

Jeremy Stone calls for war by committee

Jeremy Stone, director of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and son of anti-Vietnam War activist I.F. Stone, has proposed a congressional "war powers" committee whose approval the President would need to order "first use" of nuclear weapons. "Such a committee," he wrote in the Sept. 9 Los Angeles Times, "could be empowered by law to authorize or deny . . . presidential requests for first use, in the absence of declarations of war or decisions by the full Congress. Thus, as a step toward an eventual policy of no-first-use, we would at least spread responsibility for it." Stone's proposal also appeared in the fall issue of Foreign Policy magazine, an organ of the notorious Carnegie Endowment for World Peace. Foreign Policy articles are often trial balloons for America's Eastern Establishment.

Constitutional lawyer Raoul Berger, a harsh critic of judicial review of the legislature, and other legal scholars, are assisting Stone and the FAS in drawing up the legislation, since it is a patently unconstitutional restriction on the President's power as commander-in-chief.

The Defense Department's general counsel, Chapman B. Cox, wrote a letter to Stone on behalf of Secretary Weinberger, criticizing the proposal on grounds that it would "threaten NATO's ability to deter Soviet aggression."

Stone was interviewed on Sept. 10 by Kathleen Murphy Klenetsky.

EIR: What kind of chance does your proposal have?

Stone: First of all, the latest polls . . . show that a third of the population wants a "no first use" pledge made. Americans are not aware that the President now has the right to order the use of nuclear weapons in the event of a conventional attack; they are under the impression that the President can only use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack. What a lot of people think of as "first use" is actually "second strike." I think it's logical . . . to put an additional lock on the use of nuclear weapons in hostilities. As for my prognosis, I think the preconditions exist for a solution given the great interest shown by the population in the no-first-use issue.

EIR: Are you getting much of a response from Europe?

Stone: I'm leaving tonight [Sept. 10] for France, for a meeting of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. There will be a storm of articles about this issue soon, although I can't give you any details. My proposal is directed to NATO, not so much to the U.S. per se. A no-first-use policy as

proposed by [Robert] McNamara and [McGeorge] Bundy [in a 1982 *Foreign Affairs* article], is a change in the nature of our commitment to NATO, whereas my approach does not fracture NATO. Although let me point out that in my interpretation at least, the U.S. is not automatically at war if there are hostilities in Europe. At least that's what Dean Acheson insisted. We think many in NATO will welcome this because they fear a cowboy in the White House.

EIR: Does this fit with a NATO conventional buildup?

Stone: To a certain extent. You could argue that if NATO conventional forces were more extensive, it would delay the point at which the U.S. would consider using nuclear weapons to repel a conventional attack . . . giving the President time to consult with the proposed committee. My own view, however, is that it would be difficult to motivate a no-first-use proposal simply on the basis of a conventional buildup, since I don't know if you can ever be sure at what point your buildup is extensive enough to completely rule out the use of nuclear weapons. If I were President, I don't think I would repudiate first use, at least not publicly. What I am proposing to do is to put an additional lock on the decision to use nuclear weapons. . . .

EIR: Do you have a timetable for adoption?

Stone: No, no immediate time-frame. We have some legal scholars looking at the constitutional issues. . . . Whether or not first use is unlawful . . . we shouldn't have a single human being, who might be incompetent, deciding the lives of billions. . . .

EIR: What else are you doing to advance this?

Stone: Contacting various peace groups and others to get them involved in a national educational campaign. We want to inform people that the President does have the power to order first use. All persons and groups who feel negatively about it ought to join together on at least these two propositions: that a nuclear war arising from conventional hostilities would be a *new* war, and that, accordingly, no single decision-maker should have the power to authorize use of nuclear weapons on his own and start such a war. Whether one is for or against any first use, or against "early" first use, or just against first use on the say-so of a single, deeply involved politician who happens to be President—one can agree, in short, that presidential first use is wrong. Some who share this position may come to believe further that presidential first use is unlawful. After we get a good grass-roots base, we'll start working on Congress.

EIR: Is Walter Mondale sympathetic to your proposal?

Stone: That's a short-term thing. We don't want to inject this issue into the campaign. . . . However, I certainly think it's possible that a President who is sympathetic could himself propose it as legislation. That would give it much greater chance of passage.