
Interview: Christian Lenzer

'Germany must decide this year'

Dr. Christian Lenzer is chairman of the WEU Committee on Scientific, Technological, and Aerospace Questions, Member of the German Parliament, member of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU).

EIR: The range of positions toward SDI that emerged during the conference are best described by the following two poles: On the one side, the French minister for research Curien, who said that "SDI is undesirable," and, on the other hand, Professor Timmermann from the German Ministry of Defense, who said that SDI is a "political necessity." Of course, in Germany, even inside the government, whose official position is in general quite favorable to SDI, there are a number of voices still being raised in dissent. Meanwhile, in France, President Francois Mitterrand has said a clear "No" to the Strategic Defense Initiative, that is, to French participation in it—although it does appear as if opposition leaders who have declared their support for SDI may win legislative elections next year, and thus form a new government. But for now, President Mitterrand is sticking to his Eureka program, a supposedly civilian alternative to developing an anti-missile technology, but focused on much of the same technology. Taking this into account, how do you judge the possibility of reaching a European consensus?

Lenzer: Speaking as a German politician, I think that in the past we had some sort of unclear discussion—Eureka, proposed by the French President and a purely civilian project, on the one side and on the other side, SDI, the offer of the U.S. President for establishing a missile defense system in space. First, this alternative is wrong. The projects are not mutually exclusive; both are possible.

SDI concerns security policy and questions of general military strategy. Here a political answer has to be found, and I personally have come to a positive conclusion. I am in favor of a German participation in the research phase—and I emphasize that for the next years we are only speaking of research—of SDI. I am in favor of everything that stabilizes the alliance and strengthens the defensive capabilities of NATO—under the condition that the integrity of the whole alliance is preserved with SDI.

Eureka, on the other hand, aims at focusing the European research capacities and manpower on certain selected, market-relevant sectors: communications technology, laser tech-

nology, micro-electronics, materials research, space technology. These are purely civilian applications, aiming at increasing the competitiveness and productivity of the European economy, so it can face the Japanese and American challenge in the high-technology sector.

EIR: I certainly agree, the two programs are not necessarily mutually exclusive. And, in fact, one of your own parliamentarians in West Germany, Mr. Willy Wimmer, recently proposed that Germany, too, should have its own missile-shield research program, saying that this would not be opposed to or an alternative to participation in the American SDI, but rather supplement it from the standpoint of what may be Germany's own special needs. Of course, whether a program is initiated from the military standpoint, or initiated from the civilian standpoint, in either case it will have tremendous implications in terms of spillovers into the civilian economy. But, this does not answer the decisive question, whether a European consensus can be reached on SDI.

Lenzer: Of course this is the decisive question. I would welcome very much—and this is also the opinion of the West German government, especially after the results of the Teltschik commission—if we as Europeans would say: Yes, we participate in the R&D phase of SDI. With this we would not lose anything, especially since it does not yet include a decision on a future deployment of such systems.

EIR: Do you see the possibility ^{the} Teltschik report, the German government could play a pioneering role by deciding positively on SDI and by this pushing the other European countries forward?

Lenzer: Well, I do not like to use the expression "pioneering role," because in European policy you have to deal with certain vanities and delicacies, but I can say that, because of its political, economic, and technological weight, the Federal Republic of Germany can play a very decisive melody in the European concert. I would welcome it if the German government now, after having carefully examined the whole question for some time, would come to the conclusion, which I think, is most probable: Yes, we participate in the research and development phase of SDI, and furthermore, that it would use this conclusion in the whole European discussion.

EIR: In Europe we have been talking about SDI for more than two years now. Don't you think that now we have to make a decision, especially, if you see this against the background that the first generation SDI systems in the United States are a question of only a few years, as Professor Felden explained this morning?

Lenzer: I agree with this unconditionally. A thorough examination is never bad, but now further examination does not seem to be of much value. Within the next months, we have to find a decision; whether this can be a joint European decision, is still open, but I think that the German government should decide by the end of this year.