

Priority Issues in German Foreign Policy

Germany's Interests in the United Nations Report to Mark the Third of October

AS the country with the most neighbours in Europe, the world's second-ranking nation in global trade, a country with a large resident foreign population and with a large number of its own nationals living abroad, Germany is naturally interested in highly developed multilateral cooperation. Add to this the fact that the German public is becoming increasingly aware that global problems such as pollution, social conflicts, terrorism and a host of others cannot be solved without international cooperation. For this reason, a clear majority of Germans approves Germany's

active, committed involvement in the United Nations and its specialised agencies. But in view of empty public coffers and growing tax burdens, the same people want to see Germany's contributions spent wisely. The German government's UN policy therefore cannot get along without progress in reforming the UN system. It must have successes to point to in order to be able to maintain or perhaps even raise the level of Germany's UN contributions. Many other UN member states are faced with a similar situation.

Germany has long been underrepresented in the UN system's upper echelons. At present however it feels itself to be adequately represented. Karl-Theodor Paschke is under-secretary-general and head of the Office for Internal Oversight, an important internal supervisory body. As an assistant secretary-general, Major General Manfred Eisele is responsible for planning and supporting peace-keeping missions. The international law expert Rüdiger Wolfrum is vice-president of the International Court of the Law of the Sea which has had its seat in Hamburg since 1996. Reinhard Helmke is also an assistant secretary-general and heads the UN Office for Project

Services which controls and coordinates development cooperation activities for the entire UN system. Rolf Böhncke is director of the Common Fund for Commodities which is important for many developing countries. Norbert Holl has been appointed special envoy of the secretary-general for the difficult UN Special Mission in Afghanistan, and Gert Merrem is his counterpart in Tajikistan. In addition to the International Court of the Law of the Sea, a number of other UN institutions including the United Nations Volunteers, the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the secretariat of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals have been located in Germany recently. Branch offices of the International Labour Organisation, an office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and a UN information office round out Bonn as a UN venue and act as important partners and points of contact for the German government and interested Germans.

As is always the case with international organisations, the question of how burdens are to be allocated is of great importance. With a contribution rate of 9.04 per cent, Germany is the third largest contributor to both the organisation's regular budget and its peace-keeping operations. The USA and Japan rank first and second, France and Great Britain fourth and fifth. Germany pays its contributions on time and in full. The United Nations' present financial difficulties are due primarily — but not solely — to the USA being in arrears with its payments. Writing off outstanding debts or splitting them up and allocating them among all members will not solve these problems. They must however be solved if the organisation is to remain operational. For the future, it is vital that the distribution key be adjusted to better reflect the ever-changing economic strength of the UN's member states. Germany and its partners in the European Union advocate following the capacity-to-pay principle when determining the amount of each member's contribution. They also call for having permanent members of the Security Council pay an additional amount to fund peace-keeping operations, and for granting the UN's poorest member states disproportionately greater financial relief. Secure finances are an important prerequisite for the United Nations to function efficiently.

As a major founder of development cooperation, Germany would also like to see the United Nations' economic and social fields function well because UN multilateral development cooperation plays an important role

both as a prerequisite for and an alternative to bilateral aid. For this reason, Germany has for many years consistently pushed for — also as a member of the G7 and G8 — a reform of the UN's economic and social fields. It also welcomes Secretary General Kofi Annan's reform proposals. In the German government's opinion, real progress in the near future is more important than total agreement on final details. The UN's image as an organisation that is a good investment for the German taxpayers' money is also at stake here. This is, however, not about cutting funding: The German government wants the "reform dividend" to go to the system's development activities. Development activities rather than collateral waste is the motto.

The German public is very interested in the United Nations' efforts to prevent and settle conflicts throughout the world. In light of the fact that Germany donates humanitarian aid, offers asylum and refuge to victims of civil war, and is a country which is in a position to help, it simply cannot look the other way. Consequently, the German government is continually called upon to develop standpoints on settling virtually every one of the world's many regional conflicts. Germany regularly participates in UN peace-keeping missions — not only on a financial basis, but also with troops, volunteer services and civilian contributions. The lion's share of these resources is currently being deployed in the UN-mandated SFOR operation in Bosnia where the German's 3,000 Bundeswehr soldiers comprise the fourth largest contingent. In addition, 165 German police officers are working to set up a civilian police force in Bosnia. German peacekeepers have also been deployed in Georgia, Kuwait and Angola. Extensive humanitarian aid for the victims in these conflict regions supplements these activities. UN organisations or non-governmental organisations administer this aid. The German government is striving for a permanent seat of the UN Security Council and has the support of many friendly nations from all continents. Germany has always set great store in taking a permanent seat only when the Major Regions of Africa and Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean are also represented on the Security Council. It should be remembered that these regions' increased importance and the role of shared global responsibility which Germany has grown into are both part of the changed realities of today's world at the close of the twentieth century. And the composition of the UN Security Council should reflect these realities.



German-Bangladesh Relations in Political and Economic Cooperation

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transmission and supply, environmental protection and resource conservation as well as promotion of small and medium-level enterprises [US \$ 1.34 million (DM 2.35 million)] for construction of a new bridge at Hatubanga; promotion of private business in cooperation with DCCI]. Besides German support of development efforts and looking at commercial economic relations now, the trade volume between the two countries last year reached DM 1.1 billion [US \$ 628 million]. Of these, German exports to Bangladesh in the year 1997 stood at DM 281.1 million [US \$ 160.62 million]. Bangladesh exports to Germany were significantly higher than imports and valued DM 819.1 [US \$ 468.45 million]. Germany is the most important export market of Bangladesh in Europe and second only to the United States on a worldwide basis. While these trade figures are far from negligible, there is room for ample improvement in both directions.

During the last 27 years German private investment in Bangladesh stood at little more than DM 62 million. This is far from reflecting the real economic potential of both countries. It could probably be significantly increased if the Bangladesh market and investment opportunities were better known to German investors. The Embassy supports all efforts to increase awareness of the German business community of the potential of Bangladesh as a market and as an investment opportunity. The newly formed Bangladesh-

German Business Forum (BGBF) is going to tap this enormous business potential.

Considering the cultural relations between Bangladesh and Germany, the Goethe Institute (GI) in Dhaka is a popular meeting place for the approx 220 Bangladeshi learning the German language there, young intellectuals artists and the Alumni-organisations of the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung (11 members). DAAD (approx 80 members) and the Carl Duisberg-Gesellschaft (approx 170 members).

As cultural high sports in the year 1997 three classical concerts by two German chamber orchestras (approx 900 visitors in all) took place as well as a one-week European film festival (approx 20000 visitors), at which five award-winning German pictures (with English sub-titles) were to be seen. A similar film festival is planned for November 1998. Different activities regarding the 100th Brecht-Anniversary will be carried out by the GI in cooperation with Bangladesh Theatre groups in the second half of the year 1998.

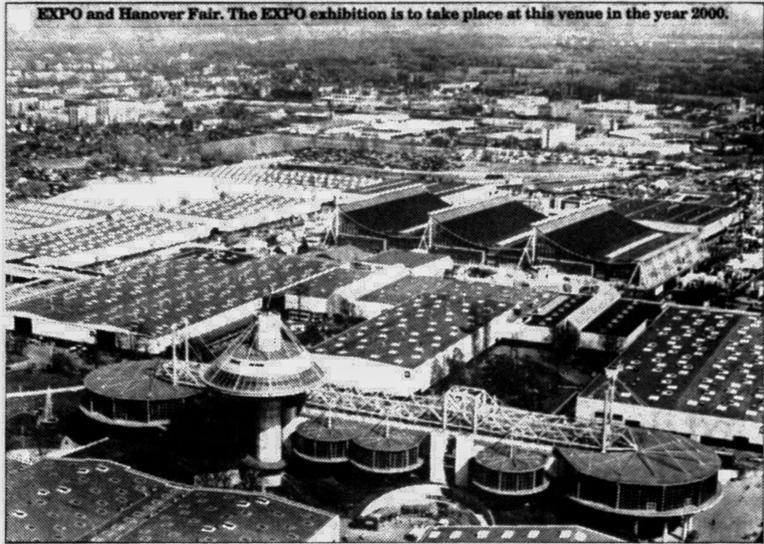
The exchanges in the university area constitutes another focus of the cultural relations between Germany and Bangladesh. In 1997 inter alia 12 DAAD short term scholarships (at least 3 months), 4 DAAD one year scholarships for research studies and 4 one-year scholarships at the Asian Institute of Technology/Bangkok could be granted. In the field of sports Bangladesh is supported by gifts and donations as well as scholarships for training courses for

coaches (football, basketball etc) in Germany. The development of the sport of football, especially popular in Bangladesh, has been supported by sending a German football expert in the framework of a sponsoring programme.

Germany is very much interested to strengthen these links, in particular with regard to the interchange in the university area and the field of sports.

Looking forward towards the future development of relations between Germany and Bangladesh, it is obvious that a politically and economically stable environment are preconditions for increased trade, investment and cultural exchange. A stable environment of this kind is also a prerequisite for the sustained development which Germany wants to support. The respect of democratic principles, safeguarding of human rights and the rule of law are at the basis of stability. They must be supported by common sense, moderation and a strong sense of compromise in daily political life. At the same time, a sound national economy depends on a working infrastructure and efficient services both in the private and the public sectors.

All of this needs constant monitoring and if necessary improvement. Germany is looking with interest and high expectations at programmes for improvement and reforms currently carried out or taken into consideration for important sectors of public life in Bangladesh. Successful reforms will bring our two friendly countries even closer together.



EXPO and Hanover Fair. The EXPO exhibition is to take place at this venue in the year 2000.

"Germany, a Land of Community Spirit"

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economic structures in the old Federal Republic. The fusion of Daimler-Benz and Chrysler — the biggest merger of its kind to date — is only the latest example of close economic networking between the two countries. I strongly advocate the continuation of this networking with America in the eastern federal states. American investment is highly welcome in Germany. And it is profitable.

Despite the stalled tax reform, we are no longer a country of standstill. Germany is in motion. We are in the process of creating a more flexible labour market. We are back in the forefront of biotechnology. We have undertaken the biggest privatisations in post-war history — from telecommunications to the railways. We are adapting

our social security system to new needs.

The social climate for innovation and reform has improved markedly. Recently, and not far from here in the Leipzig exhibition grounds, I saw a further example of change. This was at the presentation of prizes in the "Start-up" competition. Young, innovative entrepreneurs were rewarded for having the courage to set up on their own in business. I was deeply impressed with the elan shown in this sphere, particularly among younger people. Not only willingness but a boldness to take risks was in evidence. Something is moving. First there are ideas, then they're put into practice. Germany is a land of a community spirit, of good-neighbour cooperation between Germans and

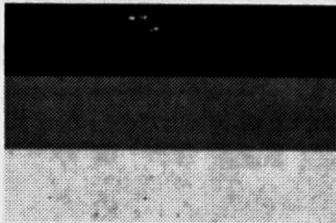
foreigners despite attempts by rightwing extremist groups to misuse social problems and unemployment for their purposes of incitement and propaganda.

Germany is a democratic country and a country well disposed toward foreigners. Rightwing extremists meet with a firm rebuttal from the overwhelming majority of the people and of all democratic parties. We allow these groupings no scope for their demagoguery and I am confident they will quickly vanish from our parliaments. This has occurred repeatedly in the past. — IN-Press

Slightly abbreviated speech by Roman Herzog, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, to the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany, Leipzig, 1998.

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