
Interview: Franz-Josef Strauss

'I welcome the American initiative'

Minister-President of Bavaria and leader of the West German Christian Social Union, Dr. Franz-Josef Strauss, gave this exclusive interview to EIR correspondents Ronald Korkinda and Webster Tarpley at the July 24-26 conference of the International Democratic Union in Washington, D.C. The discussion was conducted in English.

EIR: You have been at the IDU meeting over the past several days and there has been some discussion of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Are you satisfied with what has been presented in the final communiqué?

Strauss: The communiqué restricts itself to a formula which is the lowest common denominator, that all participants at the conference express "understanding" for the American initiative. The conference was attended by members from other states, from neutral states like Sweden and Finland, from states which do not belong to Europe or to the Americas. And so a clear formula, a more distinct statement, was not possible.

I will shortly explain the history of the strategy of deterrence. One must distinguish several phases. Phase number one was that the Americans had a nuclear monopoly, and were not within the range of Soviet nuclear weapons. In this phase, the Europeans expressed the conviction that the Americans and the American security guarantee were reliable, because they were invulnerable.

Phase number two: This changed when the Soviets developed and produced weapons which could hit and also partially destroy the United States of America. Among the Europeans, doubts came up over whether the Americans were still reliable, because they were no longer out of the range of Soviet weapons. This was the time that Gen. Maxwell Taylor wrote his book, *The Uncertain Trumpet*. Here he said that states with nuclear weapons will not make use of nuclear weapons for their allies, but only for their very own sake. The Europeans asked—and I was one of them, as West German defense minister—if this was policy when Maxwell Taylor was reactivated [as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—ed.]. I talked with him myself, together with Paul Nitze, and he replied that no, this was no longer his doctrine. The strategic doctrine is that the Americans still maintain the security guarantee even under nuclear risk. But at this time, in phase number two, serious attempts were made to increase conventional forces and to raise the nuclear threshold in order

to reduce risk of nuclear war.

Now in the next phase, we have flexible response, but with the background of the strategy of nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence became more and more the target of attacks; it offers bad outlooks and cannot be maintained forever. If we think of the memoranda of the American Catholic bishops and the European bishops, the memorandum of the West German bishops was more careful, but all of them had no alternative.

What are the alternatives to get out of the strategy of nuclear deterrence? One alternative would be unilateral disarmament. This is capitulation. This is to accept the Soviet domination.

The second alternative is not an alternative: to solve the problem by a preemptive war. Only a madman with criminal instincts would think of such a solution.

Number three, that the Soviets will, in the foreseeable future, change their imperialistic ambitions. This is unrealistic.

The alternative is to resort to a new dimension of modern technology. This new dimension of modern technology, the SDI, will not eliminate nuclear weapons but will modify, will relativize, the importance of nuclear weapons. It will not completely rule them out, but will make the accumulation of offensive nuclear weapons senseless.

I welcome this American initiative. No one knows whether or not it will be a strategic success. It will offer, surely, new insights in science and modern technology, and also industrial production, apart from the military field.

But we Europeans have a particular additional interest. The Americans are interested in getting anti-missile systems to destroy missiles in the boost phase or in the immediate post-boost phase. Our interest is the tremendous superiority of the Soviets in conventional weapons and their superiority in short-range and mid-range ballistic missiles, the targets of which are in West Germany or in the rest of Western Europe. Therefore, we want to extend this strategic defense initiative from instruments against intercontinental and submarine missiles, to short-range missiles, mid-range missiles, and maybe to modern weapons against armor, armored cars, armored artillery, armored transport cars, conventional air fighters, wiping them out or eliminating them.

EIR: The Tactical Defense Initiative or the European Air Defense Initiative?

Strauss: Yes.

EIR: Do you think the United States government is doing enough to guarantee equal access to technology and an equal partnership among the sovereign states?

Strauss: This is, up to now, not fully clarified and guaranteed. But in my talk with Vice-President Bush when he was touring West Germany, I emphasized this point and asked clear-cut questions. And he replied, that he sees no serious obstacles.