

Senator Tower on military policy

In an exclusive interview, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, a Texas Republican, discusses the issues.

In this exclusive interview with *EIR*'s Barbara Dreyfuss, Senator John Tower indicates some of his major concerns about U.S. military posture, and declares that the first priority of the Senate Armed Services Committee will be to deal with the manpower and readiness problems confronting our armed forces.

First elected to the U.S. Senate in 1961, the Texas Republican has been a member of the Armed Services Committee since 1965, where he has consistently advocated a strong military.

Before entering the Senate, Tower was a professor of government at Midwestern University in Wichita Falls, Texas. He received a master's degree in political science from Southern Methodist University and did graduate work at the London School of Economics.

In addition to his Armed Services chairmanship, Tower chairs the Senate Republican Policy Committee, and thus is a key member of the GOP leadership in the Senate.

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EIR: Caspar Weinberger has indicated in recent public statements that he's going to defer to the Senate Armed Services Committee in policy.

Tower: Well, number one, I expect to cooperate fully with the new secretary of defense. I've known him well and favorably for a long time, and he has shown every disposition to consult. So I intend to help in every way I can. Defense initiatives, in my view, are nearly due, and should come from the administration. At the same time, I think that we [senators] do have a role to play, especially those of us who have been involved on a contingent basis for many years.

The most immediate priority is solving our manpower and readiness problem, as you've no doubt read about our problems with retention, shortage of experience, and untrained noncommissioned officers.

EIR: How do you stand on gearing up R&D, especially in areas like lasers and beam weapons, and expansion of our space programs?

Tower: I think that research and development are enor-

mously important and we have to broaden our R&D base. We need to look at some programs that probably should have increased funding, programs that show some promise, particularly with applications in high technology.

EIR: Can you be specific about which programs those would be?

Tower: Right now, I cannot.

EIR: Some people would like to have a third SALT agreement involving voluntary limits on research and development. Do you think the Soviets would accept such limits?

Tower: Oh, that sounds a little like pie in the sky to me. I think we first have to advance on the problem of actual arms limitation and arms reduction. That's a pretty difficult aspect to get into when you start talking about research and development, technological base and industrial base, and that sort of thing. Of course, a lot of American defense technology is a spinoff from non-defense technology; the Soviets, of course, dedicate their superior resources to military R&D.

EIR: So we'd have an imbalance there?

Tower: Yes—how do you limit that when the American public's demanding a better detergent and a better television set, and all that sort of thing? The Soviets don't have that kind of consumer demand on their R&D.

EIR: Do you think R&D limitation is something we should look toward?

Tower: I don't think it's practical to think about it right now. We had better advance on the larger problems first.

EIR: What are your thoughts about proposals that both the United States and the Soviet Union should limit strategic weapons, while allowing an unbridled conventional development?

Tower: I think you have to have adequate strategic capability to serve as a deterrent to nuclear attack or nuclear blackmail. I think, too, that you've got to main-

tain a naval capability, certainly, because the maritime edge is awfully important to the United States. In a peacetime situation the Navy is your first line of defense, your precision instrument of diplomacy; obviously that's something you can't forfeit to the Soviet Union.

In conventional terms we need to make a number of improvements. If you lower the threshold of risk to the Soviets, by virtue of either strategic parity or strategic inferiority, then you have to have a better conventional capability to discourage them from any military-political adventures involving deployment of conventional forces.

EIR: There have been suggestions that NATO play a greater role outside its traditional boundaries, particularly in the Middle East. Do you think that NATO should expand?

Tower: It's probably not politically practical right now to try to initiate any kind of dialogue within NATO on expanding the boundaries of NATO. I think that, although beyond the boundaries of NATO we cannot act as an alliance, we must behave as allies. The requirements for a deployment in the Indian Ocean, for example, mean that a larger share of the burden will have to be shouldered in the Western European theater by our allies. It would be impractical to think in terms of contributions of land troops, for example, of NATO troops in other parts of the world.

EIR: Because they wouldn't agree to it, you mean?

Tower: It's not a matter of their not agreeing to it; it's a matter of their being confronted with superior Warsaw Pact forces. Obviously you can't denigrate your defense capability there.

EIR: Europe is not too happy with the proposals to station medium-range missiles on its territory.

Tower: That's a political problem in Western Europe. Among defense specialists there, I think you'll find support for the modernization of our tactical nuclear forces, our theater nuclear forces.

EIR: Japan has been asked to raise its military budget.

Tower: They fell short of what we had expected them to increase to.

EIR: When Senator Stevens was there last week, he said that if they couldn't increase their military budget further, they should increase economic aid to Asian nations.

Tower: I would agree that there's more they can do in extending economic assistance to other countries and that wouldn't be so much of a political problem for them, I would think, as more military buildup. There is, of course, a lingering animus in Japan toward resurgent militarism, there's a fear of it.

EIR: You could see discussing with them economic increases rather than military?

Tower: No, I could see discussing increases in military defenses with them, too; I'm making the observation that increased economic assistance, as it appears to me, would pose less of a political problem, an internal political problem.

EIR: The Carter administration has favored actually aiding the People's Republic of China on a military basis. What is your view on that?

Tower: That's a policy decision that has to be made by the incoming administration. Therefore, I'm not prepared to publicly discuss it.

EIR: What about the PD-59 policy doctrine of the Carter administration, which accepted the possibility of a limited nuclear war? Would you like to re-examine that?

Tower: Let me simply say that I think the United States must possess an urgent, hard-driving kill capability on the part of its deterrent. We cannot afford to rely any more on the discredited doctrine of "mutually assured destruction" [MAD].

EIR: So you are looking at the idea of limited nuclear conflict?

Tower: I don't know what you mean by a limited nuclear conflict.

EIR: Well, where we're not talking about MAD, we're talking about a more selective, limited conflict.

Tower: Most likely, the most limited conflict is one that's confined to theater nuclear force. I think you avoid talking in terms of some kind of limited global exchange; then, of course, the question is to what extent can you limit it. The best thing is to have the deterrent capability so that you don't have to suffer the first strike in the first place. And we have no intention of launching the first strike, and never will have.

EIR: What you're talking about is the capability to respond to a first strike?

Tower: That's correct, an adequate response. A response that discourages the Soviets from testing the idea that a nuclear war would be winnable.

EIR: Do you think we should play a stronger role in Latin America, particularly in the question of military aid to El Salvador?

Tower: Well, avoiding specifics, I think we have to vastly improve our relationship with a number of Latin American countries. We have to take a more pragmatic approach to political situations in Latin America.

EIR: Could you define that a little more?

Tower: No, here we're getting into foreign policy matters.

EIR: It's so hard to separate them out.

Tower: Yes, but you see, that's beyond the pale of my responsibility. What we have to await is for the administration to define its foreign policy objectives, and then try to provide them with the military capability to sustain and implement those objectives.

EIR: One of your staffers said that you view military policy from the standpoint of implementation of foreign policy, and that a lot of your thinking was shaped when you were at the London School of Economics. Do you look toward anybody in particular for having shaped your thinking?

Tower: My geopolitical thinking? I think that a lot of it was influenced by my studies at the London School and a lot of it by experiences I've had.

EIR: Do you plan to make any trips abroad fairly soon?

Tower: I plan to attend a West European defense seminar in Munich in February, and I may do a little other traveling at that particular time, I would say to get an updated feel on the climate of Western Europe. I've spent a great deal of time over there, and I have a pretty steady communication with a number of parliamentarians and defense-oriented officials in the NATO countries.

EIR: Would you stress more communication between the new administration and the new Congress and the NATO allies than Carter had?

Tower: Yes, I believe to develop better communications and more regular consultation with congressional leadership. And I believe he can follow through with that.

EIR: On the question of Italy, we have picked up rumors that there might be a coup in the very near future, and the head of the Socialist Party Bettino Craxi might be involved; the Communist paper *Unità* warned of efforts to undermine the government this weekend. Are you going to look into this, since it involves a NATO ally?

Tower: It's something I personally will monitor with great interest. It's not in the purview of my committee other than to keep informed of what's going on.

EIR: Back to the Middle East—Henry Kissinger has made recent proposals during his visit there to station armed forces and air capabilities in the Middle East. Do you see that as important?

Tower: I think we have to have a force capability in the Middle East, and that encompasses a number of things, if not in terms of bases, at least access, base access.

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The libel verdict against the IHT

EIR has just obtained the full official English translation of the Nov. 29, 1980 libel judgment won in a French court of law by Contributing Editor Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. against the *International Herald Tribune*, an English-language, Paris-based joint venture of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.

Under French jurisprudence, the main defense for a charge of libel is the truth of the allegations in question, while under U.S. law, the brunt of the defense can be honest motives for printing falsehoods. The *International Herald Tribune* offered no proof of the veracity of its Oct. 13-14 articles on Mr. LaRouche. Instead, as *EIR* reported Dec. 23, it defended itself by citing other newspaper articles containing the same allegations.

The Oct. 13-14 *International Herald Tribune* articles were reprinted from articles by Howard Blum and Paul Montgomery in the *New York Times* on Oct. 7-8. The libels coincided with the start of Mr. LaRouche's campaign for the Democratic Party's 1980 presidential nomination. In 1976, Mr. LaRouche had run a prominent campaign for President on the ticket of the U.S. Labor Party, which Blum and Montgomery termed "a cult."

Excerpts from the libel verdict follow. Subtitles are in the original.

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By the action of Gibault, Process Server in Paris, on the date of Dec. 28, 1979, Lyndon LaRouche summoned before this court Walter Thayer, director of publications for the *International Herald Tribune* and the International Herald Tribune, S.A., as being liable for damages, to answer to the charge of libel against an individual, dealt with in Articles 29 paragraphs 1 and 2, 32 par. 1, 33 par. 2, 42 of the law of July 29, 1881, by reason of an article written in the English language entitled "U.S. Labor Party: A Cult of Paranoia" which begins with the words: "Jim Jones' Peoples Temple," published in No. 30067 of the *International Herald Tribune* dated Oct. 13-14, 1979 on page 7.

The plaintiff demands payment in the amount of 100,000 francs and publication of the judgment to be

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