

## WEST GERMANY

### New View of Russia

In office, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer considered it his solemn duty to constantly remind West Germans of the evil designs of Moscow. Out of office, he is proving more flexible. At the annual Christian Democratic Party convention in Bonn last week, he announced that "I have not given up hope that some day the Soviet Union will recognize that the division of Germany, and thus also the division of Europe, is not to its advantage. The other day something happened in world history that, I believe, should have been stressed much more by the papers—I mean the mediation of the Soviet Union between India and Pakistan. Ladies and gentlemen, this was one proof that the Soviet Union has joined the ranks of the nations who want peace."

His words only echoed opinion in many Western capitals. But they shocked most of the convention's 577 delegates. West Germans, who live in the shadow of the Berlin Wall, are more acutely conscious of Russia's armed presence beyond their borders than most Westerners. And their politicians are apt to blame the Soviet Union for the fact that, 20 years after V-E day, Germany remains divided.

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Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, who took over as party chairman from Adenauer last week, took a more conventional approach. He won prolonged applause when he pounced on the Tashkent agreement as something Russia had undertaken only out of regional self-interest, adding acidly that "we would welcome it if the Soviet Union declared its readiness for similar peace actions in Central Europe."

Erhard, however, also senses a need to improve relations with Moscow. Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder has been angling for an invitation to Russia for some time. In an obvious effort to soothe Soviet fears about West German fingers on nuclear triggers, the Erhard government sent a note to 100-odd



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nations calling for a nuclear nonproliferation treaty. Among its proposals was an offer to sign bilateral agreements with Russia and the East European countries for the exchange of military observers.