

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

West Germany: Iklé policy threatens NATO

Dr. Alfred Dregger, the head of the Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union faction in the West German parliament, the Bundestag, came to Washington May 5 to deliver a stern warning that any change in U.S. strategic policy toward NATO will bring about a disintegration of the alliance.

Dregger specifically targeted the report published this spring by the President's Commission on Long-Term Integrated Strategy, entitled *Discriminate Deterrence*, and commonly known by the names of the chairmen of the commission, former Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé and Albert Wohlstetter.

The report calls for a drastic restructuring of the philosophy of deterrence which has been the cornerstone of the NATO alliance. Instead of a unified defensive alliance, whose purpose is to prevent aggression from the East bloc by insisting that any aggression would be met with a full-scale nuclear attack," the Iklé-Wohlstetter study advocates a concept of "regional deterrence," which is based on what it calls a "more realistic assessment" of how a conflict would actually be engaged.

The shift proposed is monumental: from an alliance built to insure that aggression never occurs, to one structured to anticipate a conflict.

Needless to say, this report created a firestorm of outrage in Western Europe when it came out. As Dregger's visit to Washington indicated, it has not yet abated, despite attempts by

the Reagan administration to assure the NATO allies that it does not intend to adopt the Iklé policy.

Dregger said in remarks to the John Hopkins University's American Institute for Contemporary German Studies here that he remains concerned "because the commission that prepared the report was made up of so many influential figures in the U.S." Indeed, the commission included three former national security advisers: Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and William P. Clark.

Dregger confirmed to this reporter in private remarks after his speech that he was "fully aware" that it is widely assumed here that the next administration, Republican or Democrat, will adopt the Iklé policy. "That is why I came to Washington now," Dregger told me.

In his speech, Dregger said that the implementation of the Iklé report "would create a violent reaction in West Germany." He said that "NATO would no longer have a base in public opinion" in Germany, and his countrymen will no longer tolerate the existence of short-range nuclear weapons on their soil.

If the U.S. says it will no longer commit its strategic nuclear deterrent to the defense of West Germany, then the Warsaw Pact forces will be encouraged to attack Western Europe, knowing they would not be risking an all-out nuclear war.

Since short-range nuclear weapons are now the major means the West has to offset the massive Warsaw Pact conventional force advantage on the borders of West Germany, the removal of the U.S. strategic deterrent increases the likelihood that these weapons will someday be used in combat.

If that ever happened, Germany would be turned into a "nuclear rubblefield," since the targets of these weapons would be Warsaw Pact tanks

advancing onto West German territory. Therefore, the minute the Iklé policy became official U.S. policy, West Germans will clamor for the removal of all short-range nuclear weapons and a pullout from NATO.

The *Washington Post* mistook Dregger's remarks as a call for the elimination of short-range nuclear systems. In fact, he said he favored their continued presence in West Germany, and their modernization, conditional upon "clarification of their strategic purpose."

East Germany: Create nuclear free zone

Perhaps not by accident, the same day that Dregger delivered his warnings against the Iklé policy, Herman Axen, a leader of the East German government, showed up to address the National Press Club.

The head of the East German communist party's Foreign Affairs Committee, Axen gave official Washington a sample of how alluring Warsaw Pact options will appear to the population of West Germany if, in fact, the Iklé policy is implemented.

Axen made the case for the Soviet proposal of a "nuclear-free zone" to run down a corridor some 200 kilometers on either side of the boundary between East and West. This, he said, is the only way to prevent the "nuclear rubblefield" that would be created on German soil if short-range nuclear weapons were ever used.

He gratuitously proposed to remove all short-range nuclear weapons from East German soil if the West Germans did likewise. He did not mention that this would leave the Warsaw Pact with a decisive advantage in conventional forces armed with "futuristic technology," such as radio frequency weapons.