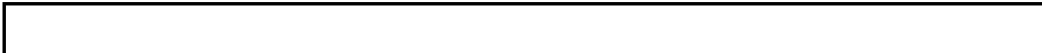
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West German Opposition Leader Visits China

Opposition leader Franz Josef Strauss--West Germany's foremost conservative spokesman--has registered a major political coup with his successful trip to China, upstaging Chancellor Schmidt who plans to visit Peking sometime this spring.

Strauss received unprecedented treatment in view of the unofficial nature of his visit and his reputation as an arch conservative in German politics. Strauss journeyed outside Peking for a meeting with Chairman Mao, had an hour-long visit with Premier Chou in a Peking hospital, and held talks with Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-ping, Foreign Minister Chiao Kuan-hua, Deputy Army Chief of Staff Li Ta, and a deputy foreign trade minister.

The closest recent parallel to Strauss' reception was the treatment accorded former British Prime Minister Heath in May 1974. Heath, however, was a former head of government and the leader of the opposition, and his trip had been planned while he was still in office. Strauss has not held a post in a German government for more than five years, but his Christian Social Union party won a smashing victory in the Bavarian state elections last October. He is regarded as a prime candidate for high office should his party and the Christian Democrats return to power in next year's national elections.

China's warm reception plainly reflects the fact that Strauss shares many of Peking's views on European security and the USSR. During his stay, Strauss expressed his well-known distrust of Soviet strategic intentions toward Western Europe and his skepticism about the durability of detente with Moscow.

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Strauss also indicated that he shared Chinese concern over the alleged naivete of some Europeans regarding Moscow, and, like the Chinese, called for a strong united Europe in close military alliance with the US as a bulwark against the USSR. According to West German press reports, Strauss went so far as to hint at overlapping Peking-Bonn interests in restraining Soviet strategic ambitions.

Strauss and some Christian Democrats have argued for several years that both Brandt and Schmidt governments have neglected Peking. In the past, these arguments were put forward to dramatize the inherent dangers in what they felt was a single-minded pursuit of detente with Moscow by Brandt and his chief policy advisor Egon Bahr.

This argument has lost much of its force because Chancellor Schmidt has adopted a more cautious and pragmatic policy toward the Soviets. By visiting Peking, however, Strauss has enhanced his political credentials and strengthened the impression in the public mind that the opposition rather than the government has been instrumental in trailblazing relations with China.

Concord between Strauss and the Chinese leaders is still of only limited consequence. Strauss' willingness to praise the Chinese openly for supporting German reunification is more public relations than substance. Most opposition leaders, including Strauss, are very wary of tampering with the existing division of forces in Central Europe. In dramatizing the reunification theme and suggesting that China participate in the European Security Conference, Strauss is more interested in tweaking the nose of the Soviet leadership.

Ironically, Chinese enthusiasm for Strauss and his hard line views on the USSR may slightly set back the development of state relations with the West German government, which Peking values highly. Strauss' reception in China has fed the rumor mill in Bonn, generating talk that Chancellor Schmidt is irritated at being upstaged by Strauss and that his own visit to Peking may be postponed.

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Despite their obvious annoyance at the red carpet treatment accorded Strauss, government officials maintain that Strauss' reception in Peking will have no affect on the Chancellor's plans. Strauss' favorable publicity however, makes it imperative that the Chancellor's visit, if and when it occurs, appear more impressive to the German public.

Some doubts in government circles may exist on this score as evidenced in official statements that internal political developments may require the Chancellor to arrange for a somewhat later visit than originally anticipated. Ostensibly, the reference to domestic politics pertains to the five state elections that Schmidt's Social Democrats must face within the next four months.

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Spanish Prime Minister Gives His Own Year-End Review

In an unusual practice for a Spanish prime minister, Carlos Arias Navarro followed up Chief of State Franco's broadcast review of 1974 as a troubled year with his own assessment. In an interview last week, Arias, like Franco, shifted the blame for Spain's troubles to the international situation by citing an absence of solidarity among nations and harmful influences from abroad. But Arias went on to push his own political goals.

The prime minister used the speech to encourage support of the recently adopted statute legalizing political associations which took effect on the day the interview was published. He cited the statute as a first step in what should be a long process of political change. Arias said he hoped the statute will permit wider participation of Spaniards in political life, but stressed that "improvement of structure" must occur with unity of purpose in the nation. Rightists, of course, are adamantly opposed to his liberalization program.

Arias gave fulsome tribute to Franco and to a lesser extent to Prince Juan Carlos. He described Franco's health as normal for one of 82 years and said that the chief of state showed "extraordinary mental lucidity" in cabinet meetings--remarks designed to reassure Spaniards about Franco's health and show that he is still exercising real leadership.

The prime minister gave a boost to Prince Juan Carlos as future chief of state by crediting him with exceptional memory and intelligence comparable to Franco's. Arias' favorable comments about both Franco and his designated successor appear calculated to combat rumors of any differences with them and to soften any possible irritation on Franco's part for Arias' presumption in giving his own year end review.

Arias also made unusual references to other political figures. He said that Jose Antonio Giron, a former labor minister and prominent ultra rightist

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leader, as well as Manuel Fraga Iribarne, the moderate reformist former information minister, should be kept in mind for a role in Spain's future. By this, Arias may have been affirming his own neutrality between the forces they represent as well as reminding them to organize political associations in conformity with the new statute. Fraga, now the Spanish ambassador to London, is expected to visit Madrid this week, amid reports that he is considering forming a political association.

The prime minister also referred to the Catholic lay organization Opus Dei strictly in terms of its service to the church and as an organization which should be outside politics. His remarks did not mention the achievements of Opus Dei members in previous governments and seemed calculated to discourage its supporters from organizing political associations.

On foreign policy, Arias said Europe was confronted with a grave economic crisis, compounded by the absence of solidarity, which could become catastrophic if it were not ended very soon. For Spaniards, Arias promised that the new year would not be "optimum" but at least "normal."

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Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Questions Dominate
the Work of the IAEA

Continuing interest in the subject of peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs) has sparked a new flurry of activity at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. The recently concluded UN General Assembly asked the Agency to prepare a number of studies on the feasibility and applications of such explosions; the Agency will also participate this May in the Non-Proliferation-Treaty Review Conference, at which PNEs will be an important issue. Partly in response to these requirements, the Agency is now mobilizing its resources in order to be able to assume the role of the primary international broker for such work.

The September meeting of the Agency's Board of Governors passed a resolution that authorized the Director General to establish within the secretariat a separate organizational unit responsible for implementing PNE services. The resolution also embodied the concept that the Agency's proposals on PNEs constitute a set of procedures which would adequately cover all aspects of the provision of these services. The resolution did not specify, however, a date for the establishment of this unit.

IAEA Director General Eklund last week moved to implement the resolution's proposals. Eklund views the creation of the unit at this time as a helpful political step to keep the PNE question in perspective and to minimize unnecessary debate at the NPT Review Conference. The debate at the conference is likely to center on Article 5 of the treaty, which calls on the nuclear weapon states to "insure that potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available" to non-nuclear states. Some countries have already expressed criticism of what

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they consider to be the failure of the major powers to implement this treaty provision.

Eklund intends the unit to serve as an internal coordinating mechanism that will conduct studies on all aspects of PNE activity. At the same time, he does not feel that creation of the unit will lead to a rash of requests for such services by the non-nuclear states.

Eklund nevertheless fears that if this "holding action" is carried too far, pressures from the non-nuclear states for tangible results from the unit might increase and such demands might interfere with the other constructive and urgent programs which he feels the Agency is now carrying out. In part to head off these expected demands, Eklund has invited the four major nuclear powers that are in a position to supply peaceful nuclear explosion services to a February meeting in Vienna. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the basic conditions that should be incorporated in agreements for the provision of PNEs.

Despite the establishment of the secretariat unit, the UK continues to push its earlier proposal for a separate committee--not incorporated in the Agency's formal structure--that would also discuss PNEs. Membership on this committee would be open to all members of the Agency, and not just NPT parties. In this way the British hope that they can get all states interested in PNEs around the same table discussing the subject. As long as such discussions continued, the British feel, no state would dare flout international concern by proceeding with an explosion. The British are anxious that the Indians in particular--who have consistently defended their May nuclear test as a PNE--will take part in the work of the committee.



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