

government thinks the best way to do that is to choose not to choose. On November 17, 1983, it proclaimed Costa Rica's "perpetual, active, and unarmed neutrality." Since then it has been engaged in a domestic and international campaign to gain support for its position of neutrality, directing its attentions at such European neutrals as Austria, Switzerland, Finland, and Sweden. These, in classic Teutonic fashion, patiently explain to the Costa Ricans that, in their experience, an army of some kind is necessary for convincing others that one's neutrality is to be taken seriously. The Costa Ricans reply that in Latin America, where armies are rarely content to stay in the barracks, this is not the moment to be reestablishing one.

Meanwhile, the opposition in Costa Rica, much of the country's free but conservative press, and, of course, some insistent voices in the United States are saying that neutrality is morally reprehensible at a time when a struggle between democracy and communism is being waged on the doorstep. Costa Ricans receive a rather unblemished image of the United States directly via Ted Turner's Cable News Network. They have never suffered occupation or invasion by the U.S., have not digested the Vietnam experience, and find it difficult to believe that the United States would ever turn its back on its own backyard. They would be willing to join with the U.S. to protect themselves from the scary developments in nearby Nicaragua. Like the Mexicans, the Costa Ricans were bitterly disillusioned when they found that a revolution they once supported was taking a direction so different from their own democratic one.

Political leaders of all persuasions expect to have future problems with the "Nicas," as they call them. The differences are over how best to protect Costa Rica against such neighbors. Those who favor neutrality argue for preserving the tradition of detachment from the region's disputes. They contend that too close an alliance with the United States can only make Costa Rica the target of Nicaraguan reprisals as hostility mounts between the U.S. and the Sandinistas. Witness Honduras, they say—a nation that has prostituted itself to U.S. interests, offering itself cheaply and receiving few benefits.

The Costa Rican opposition, on the other hand, does not see a wall of neutrality as sufficient to restrain the Sandinistas in the future. Lacking all but a poorly equipped constabulary force, will Costa Rica be able to defend itself from a Marxist-Leninist state that feels it must export revolution to maintain its own security? Perhaps Nicaragua will not invade directly but undermine Costa Rica by further fueling the unrest caused by the country's current economic crisis. The opposition's greatest fear is that the United States will cut a deal with the Sandinistas, one that leaves the revolutionaries in power in return for assurances of good behavior that are not worth the paper they're printed on. The recent suspension of the Manzanillo talks between Nicaragua and the United States seems designed in part to allay this fear.

In "peaceful" Costa Rica the atmosphere is tense. That tension was readily apparent in recent days when word came that the Sandinistas had allegedly violated the Costa Rican embassy in Managua, which had granted asylum to a Nicaraguan "draft dodger." A chorus of protest assailed the government, urging actions that ranged from invocation of the Rio Treaty of mutual defense to the break off of diplomatic relations. Costa Rica brought the matter before

the Organization of American States, which referred it to the Contadora Group—Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela—for negotiation. The dispute led to cancellation of an important meeting of the Central American countries under Contadora auspices and threatened to poison already difficult relations between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The asylum-seeker was eventually released, but there will be other incidents.

Back in San José a Honduran and a North American visitor watch as President Monge and other politicians address a mildly enthusiastic crowd of school children who have been given the day off to celebrate Costa Rica's proclamation of neutrality. The speeches, although florid in the Latin style, are amazingly short. The entire rally lasts little more than an hour. As President Monge slowly descends from the podium, a boy and girl stand at his side guiding his steps. The president then walks among the crowd, virtually without security. The Honduran wonders aloud when his country will be able to achieve the political maturity of these Costa Ricans. The North American ponders his country's policies. Are they helping to preserve this precious outpost of democracy or, in the interest of broader regional objectives, do they risk sacrificing it to the chaos that consumes so much of Central America?

Richard A. Nuccio is Director of Latin American and Caribbean Programs at the Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies, Washington, D.C.

EXCURSUS 2

Stephen Brockmann on THE ALLIED VICTORY & GERMAN AMBIVALENCE

Germany loves anniversaries. Three years ago it celebrated the Goethe anniversary; the next year it observed the Martin Luther and Schiller anniversaries, the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's rise to power, and three hundred years of German immigration to America. Last year the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) celebrated its thirty-five years of existence, and this year both Germanies are celebrating three hundred years of Bach and Handel. All these events were and are celebrated in the two German states without causing much of a political flap, but the same cannot be said of this year's most important event: the fortieth anniversary of the German defeat Allied victory on March 8, 1945.

Since the beginning of the year the anniversary has been discussed almost incessantly in both Germanies. The major newspapers, magazines, and television networks have been observing it for months, commemorating the bombings of Dresden, Magdeburg, and Hamburg and countless other military events. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—coming to terms with the past—has become the order of the day as never before in a country that for many years did not even want to think about the past and viewed 1945 as a zero point (*a Nullpunkt*) from which an absolutely new Germany

has arisen.

The central question is, of course, whether the date is indeed one that Germans should celebrate at all. For the rest of Europe this is no problem: May 8 represents the defeat of Hitler, the end of Nazism, the liberation of Europe, and the beginning of peace that has, after all, lasted to the present. This view is shared by many Germans, especially those to the east of what is frequently referred to as the "inner-German border." Here 1945 has traditionally been seen as the year of liberation by the Red Army and the beginning of the truly progressive, democratic Germany, building on the liberal and progressive traditions of the Weimar Republic and the revolution of 1848. (Those in East Germany who disagree with this assessment are unlikely to make it a public issue.)

But in the West the situation is not nearly as clear. Left out of last year's D-Day celebrations in Normandy and eager not to be left out of the Allied celebrations this year, Chancellor Helmut Kohl has invited President Reagan to West Germany and has planned a solemn festival at the world-famous Cologne Cathedral. But other voices on the right of the ruling CDU-CSU coalition, as well as from the various refugee organizations that represent those forced to flee their Eastern homelands at the end of World War II, reminded the chancellor and the West German public at large that 1945 represented not just an Allied victory but a German defeat. As a result of that defeat, the Germany so painstakingly put together by Bismarck in 1871 has been split again, with most of Prussia and Saxony now under the rule of a Communist dictatorship. Not only that, but Germany lost much of its territory completely: a large slice—Silesia and Pomerania—given up to Poland, not to mention East Prussia, the Sudetenland, and various German-speaking pockets elsewhere. On the whole, these voices said, 1945 is not to be celebrated but mourned: It paved the way for the division of Europe, the abandonment of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union, as well as the destruction of large parts of Germany. Moreover, Germany does not even have a comprehensive peace treaty to show for its pains: After forty years the German and European solution is officially still a temporary one.

Needless to say, such voices made many people uncomfortable, and not only in Eastern Europe. As a German commentator pointed out, if there is one thing that the United States and the Soviet Union agree on, it is the "German question." No one except the Germans themselves is interested in seeing a united Germany.

The situation was not made any easier when Helmut Kohl accepted the invitations of several of the refugee organizations to speak at their congresses. Throughout Europe eyebrows were raised as the refugees began to talk of their "lost" lands; and the slogan "Silesia is Ours!" was not calculated to ingratiate itself with the Polish Government. From East Germany came accusations of "Revanchismus," and moderates in West Germany accused the government and the right wing of the CDU-CSU of intentionally worsening relations with West Germany's neighbors.

All this seemed slightly incongruous in a country in which little more than a year ago it was American missiles, not German identity, that was the topic of the day. With the peace movement institutionalized in the Green party in the West German Bundestag and various state parliaments, as well as in the left wing of the oppositional SPD, the mass

actions and protests of the previous year had given way to serious political work within the legislative system. Yet it was clear that the political questions of German sovereignty and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which originally arose in the context of the antimissile movement, had moved into broader questions involving the history of the two Germanies after 1945. Here, a number of left-wing commentators had something in common with the right-wingers, though they were questioning the postwar status quo for completely different reasons. The Left did not mourn the end of the German Reich, but they did mourn the beginning of the cold war and superpower politics. For them there would be no solution to the missile question until there was a solution to the European question—that is, to the historical-political question of Europe's sovereignty and independence from the superpowers and to the artificial split between East and West. Of course for the Left this did not so much mean German reunification (which for all practical purposes is a nonissue, even in West Germany, except on the extreme Right) as simply questioning the primacy of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Between these two extremes are the moderates, with more modest hopes for the May 8 anniversary. West German chancellors since Willy Brandt have hoped that their efforts to improve relations with the East would help warm up East-West relations in general; and even amidst recent East-West tensions, Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl have argued that good "inner-German relations" can be a powerful force for stability, moderation, and tolerance—a position shared by East German Party leader Erich Honecker as well.

Hence it is with a knowledge of their own limitations and the limitations of even the most exalted anniversaries that many Germans have urged a cooling of the rhetoric on both sides. For them the possibility of a meeting on May 8 between President Reagan and his Soviet counterpart at the anniversary celebration is itself a positive sign; and it is their hope that the fortieth anniversary of a war in which East and West were allies against a common enemy—the Germany of the Third Reich—might provide new, if modest, possibilities for dialogue and understanding.

Stephen Brockmann is a Fellow in the German Department of the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

EXCURSUS 3

Thomas Land on DEVELOPMENT: LEGAL AID

One factor contributing to economic stagnation in the hungry belt of the globe is the South's lack of well-trained legal advisors in the areas of trade negotiations, loan agreements, and other international transactions. Responding to a growing sense of frustration, a group of senior lawyers has persuaded the United States, Canada, and Italy, as well as the World Bank and various aid organizations, to set up a training institute in development law for lawyers who must deal