

REBUFFING BONN'S UNILATERAL ATTEMPT TO TORPEDO NATO POLICY

West German Defense Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher flew suddenly into Washington on an early morning last week to inform George Bush that Bonn now is pushing hard for immediate East-West negotiations to eliminate short-range nuclear missiles and nuclear artillery from Europe. The German emissaries delivered their message and left no room for discussion or negotiation. By nightfall they were gone, having broken ranks with the United States and NATO, both of whom officially reject such negotiations until progress has been made in the talks now underway in Vienna to reduce the Soviet conventional (non-nuclear) threat to Western Europe.

Tearing Up the Compromise. On Bush's behalf, Secretary of State James Baker rightly rebuffed the West German Ministers, reiterating U.S. support for NATO's stand against immediate negotiations on short-range nuclear missiles and artillery. Only days before the blitz visit, the NATO defense ministers summit in Brussels reluctantly had acceded to a West German demand to postpone a NATO decision on modernizing the short-range (90 miles) nuclear *Lance* missile. Now, it seemed, Bonn had torn up the compromise even before the ink had dried. It is no wonder that Bush last week had to resist Bonn's unilateral assault on NATO nuclear policy. He should hold his ground even at risk of a public breach with West Germany on this matter at the NATO summit later this month. While Bush was right to postpone a formal decision on *Lance* modernization until after the 1990 West German elections, he should continue to back the position of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander General John R. Galvin that a modernized *Lance* and nuclear artillery must remain in NATO's nuclear modernization plans for the 1990s. Bush also should deliver a straightforward public message to Bonn that he will be unable to justify the continued stationing of a quarter-million U.S. forces in West Germany if the West German government unilaterally rejects the nuclear weapons that U.S. commanders require to defend the GIs and respond effectively to a Soviet attack.

Risking Survival of U.S. Troops. West Germans rely for their security on a U.S. guarantee to retaliate with its own nuclear weapons against a Soviet nuclear or overwhelming conventional attack on West Germany. This guarantee is backed up by 325,000 U.S. troops permanently stationed in Western Europe, 250,000 of them in West Germany. By agreeing to help defend West Germany with nuclear weapons, the U.S. risks the survival of its troops in Europe and ultimately millions of American civilians subject to Soviet nuclear retaliation. In return for this risk, the U.S. rightly has required that its forces stationed in West Germany and elsewhere in Europe be equipped with modern nuclear weapons. This concept has been accepted by NATO and Bonn for decades. According to U.S. and NATO doctrine, these

forces must be capable of a range of attack options against the Soviet Union and Soviet military targets in Europe.

The nuclear modernization plan approved in 1985 by NATO includes: 1) replacing old U.S. nuclear artillery shells with new and safer ones; 2) replacing the nearly obsolescent *Lance* missile with a new, longer range and more accurate missile, and; 3) deploying a roughly 250-mile-range tactical air-to surface missile (TASM) that would be launched from aircraft such as the F-15E *Strike Eagle* and would be able to destroy such targets as rail yards and command posts in Soviet territory. In recent months, the West German government, led on this issue by Foreign Minister Genscher, has mounted a frontal assault on the NATO nuclear modernization plan, first refusing a firm decision on modernizing NATO's short-range nuclear forces and now advocating negotiations that could eliminate a follow-on to the *Lance* missile and nuclear artillery as well. The West German position on the tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM) is unclear, but The Heritage Foundation has been told privately by a West German official that TASM deployment also may be in jeopardy.

Longest Peace in Centuries. Genscher and other West German officials justify their position by claiming that nuclear artillery and short-range missiles "single out" Germany since they would explode primarily on German territory, East or West. While this is true, it always has been true. U.S. nuclear weapons, including very short range artillery, have been on German soil for decades. These weapons have contributed to the deterrence that has given Germany its longest period of peace in centuries. These weapons, moreover, "single out" Germany no more than do the tens of thousands of Soviet tanks which, for decades, have been poised to overrun Germany. In all these decades, the U.S. has been willing to station great numbers of U.S. troops between those tanks and their German targets – and Washington never once talked about the GIs being "singled out."

Modernizing NATO's nuclear force has nothing to do with "singling out" Germany for nuclear attack, and Genscher surely realizes this. The modernization of nuclear artillery and *Lance* are considered essential by U.S. (and British) political and military leaders to protect U.S. troops in Europe and to provide nuclear options below the level of an all-out nuclear war that would destroy the U.S. This is why Bush has told the West Germans that he cannot agree to eliminate these weapons, even through negotiations with the Soviet Union, until Moscow agrees to reduce its conventional military threat to Western Europe and the U.S. troops stationed there.

By rebuffing Stoltenberg and Genscher, Bush took an important step toward ensuring that the Alliance continues to deter Soviet attack. Next he should:

◆ ◆ Assert publicly that he cannot justify the presence of U.S. troops in West Germany if Bonn proceeds unilaterally down the path of a nuclear weapons-free West Germany.

◆ ◆ Reaffirm the official NATO position opposing immediate negotiations on short-range nuclear forces, even if it means an open split between the U.S. and West Germans at the upcoming NATO summit.

◆ ◆ Continue to support NATO nuclear modernization, including nuclear artillery, a follow-on to *Lance*, and the tactical air-to-surface missile, while giving Bonn until after its 1990 election to make a firm deployment decision on *Lance*.

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