



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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Remarks by
Ambassador Max M. Kampelman
to the
Christian Democratic Party Chamber of Deputies Group

Florence, Italy

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Thank you very much. It is a privilege to be with you today at this meeting of the Christian Democratic Party Chamber of Deputies Group.

I want to commend Mr. Bianco for his most thoughtful comments. I am privileged to share this program with my friend, Ambassador Jacques Andreani of France -- he and I worked together closely during three years of the Madrid negotiations under the Helsinki Final Act. Let me also use this occasion to recognize my good friend and my Ambassador, Maxwell Rabb -- he's among our best, and I'm indebted to him for joining me here this afternoon.

Italian democracy is an inspiration to all who dream of the day when ever more people in this world can emerge from the darkness of totalitarianism into the brightness and vitality that are found only under free governments. And how can I mention Italian democracy in this hall without paying special tribute to such names as Don Luigi Sturzo, Alcide De Gasperi, and the martyred Aldo Moro -- great names, whose contribution to freedom and democracy can never be forgotten.

I would also like to express my country's appreciation for your country's dynamism and leadership in the North Atlantic Community. In doing so, I convey my personal greetings, and those of our Secretary of State George Shultz, to our colleague and good friend, Foreign Minister Andreotti, whose wisdom and careful judgment are very much appreciated in these difficult times.

The most logical subject for me to discuss with you today would be Geneva and what has been going on there.

While this would be both interesting to you and relatively simple for me, I am unable to do so. One of the first proposals made by the United States to the Soviet Delegation, when the Negotiations on Nuclear and Space Arms began in March, was to agree on a "rule of confidentiality." This agreement prohibits the members of the two delegations from making public comments on the contents of the talks. The purpose is to allow both sides, in their efforts to make

progress, to speak openly and to try out alternative solutions without fear that everything they say will appear the next day in The New York Times, Pravda, or the Corriere della Sera. (As it turned out, we haven't been too successful with Pravda!) Our American objective, of course, was to persuade the Soviet Union that we were serious about the negotiation and saw our task as talking to their negotiators rather than talking publicly to compete for public attention and support.

What I have chosen to do today, therefore, is something that may perhaps be more valuable than a mere report. I will discuss with you how I, as a negotiator, think about the Strategic Defense Initiative; and I will then offer some thoughts for your consideration on how SDI relates to arms control.

Allow me to begin with a quotation, whose authorship will not be evident to you. It reads:

"When the security of a state is based only on mutual deterrence with the aid of powerful nuclear missiles, it is directly dependent on the goodwill and designs of the other side, which is a highly subjective and indefinite factor...."

"The creation of an effective anti-missile system enables the state to make its defenses dependent chiefly on its own possibilities and not only on mutual deterrence...."

These two sentences are not, in fact, a quotation from President Reagan, Secretary Weinberger, or Secretary Shultz; nor was the speaker Paul Nitze, Richard Perle or any member of the American Government. The quote originates from Soviet Major General Talenskiy, who included these thoughts in an article in the Soviet journal International Affairs in October 1964. I suggest to you that General Talenskiy has offered us a good way of considering the goals and the objectives of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

I state at this juncture that the United States, Italy, and our Allies are all united in the understanding that our security today depends on a profound reliance on the principle of deterrence. Our view of deterrence has been of necessity based on the theory of mutually assured vulnerability to destruction. The Western premise has been that if each side can maintain its ability to threaten nuclear retaliation against any attack from the other, it can

impose on the aggressor costs that are out of balance with the potential gains to it from aggression. This ability to retaliate, which some have called a balance of terror, would be designed to prevent any war between East and West.

With this premise, we urged and agreed to limits on anti-ballistic missile defensive systems. The limits supported this concept of deterrence by insuring that, even if one side launched a disarming first strike, the other side's surviving military systems would be able to penetrate to their targets and inflict massive damage.

This form of deterrence, based on mutual vulnerability, has been successful, so far, in preventing war between the East and the West. But it is also undeniable that, fueled by rapid technological developments and a massive Soviet military buildup, the current system possesses certain defects, defects which were recognized in Europe as early as they were recognized in the United States.

Let us first examine the intellectual underpinnings of a strategy based on mutual vulnerability to retaliation. As I mentioned, this form of deterrence is based on the rational, sensible assumption that nobody will undertake a certain action if it is clear that his costs will be greater than any benefits which he could expect.

This reasoning is a sound basis for commerce or finance. But it may not be the best of all possible formulas for international relations, particularly between systems so radically different as the East and the West. The banker and the shopkeeper operate within familiar environments and patterns in which behavior and objectives are relatively easy for all parties to understand. But we should ask ourselves how well we understand the ways the Soviets think and what risks they might be willing to take in some circumstances. At the same time, we should ask ourselves how well the Soviets understand us and our will to defend freedoms which are totally alien to them.

There are sufficient reasons to believe that wisdom on this topic is not infallible. In 1962, for example, did the United States Government anticipate Khrushchev's bold gamble to try to sneak missiles into Cuba? And did Khrushchev expect such a bold response from President Kennedy to his effort to change the strategic balance? The answer to both these questions is no. Thus, both sides miscalculated on an issue involving their national security.

Stability, under the current pattern of deterrence,

requires that the Soviet Union not misread the intentions and capabilities of the West, particularly in times of crisis. It also requires that we in the West understand Soviet motivations and capabilities. The dramatic differences between our competing ideologies make these requirements very difficult to fulfill. And yet this form of deterrence depends on our ability to know how and with what to deter aggression against us.

We, therefore, should appropriately ask ourselves whether, given the high stakes involved, it is necessary or prudent for us in the West to rely indefinitely on what General Talenskiy referred to as "a highly subjective and indefinite factor," that is, on our imperfect understanding of each other's goals, objectives, and willingness to take risks. Surely it is worthwhile to seek a better way, without abandoning what we have, if a better form of deterrence can be found.

Deterrence remains indispensable to our security and to the preservation of peace. But I believe we would all agree that it would be better to base deterrence on an increased ability to deny the aggressor his objectives than to rely solely on our ability to punish him for his aggression. Our people ask of our Governments that they be protected from attack rather than that we only be able to retaliate after they are attacked.

It is this prospect for a more effective deterrence that research on strategic defenses offers. We are investigating, fully within the bounds of existing arms control agreements, the possibility that defensive technologies will allow us to drive up the cost of an attack on the United States and its Allies so high that no aggressor could contemplate such an attack. If our research should indicate that effective defenses are feasible, they would, of course, be aimed against offensive missiles rather than populations. And they would put their greatest emphasis on non-nuclear, rather than nuclear, technologies.

The debate on SDI, particularly as it affects Europe, has swelled to a point at which some of the simple truths about this research program are in danger of being obscured. Democratic debate does frequently tend to exaggerate and dramatize issues, sometimes beyond recognition. It requires all of us who treasure democratic institutions never to neglect and constantly to appeal to public opinion with a sense of reality and responsibility. Let me in that spirit try to put the SDI debate into a more balanced perspective.

Imagine with me that none of us had ever heard of SDI, but that we were making a sober analysis of the strategic problems we in the West face today as a result of Soviet military power.

The first problem we would face is that there are strong signs that the Soviet Union is not basing its military strategy on what we thought was a mutually agreed upon premise of deterrence and mutually assured destruction. In 1972 we entered into the SALT I agreements and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which put severe limits on building defenses on the theory that our respective offensive nuclear forces should be permitted to deter aggression by the ability to retaliate. The viability of the ABM Treaty depended crucially on significant reductions of strategic nuclear offensive arms, and our SALT I negotiator said so at the time.

Unfortunately, those offensive limitations did not take place. Instead, the Soviet Union launched the largest military build-up in history. Since the early 1970's the Soviet Union has deployed three new types of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM), eight improved versions of existing ICBM's, five new types of nuclear ballistic submarines, four new types of submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM's), five improved versions of existing SLBM's, and a new intercontinental bomber. By contrast, the United States has deployed no new types of ICBM's, one new type of nuclear submarine, one new type of submarine-launched ballistic missile, and no new types of heavy bombers.

The second problem we would face is the fact that the Soviet Union has not complied with the ABM Treaty. The Soviets have built an enormous radar near Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, in flat violation of the Treaty. And they have taken a number of other actions which give cause for concern that they may be actively preparing a nationwide defense against ballistic missiles, in spite of their agreement in 1972 not to do so.

Problem Three in our analysis is that the Soviet Union is extremely active in building up its defensive capabilities. It possesses the only operational ABM system in the world, and has just modernized it. It possesses the only operational anti-satellite system in the world. It has the most comprehensive air defense system in the world. And it has spent enormous resources on passive defenses to protect its leadership, command and control systems, industry and population. In fact, over the past twenty years the Soviet

Union has devoted roughly as much of its spending to defense as to offense--a clear indication that the ideas expressed by Major General Talenskiy live on in his country.

Problem Four is that the Soviets are proceeding with an intensified program of research on strategic defenses. In many cases this research starts from an advanced technological base. For example, their research in lasers is highly sophisticated; indeed, an American and two Soviet scientists shared a Nobel Prize for the invention of the laser. It is thus ironic and, of course, unacceptable to us that the Soviet Union is devoting its top priority to banning our SDI research while allowing Soviet research to proceed unhindered.

These four problems are at the base of President Reagan's decision to intensify research on strategic defenses. I use the word "intensify" because we had an ongoing research program before President Reagan came to office. Indeed, in view of the four problems I have described, it would have been highly imprudent for any American President not to pursue such research.

This leads me to emphasize that what we are undertaking is a research program. A decision on whether to move ahead with strategic defenses is years away; it might be made by President Reagan's successor, but it will surely not be ready to be made by President Reagan himself. And I must stress that the decision is not at all foreordained. There are ample examples of weapons systems for which research was completed but which were not deployed or maintained. The B-70 bomber and our own ABM system are good examples.

Nor will we reach a decision on SDI without thorough discussions and consultations with our Allies. There have already been a number of serious discussions of SDI in NATO. We have already invited your participation in scientific research. We welcome your suggestions, your advice, even expressions of your concern. We believe firmly in the strategic unity of the Western Alliance; however it develops, SDI must be a factor which strengthens that unity. If it does not strengthen that unity, it will not be pursued.

As we proceed with our research, let me also emphasize that this research is fully consistent with the ABM Treaty--and with all other arms control obligations which we have undertaken--and that President Reagan has directed that it remain so.

In an article in Pravda last week, Soviet Marshal

Akhromeyev asserted that SDI is "incompatible with the principles forming the foundation of the ABM Treaty." This, of course, is a highly ambiguous charge, but let me set against it the clear and unambiguous statement of a man for whom Marshal Akhromeyev once worked. In 1972, Defense Minister Grechko, also writing in Pravda, said that the ABM Treaty "imposes no limitations on the performance of research and experimental work aimed at resolving the problem of defending the country against nuclear missile attack." I repeat that our research is not a violation of the ABM Treaty or of any other international obligation we have assumed.

Finally, what if we decide--some years from now, after our research is completed, in consultation with our Allies, and in full observance of the ABM Treaty--that strategic defenses would make for a safer world? We would then consult--and, if appropriate, negotiate--with the Soviet Union on how deterrence for both of us might be strengthened through the phased introduction of defensive systems into the force structures of both sides. We have, in fact, offered to begin discussions on this subject now.

If in the future we decide favorably on SDI, deterrence and stability would be the strategic concept by which we could measure the value of strategic defenses. SDI is not an attack on deterrence; it's an attempt to find a way to make deterrence work better in the light of modern technology.

President Reagan said it this way:

"And in the long-term, we have confidence that the SDI will be a crucial means by which both the United States and the Soviet Union can safely agree to very deep reductions, and eventually, even the elimination of ballistic missiles and the nuclear weapons they carry."

The picture I have painted for you is not a revolutionary picture. True, it is a picture of revolutionary technologies--technologies which excite scientists and laymen alike about the expanding frontier for man's genius. But it is not a picture of revolutionary objectives--our objective remains a safer and more stable world. Nor is it a picture of revolutionary strategies--the strategy behind SDI remains NATO's accepted strategy of deterrence. And it is not a picture of revolutionary relationships--our partnership with our Allies remains the cornerstone of our efforts in SDI as in all other elements of our strategic policies.

What I have said today should not imply that SDI involves

no challenge for our Alliance. There are indeed challenges for NATO strategy, challenges for European unity, challenges for the nature of the United States security guarantee to Europe. But I need not remind this distinguished audience that we have faced such problems before. We faced them in the 1960's in the debate over flexible response. We faced them in the 1970's in the debate over intermediate range missiles. As I think of the magnificent role played by Italy--and by this great political party--in the successful Allied response to the INF challenge, I can have no doubt that we will meet this new challenge as we have met previous ones--with creativity, with determination, and together.

Thank you.