

West German Strategists Announce 'Total Failure Of American Security Policy'

The following are excerpts from an article in the Wehrkunde Gesellschaft, publication of a leading West German think tank. The article by Hans Rühle, is entitled "On the Political Strategic Debate in the USA" and concludes that the U.S. military strategic posture is dangerously incompetent.

Always and in every case, the days of a government changeover are periods of insecurity. Rarely, however, in the recent history of the western world, has a government changeover been accompanied by so many question marks as to personnel and conceptual matters as has been the transition from Ford to Carter. Nobody appeared to know in what direction this political voyage was supposed to go — outside of Jimmy Carter himself. And even more: all the unfermented and apolitical statements which came out of the mouth of a promising presidential candidate over the Atlantic stole speeches away from so many otherwise verbose contemporaries.

Once the election had passed, Europe, flabbergasted, had to concede once more that the USA remains the country of unlimited possibilities, in which a nobody without the aid of convincing personal qualifications, without a pressing or even partially concluded political program, and against the opposition of a major portion of his own party leadership, could become President.

The new government has been in office for a few months. To be sure, not that much has changed. Certainly, Carter, his cabinet and his 'kitchen cabinet' have formulated clear positions in a few political areas. However, intimate observers of the American scene still find it impossible to identify a concept behind the statements and measures issued thus far — which would allow American policy to assume a relatively consistent and predictable path. This insecurity necessarily effects security policy especially strongly. Not only because the national fate of numerous allies depends on American security policy, but also because even relative security in the present system of mutual deterrence can only be achieved if American policy is predictable to a greater degree — in the sense of rational calculability.

And thus we come to the theme: the political-strategic debate in the USA. For this could and can — in its unusual and outbroken hecticness — be explained through the initial incompetence of candidate Carter, and the present practical eclecticism on national security policy of the President. Yet, this appeared and still appears to signal that the phase of conceptualization of the new American security policy has not yet been concluded — and thus that further influence can be exercised on its formulation.

The presently discussed themes are not all new, nor were they before. For years, a few of them were regular

items in the tables of contents of nearly all leading journals. ...Now, however, since the problem was to program a President unprepared on security policy, and to put him forward for the upcoming SALT talks, every hesitation was given up...Nuances no longer played a role. The issue was addressed directly. The single and only question was: 'Who leads?', the USA or the Soviet Union...This unfruitful debate should not be emphasized and analysed. Rather, the major points of this debate will be isolated and given historical grounding. At the conclusion, an attempt should be undertaken to come to a general evaluation on a higher level of political abstraction.

'Civil Defense: the New Debate

Since the early 1960s, when the USA established the concept of 'mutually assured destruction' for the prevention of a nuclear war, civil defense played practically no role any longer...Of course, in 1967 McNamara undertook active protection of the American civilian population for protection against China's 'primitive nuclear weapons,' through the construction of an anti-missile system; however, by 1969, Nixon gave this concept up again...

As a result of statements by the former American defense secretary Schlesinger, whereby a Soviet counterforce attack against all American land-based intercontinental rockets would possibly kill 'only' 800,000 people, new speculations were provoked starting in 1974 based on calculations and counter-calculations as to the number of victims which would result from a Soviet missile attack. However, this new debate would have petered out without much interest and without practical consequences after a time had new information on the state of passive Soviet civil defense not been made known. In an interview with the *New York Times*, the retiring chief of U.S. Air Force Intelligence General Keegan pointed out that (the Soviet Union has a massive civil defense program...ed.)...

Upon inquiry by the Congress, the Joint Chiefs of Staff then rejected several of the overall statements by Keegan as incorrect; however, they were unable to refute the data on the cited concrete civil defense measures. The less so, as Keegan did not remain without support. T.K. Jones, a former member of the American SALT delegation, and presently with Boeing, went so far as to claim that 98 percent of the Soviet population could survive a nuclear war. (Source: *Science Magazine*, vol. 194, 1976). General Keegan has had the last word in this debate for the time being. A few weeks ago, he issued an imploring appeal to a group of journalists. Repeating again his data on Soviet civil defense, he called upon them to openly contradict him. Keegan on his concern

and on the reason for his decision to go to the public with his information: "The time has come to warn our population and its leaders." That this is so, becomes clear from the official yearly report of the American Defense Department for the financial year 197(6?), in which it states: "During the last six months, the actual extent of Soviet civil defense has become known to us..." Apparently, for many years we had underestimated the problem of active, but even more, of passive Soviet civil defense. ...

(Dr. Rühle then quotes from a CIA report cited in the 1976 yearly report of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The CIA statement asserts that the Soviets are striving for a 'war-winning capability,' based on emphasizing their counterforce capacities. Importantly, the CIA estimation also asserts that: 'The Soviet Union has never accepted the strategy of 'mutually assured destruction' as a desirable and lasting basis for stable strategic-nuclear super-power relations.' — ed.)

The Threat Analysts in Open Contradiction

For months, America's secret services went for banner headlines. Scarcely a day passed by on which a member, sympathizer or opponent of these otherwise so silent networks did not issue a public statement. The issue was the extent of the Soviet threat.

The leaders in the debate were and still are, as noted, the secret services. This is unprecedented in recent American history....Until the end of the 1950s, there were, just as among the secret services of all countries, occasional rivalries of numerous origins. The Threat Analyses, however, were generally undisputed. This changed at the beginning of the 1960s, when during the Kennedy Administration some of the so-called 'Whiz Kids', that younger generation of intellectuals — to which moreover the newly appointed American Secretary of Defense Brown belonged — were flooded into the CIA.

The old battle horses of the military secret services not only established a natural distance to those self-confident egg-heads, stomping around with their systems analyses and use-cost-risk evaluations, but soon enough there were opportunities for controversial, objective discussion. The most important accusation by the DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency), the central military secret service, as well as the secret services of the three armed forces was that the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) underestimated that extent of Soviet arming in general, and the tempo of Soviet arms development in particular. Of course, the CIA rejected these accusation in a year to year analysis on the occasion of the 'National Intelligence Estimate' (NIE). Today, however, we know that the accusations were justified. (Dr. Rühle then lists a number of chief studies and books released on this subject since 1974, featuring Albert Wohlstetter's work. The account traces numerous CIA misestimates of both the numbers and technological expertise of Soviet weapons — ed.)

The Future of American Security Policy

Whatever current one follows in the present American strategic debate, each leads unavoidably to the core of American security policy. And there, where for a long time the apologists of 'Mutually Assured Destruction' strategically 'order' the international system from their standpoint without consideration of the theory and praxis of Soviet military policy, one becomes increasingly uneasy. Justifiably. It is presently one of the unholy inheritances of the McNamara period that the American administration certainly believes in an overall expansive Soviet foreign policy whose conceptual and material translation into the military dimension they continually deny.

Thus, it is argued that since in the nuclear age war between the superpowers can no longer be a means of politics, any single effort for military superiority is superfluous. Only a system of stable deterrence, it is argued, makes any sense, and furthermore only on the foundation of mutually guaranteed second strike capacity. To be sure, the Soviet Union has never positively welcomed this conception, but nevertheless the planners in the Pentagon presumed that Soviet military strategy was identical with the American. Not because the Soviets wanted it so, but because according to the viewpoint of accredited American military strategy no alternative existed for a 'rationally' thinking and acting Soviet Union. There was never any questioning in Washington as to whether a politically dynamic Soviet Union by virtue of its ideological role would accept a static military concept as 'rational.'

Thus, it was resisted in the U.S.A. as entirely conforming with the system that the Soviet Union was working its way up from its inferior status to parity with the USA. The rude awakening occurred — and that is where we stand today — when new information in the area of Soviet civil defense as well as on the forced expansion of Soviet strategic nuclear weapons potential could only lead to the conclusion that the Soviet Union is striving for military superiority. Now, it has suddenly been realized in the U.S.A. that for several years, Soviet weapons development had been equated with conceptual explanations which Moscow silently indulged in, but never affirmatively answered...

The fact that the Soviet Union, via its visible striving for military superiority, has obviously not accepted the system of mutual deterrence means no more and no less than the total failure of American security policy. The participants in Washington are still defensively denying this viewpoint. The fight of the secret services ... illustrates this. However the present controversy may end in the short-term, in the mid-term those will be proven correct who simply represent the viewpoint which the Soviet Union has always expressed: that the Soviet Union, which has undertaken a world-wide mission in its spirit, only sees security in its own superiority.