

Schmidt: N-Bomb, 'Brings Up Psychological-Strategic Problems'

The following interview with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt by Jürgen Lorenz was published in the Kieler Nachrichten, July 19, 1977.

Q. Mr. Chancellor, shortly before your visit to Washington preliminary approval of the neutron bomb was given. Could the introduction of this weapon strengthen NATO's defense capability and along with it Germany's security, or do you share the view of the Social Democratic Party's national business manager Egon Bahr, that this bomb is a symbol of perversion of the human mind, since, when a choice becomes necessary, it is not the man, but rather the machine which seems more important to preserve?

A. The preliminary decisions you are speaking about are solely American decisions, made within the government and the Congress in Washington in connection with the budget legislation. Thus, no military or political decisions have been made which could affect the entire North Atlantic Alliance.

'The Chancellor Worries'

On July 18 the Czechoslovak newspaper Rude Pravo commented on the Schmidt-Carter split:

...even if at the conclusion of the talks both sides expressed their "fundamental agreement on the most important problems," it was nonetheless impossible to cover up the existing fissures in their mutual relations....The standpoint of the Social Democratic government differs from Carter's attitude in its fundamental direction. The Federal Republic believes that American attempts to interfere into the affairs of the socialist states would seriously damage all international relations. This is obviously not any sort of "ideological" dispute. Schmidt and Carter cannot be accused of altering their anti-Communist convictions....but the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany is displaying a greater amount of political realism than is the representative of the USA.

As far as I can see, inside the alliance there have only been preliminary reports on neutron weapons up to now. In the coming period there will certainly occur detailed consultations on this. I myself, however, intend to contribute to putting this issue into the correct objective context. We are dealing here with small nuclear weapons which are designed for the so-called battlefield, or, as we have read in the meantime, with tactical nuclear weapons...this new type of warhead brings up considerable psychological-strategic problems both within our own alliance and also in relation to the Warsaw Pact. This problem will require multilateral discussions within the alliance in order to clear it up. President Carter and I did not speak with each other about this because, given the

present status of information I would consider a position from the Federal German government to be premature.

The stationing of new types of weapons on German soil, whether this concerns conventional or nuclear weapon types, has in the past always been preceded by careful joint discussions. As far as American nuclear weapons were concerned, these discussions were particularly intensive and also occurred directly between Bonn and Washington. Obviously, this would also go ahead in great detail if America were to announce its intention to station this new type of weapon on German territory.

Q. You found a positive echo in President Carter for the idea of not under all circumstances waiting until American-Soviet negotiations on strategic arms limitations (SALT) are successful, before a new push is made at the Vienna conference on troop reductions in Europe (MBFR). Is this idea of using MBFR as a pacemaker for SALT and not vice versa the kernel of your repeatedly advertised initiative to give new impulses to the MBFR negotiations?

A. On this we must distinguish two different matters, Mr. Lorenz. On the one hand, we discussed with President Jimmy Carter concrete proposals which had been jointly worked out in Bonn by Mr. Genscher and Mr. Leber, and whose aim is to get concrete discussions moving at the Vienna MBFR negotiations. After we have the American President's agreement to this in principle, then we can jointly bring this to the other partners of the North Atlantic Alliance and set up discussions there.

A completely different matter is the fact that President Carter, on his own initiative, brought up the question of whether it might not be possible, if the talks between Washington and Moscow on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons — SALT II — continue to proceed very slowly, to attempt at least to make some clearly perceptible progress at MBFR in Vienna. This would make our desire to continue a policy of détente visible not only with words, but also with deeds.

This question by Carter was similar to my own thoughts, which I formulated by myself and had already discussed in the German delegation with the foreign minister. Indeed, the impression so far of all participants was that it would be senseless to seek progress in Vienna as long as the big powers did not move forward at SALT.

Soviet Press On Schmidt Visit

Izvestia July 17, "And No Agreement..." by A. Grigor'yants:

U.S. President J. Carter's words to his guest Chancellor of the BRD, Helmut Schmidt, that "between us there are no disagreements," have evoked quite a few ironic commentaries from observers. Disagreements, of course, do exist, and very serious disagreements, although the partners in the talks tried to smooth them over or at least to create the external appearance of agreement...

Since coming to power the new Washington Administration has markedly increased the striving of the United States to restore its leading position in the capitalist world at the expense of the interests of its partners and allies...

Another knot of contradictions is the sale of nuclear equipment and technology, as well as nuclear fuel. Washington is trying to get undivided American rule over the world market for atomic power station equipment and nuclear technology, and shuns no methods to crush competitors, especially the BRD...

As we can see, harmony of interest is still a long way off. But our attention is drawn to something else — during the talks in Washington differences appeared which go beyond the bounds of purely interimperialist rivalry and contradictions. At issue here is the concern and alarm which Western Europe is experiencing in connec-

tion with the dangerous “improvisations” in the policy of the Washington Administration — the uproar around “human rights” and the rush to deploy qualitatively new types of strategic weapons. The *New York Post* wrote that Schmidt went to the USA to “ask Carter to dampen his ardor...”

Speaking abroad before the National Press Club, Schmidt resolutely endorsed the policy of détente in Europe. It is difficult to say to what extent Washington is inclined to consider the opinions of its allies in this question so vitally important for the whole world. But one thing cannot be doubted: to the previous, one might say traditional, contradictions between the USA and its western partners have been added qualitatively new ones. They concern the future of the policy of détente, the policy of peace and cooperation in international relations. And this is an extremely remarkable phenomenon.

N-Bomb ‘Perversion Of Human Mind’

The following are excerpts of an official statement by Egon Bahr, Federal Business Manager of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD), which appeared in Die Welt, July 18.

For some years, we in the German Social Democratic Party have been conducting a discussion on the quality of life. After the economic revival brought us incomparable reforms which have benefited the entire population, the question now arises of the purpose of all this development. Man would become impoverished if this material success were to become the only measure of success in general.

The fact that (with the use of the neutron bomb) industrial plants, streets and communications systems can almost immediately be used “afterwards,” — this is the

idea behind it. The progress represented by this is that it is easier to remove human corpses than the rubble of cities and factories. With his brain, man is making himself into even less than a slave of his machines. When a decision must be made, it is not the man, but the machine which should be saved. The neutron bomb is a symbol of perversion of the human mind.

It makes no difference whether one thinks in terms of Christianity or with maxims of humanist ethics, whether one questions what is worth defending against enemies or thinks about the discussion of the sanctity of human life in connection with abortion reform: With the neutron bomb mankind has removed himself from the center to the edge, since the center is now occupied by material things. The triumph of materialism or human life — which do we want to defend?