

U.S. Held Uninvolved In German Wiretap

By John M. Goshko

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BONN, June 13—The West German government said today that it had formal assurances from the U.S. embassy here that there had been no American involvement in electronic eavesdropping on a private phone conversation between two prominent German politicians.

A flurry of suspicion directed against the U.S. Army broke out here last night after it became known that someone apparently tapped a phone call between Helmut Kohl, chairman of the opposition Christian Democratic Union, and Kurt Biedenkopf, the party's secretary general.

Questions about possible American involvement were raised because a transcript of the Kohl-Biedenkopf talk turned up on a form similar to those used by U.S. Army intelligence. These forms received considerable publicity two years ago when it was revealed that Army intelligence had engaged in wiretapping against persons with alleged ties to dissidents among the American forces in West Germany.

However, Klaus Boelling, chief spokesman for Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, said today that there is no evidence to support suspicion of U.S. involvement. He added, "It would be as easy as child's play to forge printed American forms."

Officials of the U.S. embassy here and at headquarters of the U.S. 7th Army in Heidelberg declined any immediate comment on the incident except to say that they were investigating. It was learned, however, that an official U.S. denial had been prepared and would probably be made public later tonight or Saturday.

Boelling also said that it "was completely excluded," that any West German governmental agencies were involved. But he confirmed that the monitored conversation was authentic, that the wiretapping had been illegal and that Bonn takes the matter "very seriously."

The contents of the conversation, last October have not been made public, although it is known to have been between Biedenkopf's office in Bonn and Mainz, capital of Rhineland-Palatinate, where Kohl is the state prime minister. The Christian Democratic leader is expected to be the opposition candidate for chan-

cellor against Schmidt in next year's national elections.

The wiretapping came to light when photocopies of the transcript were sent to the magazine Stern and to a member of the parliamentary committee that oversees West German security organizations. They were mailed June 2 from Kaiserslautern, a town in Rhineland-Palatinate that is the site of a large U.S. military installation. Government officials said the identify and motives of the sender are unknown.