

[HILL] From what you say, I have the impression that the West Europeans really felt over-shadowed by the SS-20s. Were they really worried about being targets for these things?

[TAYLOR] Yes, I think that that was a particularly strong feeling in Germany, and I think there was a feeling also that Germany was naked to this threat; that is that Germany, because of the fundamental limitations on its national policies in the London and Paris agreements is, of course, permanently prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons of its own. Therefore to the extent that the East-West strategic balance is maintained in part by nuclear weapons, then Germany is protected by somebody else's nuclear weapons because it cannot be protected by its own.

I do not think there is any question at all in German minds or in anyone else's of altering those fundamental limitations. Therefore, so long as nuclear weapons exist, any federal German government has to look to its allies in this sense for protection. I think that in Germany the feeling when the SS-20s were deployed, whether this actually was the Soviet intention or not at the time, was that because of the characteristics of the SS-20, it posed a particular threat to Western Europe which was not posed to the United States because of the range of the weapon, principally. There was even an argument that it was deliberately designed to put the American nuclear guarantee to the test, and to have a decoupling effect, to break the link between the United States and Germany.

That, I think, is the heart of it as Germans would see it. Why didn't others feel it quite the same way? Well, I think the smaller NATO countries had no ambitions at all to be nuclear powers themselves, so that the only nuclear weapons that they would have would be American weapons on their territory under double-key arrangements.

The British and the French, of course, not under the same kind of fundamental legal inhibition that the Germans are, are able to equip themselves with independent national strategic nuclear deterrents, and to that extent feel that they have dealt with a threat of this kind or at least they can feel somewhat more comfortable in these circumstances.

This is why this is above all a German problem. There is the additional obvious fact that German territory lies in the heart of Central Europe and is geographically exposed. So the whole issue appears, I think, in particularly dramatic terms in German eyes; and to a lesser degree - but nonetheless to a more lively degree than it was felt in Canada - the deployment of the SS-20s was seen everywhere in Western Europe as a particular threat to European NATO countries. Again, it was really German political and defence policy-makers who had to take a leading role in defining the problem and analyzing it. It had to be demonstrated that the response to the SS-20 had in the end to be land-based missiles on the territory of the Federal Republic. An American strategic figure might very well have said: "Yes, the SS-20s pose a threat -but it is very easy, we will just move some more ships into the area or we will move aircraft carriers, with nuclear weapons aboard or something like that. These are sea-based answers." But it would really require a German thinker, I believe, or a German spokesman to say: "No, I'm sorry that will not do. We really have to have the response based on our territory. It has to be land-based". And then beyond that, while that would have dealt very directly with the heart of the threat, it would have been politically unbearable to expect the Federal Republic to have borne all of the burden of the total response by way of deployment.

[HILL] In other words, to have it installed solely on German soil.