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Herrn  
Hans SPEIER  
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Santa Monica, California

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FILE NO. 2961/562

Lieber Herr Speier,

Ihnen ist sicher bekannt, dass im Frühjahr die in Europa stationierten Verbände der US-Army mit Pershing-Raketen ausgerüstet werden. Allerdings bin ich nicht sicher, ob es sich dabei schon um einsatzfähige Geräte oder nur um Übungsraketen handelt. Die Pershing schießt bis zu 720 Kilometer weit, und ist auch von der Bundeswehr bestellt worden, allerdings nicht für das Heer, sondern für die Luftwaffe.

Zu diesem Punkt nun hätte ich eine Frage: Sie wissen, dass es in der NATO seit langem eine Diskussion über die Zweckmäßigkeit oder Unzweckmäßigkeit der Stationierung von Mittelstreckenraketen auf dem europäischen Festland gibt. Ich persönlich bin mit der herrschenden Doktrin eigentlich dagegen. Ich fürchte, dass derartige Basen zu leicht in einer Krisensituation ausgeschaltet werden können, und infolgedessen ihren militärischen Wert verlieren. Ausserdem sind Gebiete, in denen sich derartige Basen befinden, in hohem Ausmasse psychologischer Erpressung ausgesetzt. Daher ging meine Meinung eigentlich mehr in der Richtung, derartige weitreichende Waffen auf die See zu verlagern.

Die Pershing ist zwar mobil und bedarf insofern keiner festen Basis, aber sie würde sich ja in den in Frage kommenden Ländern aufhalten.

Mir ist nun etwas unklar, welche taktische oder gar strategische Konzeption mit der Einführung der Pershing in die Verbände der amerikanischen Armee auf dem europäischen Kontinent überhaupt verbunden ist. Wäre es Ihnen möglich, aus Ihrer Sachkunde heraus mir dazu ein paar Anmerkungen zu machen?

Ich habe mich absichtlich nicht an das Pentagon gewandt, weil ich ja keine Geheimnisse ergründen, sondern zu meiner eigenen Meinungsbildung ein etwas unabhängiges Urteil haben möchte.

In der Hoffnung, dass Sie mir in dieser Frage etwas behilflich sein können, verbleibe ich

mit den besten Grüßen  
Ihr

28 January 1964  
L-1988

Mr. Fritz Erler, MdB.  
Bundeshaus  
53 Bonn, Germany

Dear Mr. Erler:

In response to your inquiry regarding the Pershing missile, I am enclosing two statements made by Lieutenant General Dwight E. Bead, to the Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, and by General Earle G. Wheeler, to the Senate Committee on Armed Services, respectively. The deleted phrases in Wheeler's statement are classified; the text I am sending is taken verbatim from the record as published.

In the United States, the Pershing is, of course, a tactical Army weapon like the Redstone, which it replaced. It can reach only targets lying within the range assigned to U. S. Army missiles. I do not know whether it would be technically feasible to extend that range by modifying the system. If that were possible, the U. S. Army could not continue to claim Pershing as one of "its" missiles, unless the so-called Key West Agreement allocating missiles according to range to the Air Force and Army, respectively, were revised once more. You know better than I do why the German Luftwaffe rather than the German Army will get the Pershings which your government is buying. (This arrangement reminds me of the fact that the Thor missiles in Britain were under RAF jurisdiction.) It is, of course, a fact that the Pershing can reach targets that could not be reached by the shorter-range Redstone and were for this reason assigned to other weapons systems, including tactical aircraft.

From your published statements, including your October 1963 article in Foreign Affairs, I was familiar with your preference for sea-based rather than land-based missile delivery systems. You give two reasons for your preference. First, you fear that land-based weapons of such wide range can be too easily eliminated in a situation of crisis;

second, you say that the territory on which such bases are located are to a high degree exposed to psychological blackmail.

Let me briefly comment on these issues:

1. Given the range of Pershing (100-400 nautical miles) they could not be based like Polaris on surface ships or submarines far away from the coast. Instead, they would have to stay close to the shore, (e.g., not very far from Hamburg) if they were not to get out of range and become militarily useless.

2. Such off-shore location would make them as much vulnerable to attack as mobile land-based weapons. It might even be argued that sea-based so close to the shore they would be more easily detected and hence be more vulnerable than they are on land.

3. Elimination of the Pershings in a military conflict would in any event have to involve the use of massive force against the West, but such massive failure of the western deterrent would lead to nuclear war in any event. Perhaps, you will argue that destruction of sea-based Pershings would be less likely to invoke nuclear retaliation by the West than the elimination of land-based weapons? I do not consider it likely that major aggressive action could be limited to the sea.

4. I have no specific information on the fall-out problem raised by attempts to eliminate off-shore vs. land-based systems, but I venture to guess that the major diminution of collateral damage would be confined to heat and blast effects.

5. Perhaps, the most important objection to basing Pershings on ships can be derived from the fact that you would need a different guidance system: (in your scheme, the Pershing would have to become something like a short-range Polaris, as far as guidance is concerned). There is probably no technical reason rendering such change of the system impossible, but it would certainly involve major modifications and these would require additional time and money.

6. The modification of the guidance system would be avoided on water-based Pershings, if they were mounted on barges and moved up and down canals, but this is an idea different from your proposal.

7. As to your argument on nuclear blackmail, it may be useful to distinguish between psychological pressure that is applied in peacetime and pressure that could be applied at the beginning of a military conflict, however small. As you know, the first type of blackmail was tried many times by the Soviet government in the '50's against all European NATO members as well as against Japan and other countries on whose territories U. S. air and missile bases were located. In none of these cases did blackmail work. No allied government has ever been intimidated, reneged base agreements, or taken similar divisive action under such pressure. In all cases the blackmail attempts led to vigorous political rejection of Soviet interference in the affairs of other countries, to protests, assertions of sovereignty, etc. In short, such blackmail solidified rather than weakened the alliance.

I grant you that the response could conceivably be different if we assume, say, a border conflict that might escalate. At such a moment of high tension Soviet nuclear blackmail may intensify fear and possibly cause panic in the countries exposed to Soviet threats. But the risks that the Soviets would incur by openly threatening escalation are considerable, given Western capabilities for nuclear deterrence and action. Nor is it certain that under the assumed conditions resistance to blackmail would be materially affected by the location of one particular weapons-system. We must consider, it seems to me, that other weapons and military manpower, not all of which could possibly be moved out to sea, would continue to present targets for political pressure and military aggression.

I would have sent these brief remarks more promptly to you had it not been for the fact that I am in the midst of preparing a move to New York at the end of this week. I have accepted an invitation of Mr. McCloy to take a leave of absence from RAND for a year and will serve as Senior Fellow to the Council on Foreign Relations. ~~There~~, I will undertake a study of German Foreign Policy (in the Erhard era). Some time in April I expect to be in Europe for two or three months. I am looking forward with great pleasure to seeing you again.

Mr. Fritz Erler

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28 January 1964  
L-1988

My address in 1964 will be c/o Council on Foreign Relations, 58  
East 68th Street, New York 21, New York.

With kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

Hans Speier

HS:thb

Attachments - noted

With respect to our field army guided-missile system, we are providing the field army commander with a nuclear capability against targets in his zone of tactical responsibility. The employment of these weapons is, of course, controlled at the highest Government level, but they have to be ready for immediate use once the decision is made. In the new PERSHING missile we get just over twice the effective range of the earlier REDSTONE, more warhead weight, and a solid fuel instead of the hard-to-handle liquid fuel. The requirement here is for  which includes some for unit training and annual service practice. We have  PERSHINGs on hand or on order. We want to buy  PERSHINGs in the new year to round out the support of the  PERSHING battalions in our troop structure, and replace the out-of-date REDSTONE missile systems at a cost of \$164.4 million.

Statement of General Earle G. Wheeler, Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, p. 512, Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, First Session on H. R. 2440 (S.843), Department of Defense Programs and Authorization of Appropriations During Fiscal Year 1964 for Procurement, Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation of Aircraft, Missiles, and Naval Vessels for the Armed Forces.

PERSHING is our 100- to 400-nautical-mile, two-stage, solid propellant replacement for REDSTONE. It stands out as a fine development that will enhance our ability to move and shoot. The PERSHING fire unit -- mounted on four fully tracked vehicles -- can move into firing position and fire within minutes. The fire unit -- less its tracked vehicles -- is transportable by CHINOOK helicopters. Tactical equipment has been delivered to the first unit and service test firings under conditions simulating various tactical environments are scheduled to begin in August of this year at White Sands Missile Range. In addition, firings are already underway at the Atlantic Missile Range where military firing crews are launching production missiles using production ground-support equipment.

Fiscal year 1964 funding for PERSHING will provide for evaluation of service and environmental test programs as well as research and development effort for corrections identified during final testing and initial field deployment.

Statement of Lt. General Dwight E. Beach, Chief of Research and Development, Department of the Army, p. 1262, Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, First Session on H.R. 7179, Making Appropriations for the Department of Defense for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1964, and for Other Purposes.