

February 15, 1967
**Letter, Minister Franz J. Strauß to Chancellor Kurt G.
Kiesinger**

Citation:

"Letter, Minister Franz J. Strauß to Chancellor Kurt G. Kiesinger", February 15, 1967, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, St. Augustin (ACDP), Nachlass Kiesinger, I-226-285. Contributed by Andreas Lutsch and translated by Bernd Shaefer. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/300663>

Summary:

In a stern letter to the Chancellor Kiesinger, the Minister of Finance Franz Josef Strauß explained that he would "fight against" the NPT. Strauß was chairman of the Bavarian CSU and had served as Minister of Defense between 1956 and 1962. His point was that a decision to accede to the treaty was unthinkable as long as he remained minister in Kiesinger's cabinet and, hence, with the CSU participating in the 'grand coalition'. Strauß' letter also indicated his suspicion of Foreign Minister Willy Brandt and his disposition towards the NPT which Strauß apparently regarded as submissive.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Dr. h.c.[\[1\]](#) FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS[\[2\]](#)
Federal Minister of Finance
53 BONN
February 15, 1967

Personal!

To the
Chancellor of the
Federal Republic of Germany
Mr. Dr. h.c.[\[3\]](#) Kurt Georg Kiesinger[\[4\]](#)

53 Bonn
Federal Chancellery

[Handwritten: 15/II signature]

Dear Mr. Federal Chancellor!
Dear Friend Kiesinger!

The reading of the press in recent days and some other information, including calls from members of the EEC[\[5\]](#) Commission in Brussels, have prompted me to express to you in writing my position regarding the Non-Proliferation Treaty imposed on us. I have the impression that Federal Minister Brandt[\[6\]](#), although he expressed certain misgivings in America, has received in return some reassuring explanations, but has finally hinted at the forthcoming German signature. I am aware of the argument that a "No" to this treaty will lead us into complete isolation. Allegedly, we are also threatened by the United States with withdrawal of the enriched nuclear fuel. We must not sign a treaty here out of fear of "world opinion" nor under the pressure of the American blackmail; [a treaty] that would ultimately degrade Germany to the divided object of a super-cartel of the world powers, eliminate Europe's prospects for a political unification and destroy even the remaining alliance spirit within NATO. A German government, for which still do exist the terms of nation and history, cannot and must not sign this treaty. A government that does sign this treaty has relinquished the most essential right of sovereignty out of weakness or blindness as to the consequences. I am warning emphatically of the consequences for domestic and foreign policy.

For the sake of honesty, I am stating in advance that under no circumstances I am going to consent here to a cabinet decision ("we anyways have no choice"), arrived at through conditions God knows how. I will fight with ultimate vigor against the Yes to this treaty, first within the respective bodies, but then also in public. For me and for many others, the limit has been reached here for what is called conscience. This is where opportunism and tactics are ending; here the realm of ultimate responsibility is beginning.

Yours sincerely
[signed F. J. Strauß]

[\[1\]](#) Dr. Honoris Causa (honorary doctoral degree).

[\[2\]](#) Franz Josef Strauß (1915-1988). West German Minister of Nuclear Issues (1955/56), Defense (1956-1962), and Finances (1966-1969).

[\[3\]](#) Ibid.

[\[4\]](#) Kurt Georg Kiesinger (1901-1988). West German Federal Chancellor between 1966 and 1969.

[\[5\]](#) European Economic Community.

[\[6\]](#) Willy Brandt (1913-1992). Governing Mayor of West Berlin 1957-1966, West

German Minister of Foreign Affairs 1966-1969 and Federal Chancellor from 1969 to 1974.