

WAR ON TERRORISM / GERMANY MAKES 'HISTORIC OFFER' *Germany*

# Schroeder commits troops to coalition

**BERLIN, NOV. 6.** The German Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, on Tuesday offered up to 3,900 German troops for the U.S. war on terrorism, backing up Germany's pledge of solidarity with the United States.

The historic offer to ready German troops could lead to the nation's widest ranging military engagement since World War II. But reflecting Germany's reluctance to become embroiled in combat, Mr. Schroeder said there were no immediate plans to deploy ground troops. "This is an important, fundamental and — if you like — historic decision," he said.

Germany's participation would include help combating nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; about 100 special forces; medical evacuation services; air transport and naval forces to protect shipping lanes, Mr. Schroeder told a news conference. He has been eager to put Germany in the forefront of the coalition's military response to terrorism, and said he expected to win Parliament's approval next week. He said the Government's positive response to the specific U.S. requests was issued in "a solidarity that I have expressed again and again" since the Sept. 11 attacks on New York



**FIRED UP?:** The undated handout shows a German "Fuchs" armored vehicle in Lueneburg, northern Germany. A contingent of the vehicles was among the requested support by the U.S. — AP

and Washington.

Britain has been Washington's staunchest European NATO ally in the anti-terror campaign, flying refuelling and reconnaissance missions in support of U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan. It had also

fired Tomahawk cruise missiles from a submarine in the Arabian Sea.

Canada, another major contributor, has provided ships, aircraft, special forces and 2,000 other personnel. Italy has offered to

*7/11* *KP-16*  
supply an armored regiment, attack helicopters, fighter jets and specialists in nuclear, chemical and germ warfare for the coalition. Other contributors include Australia with SAS special forces, war ships and aircraft; New Zealand with a commitment of special forces and humanitarian aid and Turkey, which pledged an anti-guerrilla mountain warfare unit. "We mustn't forget that the military measures are only a part of the measures against international terrorism," Mr. Schroeder said.

While insisting that Germany also must contribute militarily, Mr. Schroeder emphasised the importance of political and diplomatic efforts to hold the international coalition against terrorism together, the humanitarian mission to help Afghans, economic sanctions aimed at undermining terror networks and cooperation of secret services.

The Government's proposal to Parliament would initially limit authority to deploy German troops to one year, Mr. Schroeder said, emphasising, however, that the year did not reflect any estimate that the campaign would be over by then. "I cannot say how the campaign against international terrorism will last," he said. — AP

# German duelling clubs

## Neo-Nazi nests

51-7  
2/16

**N**EO-NAZIS are using student duelling clubs to penetrate German universities and create a far right-wing elite. "The National Party of Germany in particular is trying to embed its ideas in intellectual circles," said Gerhard Forster, of the Bavarian Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, the equivalent of Special Branch. Warnings are being issued by police in university centres across Germany. Student duelling clubs began in Jena, Prussia in 1815 as a way of strengthening German national consciousness after the Napoleonic wars. Each club has a flag and members wear pillbox hats and sashes.

The clubs played an important role in the 1848 national revolution and consider themselves to be among the most independent of German institutions. A prominent student dueller was Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of the first united Germany. The students often have to pass humiliating initiation rites. Typically songs have to be memorised and if a mistake is made the student has to drink a large jug of beer within a few seconds. Further penalties are imposed if the novice fails to down the beer. Some clubs maintain the duelling tradition. Special masks are worn so that that the subsequent scar is positioned precisely along the cheekbone.

The spotlight was turned on the secret political outlook of these clubs after some members in Munich attacked a 31-year-old Greek man. The great-grandniece of Franz von Papen, who was jailed briefly and fined after World War II for his Nazi activities, started to insult and then attack the Greek. When the man defended himself, she called on her student club friends for help. They promptly beat the man into a coma. One of the assailants hid from the police in the Danubia Student Club before fleeing to Holland. Another student, so far identified only as Reiner M, is on trial for the attempted murder of the Greek. In the courtroom he has denied Nazi affiliations,

admitting only to being a nationalist and a "good German". He said he had been in a drunken haze and did not recall bawling out the anti-Semitic song *Six million chickens* - a reference to the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust. The song was a standard part of the evening repertoire in his student club. German investigators found that not only Danubia but also dozens of clubs around

Germany had become a refuge for the far Right. "We make use of our freedom to invite interesting people to our house," says a spokesman for Danubia. These have included the neo-Nazi activist Horst Mahler, a former member of the Left-wing Red Army Faction terrorist group who is now the lawyer acting for the National Party of Germany in its challenge against the German government which is seeking a ban on the party.

Leaders of the far-right party are frequent guests in student clubs in university towns of Bielefeld, Giessen, Frankfurt and Jena. Bavarian police admitted on Wednesday that they had put at least two clubs in their region under observation: the Teutonia in Regensburg and the Frankonia in Erlangen. All the clubs are part of the Deutsche Burschen-

**All the clubs are part of the Deutsche Burschenschaft, an umbrella outfit set up in 1818 and revived after World War II. It includes 18,000 students at 40 German universities and remains a powerful conservative force. ROGER BOYES reports**

schaft, an umbrella organisation established in 1818 and revived after World War II. It includes 18,000 students at 40 German universities and remains a powerful conservative force. It links politically active students with many thousands of older graduates who are established in the professions.

These old boys (alter herren) ease the younger men into respectable society, including conservative parties, especially the Christian Social Union in Bavaria. On Wednesday, Bavarian Interior Minister Guenther Beckstein demanded a "crystal-clear divorce" of the clubs from their extremist members. Yet right-wing politics - and anti-Semitism - has been at the heart of these clubs since 1818.

- *The Times, London.*

# Left leaders distrust Schroeder EU dream

By JOHN SCHMID  
*International Herald Tribune*

*W* *Gurmen* *96-5* *9/5*

**Berlin, May 8:** Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany pressed ahead on Monday with his plan for a centralised European Union government, telling fellow leftist leaders from across the EU that a "clear orientation" is necessary for a prosperous future.

But most of his guests distrust his radical vision. "We need to strengthen our European institutions and decisively to further develop the European integration process," Mr Schroeder said in the opening speech at the convention in the German capital. Hours earlier, Mr Schroeder headed a meeting of his own Social Democratic Party's national committee, which unanimously approved a paper that advocates the goal of a strong EU executive branch with a two-chamber Parliament and expanded powers. Only a week old, the German proposals have spawned debate over Europe's future and irked many of Germany's EU partners, who want to preserve their national authority. The two-day gathering was meant as a show of ideological unity among the centre-left parties of Europe, which group under the banner of the Party of European Socialists. Ten of 15 EU heads of state belong to centre-left parties. "I am not in favour of federal structures in Europe," said Prime Minister Goran Persson, who leads Sweden's Social Democrats. Mr Persson, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency, attended the Berlin congress.

INDIAN EXPRESS

9 MAY 2001

# Schroeder's EU vision projects an assertive Germany

By JOHN VINOCCUR  
International Herald Tribune

Paris, May 2: Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's new push to rebuild the European Union's political institutions once again projects a Germany seeking to assert its leadership through deeper European integration. But this time, the Chancellor's blueprint for Europe also includes traces of a German domestic political timetable and of elements of a German model for government.

As a result, for the first time since he signaled in January that Germany would regard European political integration as its mission for the decade, Mr Schroeder has maneuvered into an awkward zone. For all the appeal and reasonableness of his proposals, Mr Schroeder is pushing into an area where German self-interest, his EU allies' fears of surrendered sovereign-

ty, and their not-quite-dominant concerns about German domination come together.

Leaving France and Britain unconsulted on the sidelines, Mr Schroeder made new proposals over the weekend to strengthen and democratise decision-making in the EU. He proposed to widen the executive role of the European Commission, further empower the European Parliament to have full control of EU budgeting including agriculture, and turn the secretive Council of Ministers into a brightly lit legislative body. German self-interest is involved because Mr Schroeder's initiative suits the entire German political spectrum, protecting the prerogatives of the German laender, or states, and projecting onto a reconstituted European Parliament the relationship between the Upper and Lower Houses of the German legislature.

His proposal also reflects German domestic politics,

this time as personally interpreted by Mr Schroeder, because it arrives at a moment that complements the Chancellor's election schedule, rather than those of his main EU partners. In reality, Mr Schroeder's proposals are gallingly inconvenient for Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, who will soon run a re-election campaign that must sustain Labour's ambiguities about Europe. And as a solo run, they are totally embarrassing for the

## SPOTLIGHT

France of both President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, who have not only tried to portray French-German special ties as fully intact, but also seemingly by mutual consent have avoided clear visions of Europe's future in view of their probable confrontation in the 2002 French presidential election.

Mr Schroeder had the gracious option of discussing his proposals in private with his peers. But Franz

Muenterfering, said that the Chancellor's ideas for the German SPD convention were not disclosed to either foreign governments or parties.

If the changes Mr Schroeder seeks were described as radical and grand, the timing of his propositions for Europe appeared mostly related to political concerns at dandelion level — getting re-elected. These days, with national elections scheduled for early fall 2002, the sluggish German economy and improved employment statistics no longer seem likely to provide Mr Schroeder with an unbeatable card. Reform of the labour market, and other far-reaching changes in the German pension and health system, however necessary, would hardly appear as solid vote-getters for a Social Democratic candidate. But the issue of Europe is another story in a country at the centre of the continent, bordering on the former Soviet bloc with member states pressing to enter the EU.

THE ASIAN AGE

23 MAY 2001

23 MAY 2001

## A GESTURE OF RECONCILIATION

IN A HISTORIC act of reconciliation, even of atonement, the German Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, has paid homage to the victims of Hitler's war in the imperial Russian capital. Nearly one and a half million residents of St. Petersburg, then known by the revolutionary name of Leningrad, died during a prolonged siege laid by the Germans at the height of World War II. Mr. Schroeder, accompanied by the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, placed a joint wreath at an eternal flame at a cemetery where six decades ago the dead in their thousands were brought in by whatever mode of carriage was available, including children's sledges too small to fit the adult frame. Mr. Schroeder's homage was the first time after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union that Germany was formally making a potent gesture of reconciliation toward an old foe. If the reconciliation means inflow of German capital and knowhow, this will be most welcome to the capital built by Peter the Great, which has been going through a period of rapid decline. Raised in the first decades of the 18th century as a bastion against the Swedes, Finns and Germans who had for centuries fought to breach the gateway to the rich Russian hinterland, the city has been struggling to lift itself out of the neglect of the past decade, with only meagre funds for reconstruction, renovation and renewal. The hopes raised by the fall of the communist empire have yet to see fulfilment.

The last century brought perhaps the worst experiences for the people of Petersburg. The German encirclement and Hitler's war topped years of suffering and trauma as Stalin tightened his grip on the country through a reign of terror inaugurated on the pretext of the unresolved murder of a close comrade under mysterious circumstances in the former imperial city. The siege lasting two and a half years without any letup — for an unbelievable 900 days beginning in 1941 —

and the epic resistance that the people of the city put up are now part of Petersburg's brief history. Let no one forget, let nothing be forgotten, wrote poetess Olga Berggolts who survived the siege but saw her family perish. The tears of the people of Leningrad are frozen, she said after being moved to tears for the first time when her husband died. Thousands perished of hunger and deprivation and many thousands more died during the relentless bombardment but the Germans were kept at bay on the outskirts through acts of bravery under the most hostile of circumstances, natural and man-made. Mr. Schroeder's homage must come as a rare tribute from a former foe to the bravery and unbroken resistance put up by the citizens of this most European of cities.

The German leader's gesture has more than symbolic significance and comes amid reports (or claims by British spokesmen?) that the Kremlin appears to have abandoned its attempts to forge a front with immediate neighbour and longstanding rival Germany. There have even been reports that with the Franco-German axis revealing signs of strain and wear and tear, Moscow may be gravitating to London as it seeks new friends to fight off the offensive from the Republican administration in Washington. These sound like wishful thinking by the British considering that Mr. Schroeder took a powerful delegation of businessmen and industrialists with him to Russia, indicating that he has no plans to miss the opportunity of tapping the rich market east of his country's borders. This is not to suggest that the decades of mutual suspicion and hostility between Russia and Germany may be about to disappear. But Mr. Schroeder's pilgrimage to the cemetery in Petersburg at least signals a deep German desire to say sorry for the terrible deeds of the Nazis to the one people who had suffered the most in two wars thrust on them by their neighbour.

THE HINDU

16 APR 2001

# Germany's Schroeder starts Russia visit

**Moscow, April 10:** German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on Tuesday appeared on a radio station critical of the government, but sidestepped a bitter row over ownership of Russia's only independent national television station NTV.

On arrival in St. Petersburg on Monday for a two-day annual summit with President Vladimir Putin, Mr Schroeder said he would raise German concerns over media freedom with his Russian host. But the German leader dodged critical questions on radio, *Echo Moskvy*, about last week's contested takeover of NTV. The radio and TV network are part of the troubled media empire of Mr Vladimir Gusinsky, a fierce opponent of Mr

Putin. State-dominated gas giant Gazprom ousted Mr Gusinsky in a boardroom coup after a disputed shareholder meeting last week. NTV staff say the meeting was illegal. Mr Putin on Monday advised them to take their complaints to the courts.

Asked if he realised he was speaking on anti-government radio, Mr Schroeder responded: "I don't think that is the case. I promised in Germany to give a radio interview, and I'm used to keeping my promises." German government officials had previously flagged the appearance on *Echo Moskvy* as an expression of support for independent media. Mr Putin critics say the NTV takeover aims to silence a vocal Krem-

lin critic. "My understanding of a free press is that you have to separate property on one side and an understanding of journalism on the other," Mr Schroeder told listeners. "I have always understood that journalism is the freedom, the democratic freedom, of a country and in that I agree with the President," he said.

In a joint television interview with his German guest, Mr Putin on Monday broke a week-long silence over the NTV furore to pledge his commitment to free speech, but refused to intervene. "As far as expressing one's opinion is concerned, freedom of the press etc, then it must be guaranteed," Mr Putin said in a joint interview on Russian

and German television.

"But it can only be guaranteed under one condition: the creation of acceptable economic conditions for a free press." Challenged on the meaning of Mr Putin's comments by *Echo Moskvy* editor-in-chief Alexei Venedictov, Mr Schroeder declined to admit any hint of a disagreement with Mr Putin. "I understood that he (Putin) wanted to show the process of development, and not of limiting, freedom of speech," he said.

Liberals have been expressing concerns about Mr Putin's commitment to free speech ever since the former KGB spy became Prime Minister in 1999 and then President. (Reuters)

# Schroeder sidesteps debate on freedom of the media in Russia

REUTERS  
MOSCOW, APRIL 10

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"My understanding of a free press is that you have to separate property on one side and an understanding of journalism on the other," Schroeder told listeners to Echo Moskvy, which broadcasts to the Russian capital and 66 other cities.

The Economic Times

31 APR 2001

# Schroeder to talk business with Putin

BY ANDREI SHUKSHIN

Moscow, April 6: German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, stepping into a vacuum created by a new cooler US approach to Russia, will try to advance key business projects in talks next week with President Vladimir Putin.

But the summit in Russia's second city and Mr Putin's home town of St. Petersburg on Monday and Tuesday could well be overshadowed by Western concerns over media freedoms in Russia.

Germany has moved quickly to foster closer ties with Moscow against the background of strains between Moscow and the new US

administration of President George W. Bush.

Mr Putin, a fluent German speaker from his time as a KGB spy in former East Germany, stressed Moscow's desire to boost ties with Europe in a state of the nation address to Parliament this week. He made no mention of Washington. Ties have suffered after weeks of scandals over expulsions of alleged spies and accusations by senior US officials that Russia contributed to proliferation of nuclear technology and could pose a threat.

Mr Schroeder is expected to share with Mr Putin his impressions from a meeting with Mr Bush in Washington late last month. The St. Petersburg talks will set in motion the first of

several debt-for-equity projects in which Russia is to offer stakes in attractive enterprises in exchange for Berlin writing off some of Moscow's \$16 billion debt.

The visit will also be heavy on symbolism. Emphasising a willingness to lay to rest the ghosts of the past, Mr Schroeder will lay a wreath in a cemetery for the hundreds of thousands of Russians killed in the Nazis' 900-day World War II siege of Leningrad, as St. Petersburg was then known. Germany is considering, along with other European Union states, providing funds to help restore some of St. Petersburg's imperial splendour for the city's 300th anniversary in 2003. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

7 APR 2001



# Germany facing problems on labour front

By Batuk Gathani

AD-12

**BRUSSELS, MARCH 17.** Dark clouds are again gathering over Germany — Europe's biggest and the world's third largest economy, with poor growth prospects and rising unemployment. Estimates indicate that the unemployment remains above 10 per cent and despite rhetoric, the economy this year may be lucky to manage an above two per cent growth.

The reality is that Europe's economic 'locomotive' power is slowing and with spill over effect on major European Union economies. Unemployment figures for February have revived anxieties that it cannot sustain a recovery in the near future. Such gloomy outlook contrasts sharply with the much published recent optimism of the Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder's Government.

In its latest report, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has criticised Germany for failing to liberalise its stiff and traditional labour market and 'squandering' huge sums in aid to the economically depressed eastern

region, which till 1989 was communist ruled.

East Germany is still struggling to catch up with West Germany, with high unemployment — 17.3 per cent — and poor productivity rates. Mr. Schroeder's coalition Government argues that it has sustained the reform momentum with proposed changes in taxation, social security and labour laws.

Recently, trade unions put pressure on the industry to cut overtime hours and create thousands of new jobs. They also threatened tough wage talks which could hamper efforts to shield the E.U. from a U.S. economic downturn. Wage agreements set the pace for other euro-zone economies. Germany's exposure to the U.S. market is 25 per cent more than for other euro-zone area generally.

In November 1999, a report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) criticised the German government for its inflexible labour policies, which according to it, have worsened unemployment. The unemployment was then hovering at nine to 10 per

1873

cent mark, causing much socio-political anguish and embarrassment for the Schroeder government, whose popularity was then at its lowest ebb. The IMF pointed out that the German government must make it easier for companies to hire and fire workers. The German employers are reluctant to take on more staff under the protective policies.

What happens to the German economy has significant spillover effect on its major trading partners in Europe and the world at large. Mr. Schroeder has consistently argued for 'daring and imaginative' economic and labour reforms. But many observers wonder if the authorities are following the correct strategy to attract investments, create more jobs and ease the high unemployment through more flexible labour policies and German labour market remains notoriously rigid and inflexible.

In recent months, the labour costs have soared at an alarming rate. For example, not long ago the non-wage costs of labour were 60 per cent of the basic pay.

# German Greens' agenda gains respectability

By **Batuk Gathani**

**BRUSSELS, MARCH 17.** The German Greens or environmentalists, who are partners of the ruling socialists in the "Red-Green" coalition Government headed by the Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, have put up a united front ahead of important provincial elections scheduled for March 25. Apart from agreeing on issues related to nuclear and environmental agenda, there was also a new sense of unity in the party based on the growing popularity and credibility of the two party Ministers in the Government.

The Foreign Minister, **Mr. Joschka Fischer**, is now a respected figure in both German and European Union forums. The German people are also impressed by the performance of the other Green Minister, **Ms Renate Kunast**, who handles Farming and Consumer Protection. Ms

Kunast has laid emphasis on promotion and consumption of organic food products and called for "natural" instead of "factory" rearing of animals.

Ms Kunast's green agenda has a special appeal for Germans, especially in the wake of the outbreak of BSE or mad cow disease. As the newly-elected co-chairperson of the Green party, Ms Claudia Roth put it: "In the past we were laughed at. Today, ecological farming has become the mainstream" and added that the Greens were not just vegetarian freaks. Since the outbreak of the mad cow disease, vegetarianism has become fashionable and prominent European restaurants are busy devising vegetarian menus.

This is the average European's response to BSE and the recent outbreak of the foot and mouth disease and swine

fever. The authorities have tried to contain them with strict quarantine measures. So far in Britain, some five million animals have been slaughtered to make the meat food chain safer. In Germany, France and Italy, beef consumption is substantially down and according to surveys, this ranges from 40 to 70 per cent. Even the British are turning to organic food products with increase in the number of vegetarians.

As one foreign observer put it: "Once Prince Charles was mocked for his organic farm but now he is thought to be a prophet." But the more unpleasant side of the BSE outbreak is that the French have taken to eating more horse meat. Bison, kangaroo and ostrich meat is also gaining popularity.

The green movement has yet to make a significant political impact in other E.U.

countries. Although Germany's "Red-Green" partners have made commendable efforts to iron out their differences, there is still a wide chasm of divide over social, environmental, nuclear and energy issues. For example, more than seven million Germans "live in poverty" according to a report published by the German Trade Union Federation, which reveals that 4.65 million in the West and 2.6 million Germans in the East can be termed as poor.

The authors of the report have not revealed the growing division between the rich and the poor in both parts of Germany. They define poverty as encompassing not just income but also housing, employment and training. On this definition, more than one in five East German children live in poverty.

The report highlighted what the au-

thors described as a "society doubly divided" between the West and East and the rich and the poor. On the economic front, with depressed economic growth and rising unemployment, Germany's generous social benefit system is under increasing strain. The country also has a fast aging population with more older people dependent on social welfare.

Germany, however, is not an exception in the "graying" Europe where the falling birth rate has afflicted wealthier parts of Europe for more than two decades. Another demographic study reveals that about one-fifth of the E.U.'s 370 million citizens are over 60. The West Europeans' fertility rate has declined and today all the countries in Western Europe — with the exception of Ireland — rank below the 2.1 level of the U.S. and the 3.3 world average.