'Europe Is Still Dependent on America'

INTERVIEW: JOSEPH LUNS

Joseph Luns, 72, was foreign minister of the Netherlands before he became secretary-general of NATO in 1971. In June of this year he will be succeeded by Lord Carrington, Britain's former foreign secretary. Recently Luns spoke with NEWSWEEK's *Maks Westerman in Brussels about the state of the West's defense and the prospects for East-West relations. Excerpts:*

WESTERMAN: ***What is your view of the meeting in Stockholm? Do you foresee a break in the arms-talk deadlock?***

LUNS: Soviet diplomacy seems to be paralyzed. The Soviets have not taken any real initiative in a long time, and they persist in an attitude that is very unreasonable. If the Soviets remain adamant, then we've got to live with it. But it does not worry me as much as it seems to worry others. As long as we maintain a credible deterrent, we don't have to fear war. And the credible deterrent has been re-established by the deployment of our modernized missiles.

Q. One suggestion has been to combine the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) negotiations. What is your opinion?

A. I am not very enthusiastic about that. The INF negotiations are more difficult. If you combine the two talks and there is no progress in the INF sector, it will be detrimental to START.

Q. The Soviets recently proposed a ban on chemical weapons. What do you think of their offer?

A. This is not a Russian initiative. NATO countries have repeatedly proposed to do away with all chemical weapons. They last did so in December. But we are looking with positive interest at the Soviet proposal, even though at first glance it seems to have only regional implications.

Q. There have been signs in recent months that the public debate in Western Europe will shift from the missile issue to a questioning of the NATO alliance. Are you worried?

A. No. I don't believe the anti-NATO movement will gain more strength. Gallup polls in Western Europe have shown that of those who oppose the stationing of the Pershing and cruise missiles, more than half are in favor of NATO. The rest of the population is absolutely in favor of NATO. But even if a democratically elected government decided to change its policy, there is little we could do about it.

Gamma-Liaison

Luns: 'Soviet diplomacy seems paralyzed'

Q. Your successor says Europe should have a greater say in its own defense. What is your opinion?

A. I would be completely in favor of giving Europe a greater say, but you cannot forget that a greater say has to do with the power factor. Europe is still dependent on strong American support. But expanding Europe's military effort at a time of economic recession is very difficult, especially because the Europeans' social spending is so high. The NATO countries in Europe spend nearly eight times more in the social sector than in the defense sector. In America, social spending is only three times higher than defense spending.

Q. But many Americans argue that Europe should spend more on defense.

A. America generally exaggerates Europe's unwillingness to do its bit. The Europeans are doing more than the United States knows or acknowledges. By far the greatest number of alliance troops in Europe are European troops. By far the greatest number of planes are European planes. And there are far more European ships in a combined NATO fleet than there are American ships.

Q. President Reagan has often spoken about the vulnerability of Western defense. Has the alliance really become weaker during your term in office?

A. Western conventional defense is not as impressive as I would like to see it. On the other hand, when people talk about our defense capabilities, they only look at the standing armies. NATO has enormous reserves that it can mobilize in a short period of time.

Q. But is the West in better shape than the East?

A. I would say that the gap in favor of the Soviets is somewhat bigger than it was 13 years ago.

Q. France has been showing more interest in the military aspects of the NATO alliance. Do you think that under your successor the French might return to a more active role in the alliance?

A. France is a full partner of NATO. The only difference is that it doesn't take part in the integrated defense. But France has liaison missions in all our staffs and all our command centers. Its army in Germany has its allotted task in times of crisis and war. And the French government has repeatedly stated that it would be inconceivable for France not to take part in the defense of the NATO territory. We would like France to come back in the integrated defense, but we can live with the present situation. President Mitterrand has shown a far more positive attitude toward the alliance than his predecessor.

Q. Increasingly, there have been calls in the U.S. Congress for withdrawing American troops from Europe and putting them in Asia. Should this worry Europeans?

A. No. The United States has justly become more and more aware of the dangers for world peace in parts of the world that are not protected by the alliance. Therefore, the whole alliance warmly welcomes the American decision to set up a rapid-deployment force. If the United States would have to withdraw some forces in Europe, for example in case of crisis elsewhere, the Europeans have agreed that they will compensate for that loss of manpower.

Q. In Western Europe there is a widespread feeling that President Reagan's anti-Soviet rhetoric has endangered world peace. What is your view?

A. Some of the president's words might be considered a bit strong, especially when they are quoted out of context, which they often are. But the Soviets are more sensitive than any other country to the power factor. They see that America is rearming. And that is a very good thing for the preservation of peace. President Reagan's predecessor thought that nice gestures would help improve East-West relations. But he was proven wrong.

Photos by Alain Willaume

Blindfolded trainees enduring taunts: Getting ready for a big autumn offensive

Schools for Civil Disobedience

Schwäbisch-Gmünd, a normally placid town in southern West Germany, has been unusually active of late. The town reportedly has been designated as one of the sites for the stationing of U.S. nuclear missiles later this year. But Schwäbisch-Gmünd is also the home of a training camp for demonstrators who are hoping to block the deployment of the missiles. NEWSWEEK's *Maks Westerman enrolled in the camp recently to find out what goes into the making of a West German antinuclear demonstrator. His report:*

Our instructors did not expect any trouble. There were 20 of us and a horse to carry anyone too weak to walk after three days of "fasting for peace." We locked hands and began our "circle of silence," blocking the road to the Airfield Mutlangen missile base. Suddenly, an American military-police sedan sped up the road and broke into the circle. An MP, truncheon in hand, quickly jumped out of the car and began shoving the demonstrators. "We don't block your roads, you don't block ours," he shouted. "But we don't occupy your country," one angry protester yelled back. The MP ordered a truck approaching from the other direction to proceed. Some of the demonstrators who were sitting in the road barely managed to jump out of the way. It was our first day of training.

Instructors in the training camp for demonstrators frequently stage such encounters, but this incident was real—a frightening reminder of the dangers antinuclear protesters in West Germany may face. About 150 prospective protesters have enrolled in the Schwäbisch-Gmünd camp—one of some 50 such training centers around the country—to learn how to handle such potentially explosive situations. The trainees at the camp I attended ranged in age and occupation from a 16-year-old schoolgirl to a former priest in his 30s. But most were university students—and their teachers were usually no older than they were. "I felt very uncomfortable about this action," says Thomas Lange, 22, a carpenter, one of about 100 instructors in West Germany teaching the art of civil disobedience. "People could have been hurt."

Our "school" was a rough collection of tents pitched on land rented from a local farmer. Trainees will stay at the camp until early September, when the country's antinuclear movement plans to hold a massive blockade of the American missile base. Lange and the two other trainers at the camp insist that the action will be successful only if it remains nonviolent. "That is what we teach," says Lange. "You can't work for peace with nonpeaceful means."

Blockade: The training course is a series of exercises and games designed to get a group of demonstrators to work well together under any circumstances. We simply got to know each other. We all explained why we had come to Schwäbisch-Gmünd. The reasons varied. "I want to find out whether I am fit to participate in a blockade," said one trainee. "I feel like throwing stones at the police when they get violent," said another, "and I want to learn how to suppress those tendencies."

In the days that followed, the instructors staged mock demonstrations to teach us how to deal with the police. In one rehearsal for the missile-base blockade, half of us were designated "cops" and the other half "demonstrators." In the protesters' group, we began with a discussion of our strategy. Every decision was carefully debated until a consensus was reached—a procedure used by all the civil-disobedience camps so that no one feels excluded. How should we sit? In a circle. Should we sing? Yes, to soothe our nerves if the situation becomes critical. What should we sing? "We Shall Overcome." We agreed that each person should "decide for himself whether he wants the police to lead, drag or carry him away."

Then we sat down on a deserted stretch of roadway in front of the camp. "I bet you guys are unemployed," sneered a "passerby" played by a camper. We did not respond. Soon the "cops" arrived, armed with "truncheons"—rolled up newspapers. When a trainee dressed as an American MP ordered the police to "move these people off the road," one by one we were lifted by our arms and legs and carried off to "jail." But the peaceful demonstration soon turned violent. Through an oversight, we had let a "provocateur" slip into the group, and he started to bite and kick the police as he was being carried away. Taking that as a sign that the entire action had turned violent, the police began to beat us with their mock billy clubs. In the weeks leading up to the antinuclear demonstrations planned for this autumn, that scenario will be repeated over and over again as instructors in civil-disobedience schools throughout West Germany try to show their pupils what a single misstep can mean.

'Cops' and a 'demonstrator' in a mock protest: Nonviolent strategies