
INTERVIEW: British strategist Gerald Frost

How Mutually Assured Survival can reinforce the Western Alliance

Gerald Frost, director of the Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies in London, gave an exclusive interview to EIR's Mark Burdman from his office in London on Jan. 6. Frost had written the first article to appear in a British daily calling on the nations of Europe to support President Reagan's commitment to develop directed-energy-beam antibalistic-missile defense systems, as an alternative to the disintegration of the Western alliance and as the most effective means of countering the strategic threat from Moscow. The article appeared in the Times of London on Dec. 28 under the title, "Why a Star Wars Strategy Could Help Keep the Peace" and was excerpted in last week's issue of Executive Intelligence Review.

Frost's writings on strategic questions have appeared in the past in the magazine Survey and other publications. His statements to EIR reflect his own views and are not meant to express those of his institute.

EIR: In your London *Times* piece you have harsh words to say about "flexible response" as a doctrine. Could you specify here your objections to this idea?

Frost: What I would say is that the weakness of flexible response—which is all we have right now—is that it rests on the idea of America placing its cities at risk to nuclear attack to defend European cities. That is a doubtful proposition. It's not that we need 100 percent deterrence against nuclear attack, that's not the point, but the current arrangements lack credibility.

We are faced with a possible American unwillingness to defend a recalcitrant, reluctant, and sometimes disloyal Europe. The alternative that is most worthwhile of consideration is one that has been unknown but which compensates for the deficiency, which is what has come to be known as "Star Wars." This would increase the defense of American cities and also of European cities. The risk to the United States would be diminished, so U.S. credibility to defend Europe would be greater. I regret that the idea has not been more sympathetically received in circles in the United States and in Europe. There has been a knee-jerk response, claiming it is a "Fortress America" policy, whereas it is just the reverse. All the statements that the policy is fantastic, expensive,

escalatory, and so on, are poorly based. I want to see a discussion of the advantages of Mutually Assured Survival [President Reagan's offer to the U.S.S.R. of parallel development and deployment of advanced ABM systems]. This might generate greater public support.

EIR: Would you say that an honest discussion of what President Reagan has advocated might defuse the arguments of the so-called peace movement?

Frost: What has been proposed is not offensive; it is purely defensive. It is non-nuclear. The peace movement might find it harder to oppose such a system compared to the Pershing and the cruise. However sincere some people in the peace movement may be, there may be obvious advantages in this doctrine in countering their arguments.

EIR: There has been a lot of talk, in the *Financial Times* this week, in statements by Lord Carrington and others, about the "decoupling" of Europe from the United States. Where does it come from, how might it be countered, and how does this affect Soviet strategic considerations?

Frost: This is an immensely complex question. It has much to do with the European dependency on America. Perhaps the way this works is unhealthy for both partners. There was a sense after the war that Europe was recovering from a devastating war, and so needed this dependence. But we have allowed ourselves to become so dependent that it has caused resentment. Americans tend to see us as freeloaders, and there is in Europe a reluctance to provide for our defenses. But there is not much incentive to "do it yourself" when the American nuclear arsenal exists to protect us; we are not maintaining our conventional forces with sufficient strength. With our withdrawal from overseas possessions, our general worldview diminished. We don't think globally as much, even though the threat is a global one. We have permitted America to have too large a part in the formulation of nuclear policy and doctrine.

The situation with the Pershings and cruises is different. This came from the fear of Helmut Schmidt and [former Labour Prime Minister] James Callaghan and others that in fact there would be a decoupling. But the problem is that no

one for a long time thought of the defenses we need in a coherent way. We have developed no notion of defense, but have been guided by domestic political factors.

EIR: In this context, how would you estimate the effects of the doctrine of MAD, the doctrine that was developed out of the Pugwash group? It has amazed us how this doctrine has left the West with no doctrine of defense and no doctrine of offense while the Russians—Sokolovskii and so on—have both.

Frost: It is unsatisfactory to have a defense based on offensive weapons! We have wondered: Can MAD protect third parties? It's one thing to say, "If you destroy me, I'll destroy you." But the statement "I'll destroy you if you destroy my friend" is not credible. I agree with the thrust of your question.

MAD became inadequate once the Soviets achieved strategic parity. Flexible response was only a means of attempting to deal with that, but without major changes in doctrine. This has led to a general lowering of our guard, both in the ideological sense and in the military sense. Many in America say, for some reason, that it would be *easier* to deal with the Soviets if America had *fewer* missiles, because the Soviets would be less afraid of the West. The experience of détente is based on this. It reflects a philosophical worldview which has been shown to be incredible.

EIR: How, specifically, do you evaluate the strategic danger from the Soviets now? Where do you expect major Soviet moves and on what level of escalation?

Our journal has been warning of Soviet intentions to use the bogus pretext of a "resurgence of Nazism" in West Germany to justify a surgical strike into the Federal Republic, while at the same time offering "carrots" to entice the West Germans out of NATO. In response to this, we have advocated emergency pre-emptive measures signaling a readiness to fight war if need be, including a crash ABM program, neutron bombs in Europe, and placing strategic and relevant forces on alert, which could apply to the British case as well in terms of submarine capabilities and so on. How are you viewing the situation in Germany from this standpoint?

Frost: We can't say the Soviets are infallible, but they have a great consistency of purpose. One of their main thrusts is the decoupling of America and Europe. All their statements during the arms talks are oriented toward this. In any case, the Soviets rarely reach an agreement which is meant to be mutually beneficial, but in the case of public diplomacy, their aim is to divide Europe from America. They mobilize the peace movement, increase anxieties, and raise the fears of imminent war, and, here, I must say, I find disagreement with your specific idea of the surgical strike in the next weeks.

When they talk of Central America or Grenada, splitting Europe from America is always in the back of their mind. Their strategy is to Finlandize Western Europe, and they have not been wholly unsuccessful in the last 25 years. In terms of Germany, you identify their objectives very well: They offer

the carrot and the stick element. But what I see is that, given that the peace movement is gathering in strength, they will go on using their military might as a means for threatening, cajoling, psychological pressure. There are signs that this is successful. But I am not worried at the moment about a surgical strike. I agree, they think coherently about fighting a nuclear war—they are better than we are in this. And, I agree, they are expansionist. But I think they are cautiously expansionist. The main purpose of their weaponry is pressure, to dominate by political means. Of course, if they decide they have to go to war, they are more ready to use their weapons than we are in the West. They have a better idea of strategy and tactics. But I don't see them *seeking* war.

EIR: What of the window of opportunity factor for them, our window of vulnerability—their perception that if the West has a technological-military renaissance around these new systems, their calculations for imperial rule will be destroyed?

We need a proper discussion about what Mutually Assured Survival would involve. I doubt whether even two or three Members of Parliament know about it. This doctrine makes the American guarantee for Europe more credible. It means more direct defense for Europe itself.

Frost: The window of opportunity has not been closed yet. There is no rock-like solidarity as a result of more defense spending, and the systems we have are not deployed. But if the Soviets are thinking seriously, I don't see them mounting drastic action for another year. They want to see who's going to win in the U.S. elections before doing anything drastic. And they are wondering what success they can derive in Europe from their moves.

One thing we must consider: It is too early for NATO to congratulate ourselves over the Euromissiles' deployment. We have one to two missile parts [i.e., batteries] in, and they are not deployed. In the case of Greenham Commons, it may be impossible to disperse the weapons because of the peace movement. If they can't move around, they lose their deterrent value.

I see the Soviets waiting for six months, a year, maybe 18 months. Although what Reagan has done is commendable, few things have been brought to fruition. So the Soviets won't declare war, or seek something on the central [Euro-

pean] front. They will play on the mounting uncertainties.

EIR: What arises here are the parallels between now and 1939, the Soviets challenging us as Hitler did. . . .

Frost: In the opinion-forming elite, there is a reluctance to think about the Soviet menace. We don't have the eulogies to the U.S.S.R. that we had [to the Nazis] in the 1930s, but there is a reluctance to think about the accumulation of weapons by the Soviets over the past decades.

Many people, because of this reluctance, start to think of America as a greater threat than the U.S.S.R., because of the concrete worries around the Pershings and cruises. But the SS-20s are moving in, at the rate of one more a week, and there is no reaction. It is very disconcerting. If there is a *tide*, it is toward listening more to those warning about the consequences to European sovereignty of the Soviet threat, although this is not true of Germany. There has been a reluctant awareness of the Soviet predominance in Europe. Unlike America, people say, the Russians will never go away, they are a European power, not just an Asian power.

The fear of the Soviets, ironically, is reflected in the growth of the peace movement. Contrary to what should seem to be the case, when the Soviets behave decisively, the peace movement gains strength, rather than weakens, and hostility to America goes up. This makes a valid comparison between now and 1939: When the Nazis showed aggression, the reaction was contrary to what would have been imagined, and people tried harder to appease. I see the parallels. There is a strong appeasement current now. Probably *détente* is part of that.

EIR: You recently wrote an article in *The Spectator* attacking Lord Carrington's appointment as secretary-general of NATO.

Frost: . . . He's a highly accomplished diplomat, and he has diplomatic answers, but he confuses the diplomatic with the strategic. His support for *détente* has been consistent, and this doesn't really cohere with NATO strategy. It doesn't cohere with Luns, who doesn't believe in *détente*. Carrington is a nice man, but he believes in *détente*. He thinks one can complain to the Soviets about Afghanistan, but he is very much in favor of trade and doubtful about sanctions.

It is a bad appointment. His relations with America are not the best. His support for a more independent European policy is well-known. His appointment won't necessarily lead to a more coherent response. International politics is in large part signals and symbols, and his appointment is the wrong signal. And he's likely to send many more wrong signals now. The only hope is that he is dependent on his staff, and some are more realistic than he. Maybe this will mean our worst fears won't be realized. It's the best one can hope for under the circumstances.

EIR: On the question of the role of Britain in the worsening strategic situation, we have been working to strengthen the

potentials for a "Churchill/'39 reflex" against the appeasers. How would you see the role of Britain in respect to this potential at this late moment?

Frost: It is important for Britain not to underestimate nor to overestimate its influence. Our advantage is relative stability politically and good relations with America; so we have a part to play, in terms of countering the divorce of the Western alliance which is now threatened.

Our most valuable role is to remind the Europeans of the dangers to the alliance posed by the threats to our internal coherence. We need increased spending on conventional forces. We need a greater recognition of American initiatives to curb Soviet expansionist tendencies. Certain proposals from the United States, like the pipeline embargo, have been either dismissed contemptuously or met with vapid rhetoric. . . . Britain should spell it out: *There are no alternatives to the present alliance*. We cannot defend ourselves without America. We need new forms, new structures, new initiatives, to keep together the alliance that has kept the peace and made democratic values possible for the last 38 years. This is a fairly herculean task, and there are not many hopeful signs at the moment.

EIR: That brings us back to the question of Mutually Assured Survival as providing such new forms, initiatives, and so on.

Frost: We need a proper discussion about what Mutually Assured Survival would involve. I doubt whether even two or three Members of Parliament know about it. This doctrine makes the American guarantee for Europe more credible. It means more direct defense for Europe itself.

Some people say the Soviets would only produce missiles with shorter times, to achieve greater invulnerability, but I think that would only mean we would have to have more sophisticated ABM systems to match these. We need an objective analysis of the whole doctrine, so people can decide; and we need to discuss the role Europe could play if we don't want a continuation of the resentment about America that has developed.

What I think, for example, is that British, French, and West German technology could make a valuable contribution to the schemes we are discussing, and it would make it easier to argue for the new doctrine. It could provide jobs in the growth area in Europe. This would enable the proposal to be more readily sold in political terms.

EIR: This last point is very interesting. Could you elaborate how European technological contribution to the ABM development could work?

Frost: I am not an expert on the technological side of ABM systems, but my sense is that West German technology is of a very high order for these systems, as is much of French technology, and even some of the British. We have to discuss to see what inputs could be made. . . . It's important in the sense of making the burden-sharing more meaningful.