



# OFF THE NEWS



**Donald Trump** signs orders to green-light the *Keystone XL* and *Dakota Access* pipelines on January 24, 2017. Behind Trump, left to right: White House Counsel **Don McGahn**, Senior Adviser **Jared Kushner**, and White House chief strategist **Steve Bannon**.

## Last Man Standing?

The world analyst community is chock full of China watchers—experts who regularly try to determine who’s up and who’s down in the Chinese leadership. Now we have the new Trump watchers—those who try to determine the nature of the White House power structure behind the curtain. The general consensus: Trump has no commander-in-chief but instead a half-dozen senior generals. The most intriguing of these generals is Jared Kushner, the president’s son-in-law, a registered Democrat with no experience in GOP politics before the recent presidential campaign. Nevertheless, the son-in-law is said to have done a brilliant job masterminding the technical side of the campaign’s ground game.

Today Kushner is said already to have thirty people in the West Wing reporting directly to him. Detractors say that in meetings with the president and other top advisors, Kushner tends to be a “momentum guy.” In other words, he holds back to see where the momentum is going. Then he piles on with the majority view. Admirers counter that his views are so valued by the president, there is no need for Kushner to make a lot of pronouncements about how he sees things. He and the president speak so frequently throughout the day that there is no mystery about where Kushner stands. The president knows his son-in-law’s views.

Close White House observers say Team Trump is in turmoil with the generals constantly jockeying for position. White House officials respond that such a notion is nonsense. Time will tell which side is correct. But one thing is clear: If in fact the Trump high command stumbles into civil war, the last person standing likely will be Jared Kushner.



**Hans Tietmeyer**  
(1931–2016)

## The Passing of a Friend

In the years leading up to the introduction of the euro, Hans Tietmeyer, then president of the Bundesbank, was at the center of an historic post-war process of European integration. Hailed as the “guardian of the D-Mark,” Tietmeyer played a crucial role in preparations for the establishment of the European Central Bank. Tietmeyer died on December 27, 2016, at the age of eighty-five.

“Hans Tietmeyer was an outstanding president, who always acted with a clear and firm hand that followed the goal of monetary stability,” Jens Weidmann, the current Bundesbank president, said in a statement. “What I appreciated most was that he was a true European, and that was manifested on many occasions,” said Jean-Claude Trichet, former ECB president, who for many years as French finance secretary worked closely with Tietmeyer.

As the last president of the once independent and mighty Bundesbank from 1993 to 1999, Tietmeyer put in all his weight into making sure that the countries joining the euro would be held to strict spending limits and that the European Central Bank would be established in a framework of securing price stability as top priority.

It was not a secret that Tietmeyer on the one hand seemed convinced politically that “there was no alternative to the euro,” but on the other was deeply worried that the failure of governments to respect fiscal rules would create tensions between member states and undermine monetary union. As an architect of the eurozone’s Stability and Growth Pact which sets ceilings for government deficits and debt limits, he was alarmed as Germany and France started to ignore these limits. And he considered the euro sovereign debt crisis as a manifestation of member countries not sticking to the SGP rules.

Born in 1931 near Münster, Tietmeyer grew up as a devout Catholic in a family of eleven children. One of his professors, Joseph Höffner, who later became archbishop of Cologne, led him toward economics and social science with a Christian frame of reference.

Tietmeyer started his long civil service career in Bonn’s economic ministry in 1962, during Konrad Adenauer’s fourth term. Adenauer’s economic minister Ludwig Erhard, whose market-oriented policies laid the foundation of what became Germany’s post-war “economic miracle,” was Tietmeyer’s first boss.

In 1982, Tietmeyer moved into the limelight as author of a politically explosive economic reform memorandum that Economic Minister Otto Graf Lambsdorff, a leader of the Free Democratic Party, used as a lever to end the coalition government under Social Democratic Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. The Lambsdorff Paper was considered the divorce document of the “Wende.”

Tietmeyer made his way to the top of the Bundesbank after serving as state secretary in the Finance Ministry from 1982–1990, where he was not only responsible for international and monetary affairs and especially EU integration, but in close contact with Chancellor Helmut Kohl as “sherpa” preparing for the international G7 economic summits.

In such an influential position, Tietmeyer was targeted by Germany’s terrorists. In 1988, members of the far-left Red Army Faction fired at his limousine outside Bonn, hitting the car many times. Tietmeyer and his driver survived the assault.

At the Bonn finance ministry, Tietmeyer and then-Finance Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg were confronted not only with major domestic problems—high deficits and high unemployment—but also with the Latin American debt crisis that, for the first time, threatened the global financial and banking system.

A close adviser to Kohl over many years, the “Chancellor of German Unity” looked for Tietmeyer when in 1989 the fall of the Berlin Wall paved the way for German reunification.

Against the advice of the Bundesbank under Karl-Otto Pöhl, Tietmeyer backed Kohl’s political decision in favor of a speedy economic and monetary union between the two Germanies. Opting for a very favorable conversion ratio for the East German mark and the introduction of a hard currency was seen as a timely signal intended to bring mass emigration from East Germany to an end.

—Klaus Engelen