

## Schmidt: France, BRD concur on Indochina

*In an interview with Corriere della Sera Feb. 26, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt discussed the nearly operational European Monetary System and its role in bringing political stability to Europe. In that context, the Chancellor commented on the conflict between China and Vietnam and stated emphatically that his government, unlike that of fellow European Community member Britain, would not sell arms to China.*

*Q: Mr. Chancellor, a political crisis developed in Italy over the question of whether to join the EMS or not. Because of that we now are disappointed: can you explain how a decision of such historical import has been embroiled in interests which certainly have no historical value?*

*A: I share your disappointment. . . . I continue to hope that in the course of the coming weeks we can overcome the difficulties that suddenly emerged in the course of the meeting of the agriculture ministers shortly before Christmas, around the problem of the compensatory amounts — a difficulty that today impedes the full functioning of the EMS. . . . The currencies are behaving well. They are behaving as if the EMS were already functioning.*

*Q: Mr. Chancellor, a new war has broken out in Southeast Asia. Do you see in this new danger for detente?*

*A: I am worried about the situation. The European Community, to which both Italy and the BRD belong, has asked France, which is currently holding the EEC chairmanship, to express this concern. On the other hand I don't include myself among those who present the situation with exaggerated and pessimistic predictions for the future of the whole world. Such a prophecy, once it starts circulating, can become self-fulfilling. So far I consider only those*

positions, from East and West, that don't include threats of intervention.

At the end of the recent meeting with President Giscard d'Estaing, I indicated three points:

1. Between us and France there is agreement of views about the attitude to take on the Southeast Asian conflict;
2. We agree also on the fact that each state must respect the territorial integrity of its neighbors;
3. Finally we agree — and I explicitly emphasize this — that the events in Southeast Asia must present no obstacle to the continuation of our policy of detente between East and West.

*Q: You also received a letter from Brezhnev. I don't know if you have replied to it. You said, however, that the BRD would not furnish arms to the Chinese: among all the recipients of Brezhnev's message, you are the only one to make such a public commitment. Why?*

*A: I have already responded to Brezhnev's letter. What I said publicly is a foregone conclusion for my country. This commitment goes not only for China, but also for the Soviet Union and other states of the world. For 10 years we have followed a consistent policy, by which we furnish arms and military equipment only to our allies. China is not our ally and therefore we don't sell arms to China, nor to Japan.*

*Q: You would refuse to sell even if it might compromise commercial relations?*

*A: Yes. . . . We don't give arms to Vietnam, to Cambodia, to the African states or to other states. It is a linear policy, which we have not changed on account of Mr. Brezhnev's letter. . . . I should add that the Chinese know of our policy and they have not asked us for arms.*

The existence of this secret French report (which was supported yesterday by the intensification of the Chinese offensive, and the news of the Soviet airlift, is revealed by the *Lettre de l'Expansion* of yesterday. According to this source, it also seems that tension is developing between Paris and London because of the sale of British Harrier planes to China, confirmed in recent days. Giscard (who earlier agreed to negotiate with the Chinese on the sale of armored cars) is in fact convinced that the West must "limit as much as possible" the sale of arms to China: and in this context a "hard line" has been taken against London, along with a "critical line" towards Washington.

## 'Can't the USSR say it's being encircled?'

*Georges Gorse, former Minister in the French government and now a deputy of the Gaullist party (RPR), argued in Le Monde Feb. 25-26 that China, not the Soviet Union, is endangering world peace. He brings his article, excerpted below, citing a conversation he had with General de Gaulle on this subject.*

...De Gaulle told me, somewhat schematically, "the USSR and China will one day soon begin feuding: we