

Post 7/11/66

Today and Tomorrow . . . By Walter Lippmann

The Chancellor and the Prime Minister

THE PRESIDENT'S two favorite European statesmen are Chancellor Erhard and Prime Minister Wilson. Both are in trouble at home, as it happens, at the very time when the Southeast Asian war has become larger and fiercer. The two phenomena are not unrelated.



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THE GERMAN elections in the pivotal state of North-Rhine-Westphalia, which includes the great industrial complex around the Ruhr, show a marked loss for Chancellor Erhard's Christian Democrats and a corresponding gain for Willy Brandt's Social Democrats. While domestic problems arising out of the coal situation played a part in the outcome, there is general agreement that the Social Democratic attempt to open a dialogue with East German socialists was an important factor in the result. This conclusion is supported

by the fact that the Free Democrats who are conservative in domestic policy but, like the Social Democrats, favor a policy of detente, also gained a seat.

Dr. Erhard's Christian Democrats no longer reflect the dominant feeling of the West Germans who have turned towards reunification through a relaxation of tension in the cold war. Chancellor Erhard profited little from the support at the White House and in the State Department, or from his identification with the hard times in Washington, with those who have regarded the West Germans as the principal instrument in Europe for holding off both the Soviet Union and Gaullist France.

If, as the Germans appear to think, the overriding power of the Christian Democrats in the Federal Republic is broken, we are witnessing another and most significant event in the evolution of European affairs. We are witnessing a movement of the West Germans towards a European, as contrasted with a trans-Atlantic, policy.

THE CENTRAL point in Britain is that once again the pound sterling is in a critical condition, and there is great expectation of a devaluation. The history of Harold Wilson's Labor government has been dominated since its first week in office by the decision not to devalue the pound sterling and to defend the present exchange rate. In foreign policy this has meant satellitism to Washington.

In order to play a British role east of Suez, as the American Administration plunged on with its crusade in Asia, the Wilson government has had to take a smaller interest in European affairs, making more difficult its eventual entry into the common market. The policy is a very considerable

mess: east of the Suez the British government is ineffective and dependent on Washington; west of Suez it is an outsider, which will be compelled to go through a drastic experience in order to restore its power and influence in Europe.

DESPITE the swelling chorus of voices from Washington which say that the future of the world and the future of peace is being determined in Asia, our isolation is increasing. The fact is that our influence in Europe is declining long before there is any prospect of success in Asia. Yet it is in Europe, which includes the Soviet Union, that all the world's great powers, except Japan, are to be found.

Has Mr. Johnson ever dared to ask himself why, if he is in fact the savior of the world's peace and freedom, there is no great power that stands with him? It begins to look as if the more righteous we feel, the more alone we are.

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