

Defense Secretary Weinberger vows: We will have no more Vietnam wars!

"We in the United States could not live in a world that was overrun by Soviet hordes." So stated U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger at a press conference Dec. 5 in Brussels, following the two-day NATO Defense Ministers' meeting there. "It is absolutely vital that NATO be strengthened because this strengthens the defense of the United States." The statement was made in response to a question about congressional pressure to reduce U.S. forces in Europe. Weinberger's opposition to such reductions was a slap at U.S. Ambassador to NATO David Abshire, a mentor to Democratic Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, the author of legislation mandating such troops cuts.

Weinberger coupled these statements with a briefing on the rapid rate of Soviet production and deployment of SS-20 intermediate-range missiles. The U.S.S.R. has deployed nine more SS-20 intermediate-range missiles capable of hitting targets in Western Europe, bringing the total to 387, each with three warheads. He added that many more SS-20 launchers and bases are under construction. "The rate of construction and the rate of activity have enormously increased."

The government of Holland has made deployment of cruise missiles on Dutch soil contingent on evidence of increased SS-20 deployment. Dutch Defense Minister Job de Reuter said at the press conference: "The evidence of further deployments of SS-20s was bad news, a development causing real concern."

The following is from the speech delivered by Weinberger before the National Press Club on Wednesday, Nov. 28 in Washington, D.C., selections from which EIR ran last week.

The uses of military power

Alexander Hamilton, writing in the *Federalist Papers*, said that "It is impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national exigencies, or the correspondent extent and variety of the means which may be necessary to satisfy them." If it was true then, how much more true it is today, when we must remain ready to consider the means to meet such serious indirect challenges to the peace as proxy wars and individual terrorist action. . . .

The issue of which branch of government has authority to define that mandate and make decisions on using force is

now being strongly contended. Beginning in the 1970s, Congress demanded and assumed a far more active role in the making of foreign policy and in the decision-making process for the employment of military forces abroad than had been thought appropriate and practical before. As a result, the centrality of decision-making authority in the executive branch has been compromised by the legislative branch to an extent that actively interferes with that process. At the same time, there has not been a corresponding acceptance of responsibility by Congress for the outcome of decisions concerning the deployment of military forces. . . .

Yet the outcome of decisions on whether—and when—and to what degree—to use combat forces abroad has never been more important than it is today. While we do not seek to deter or to settle all the world's conflicts, we must recognize that, as a major power, our responsibilities and interests are now of such scope, that there are few troubled areas that we can afford to ignore. So we must be prepared to deal with a range of possibilities, a spectrum of crises, from local insurgency to global conflict. We prefer, of course, to limit any conflict in its early stages, to contain and control it—but to do that our military forces must be deployed in a timely manner, and be fully supported and prepared before they are engaged, because many of those difficult decisions must be made extremely quickly.

Some on the national scene think they can always avoid making tough decisions. Some reject entirely the question of whether any force can ever be used abroad. They want to avoid grappling with a complex issue, because, despite clever rhetoric, disguising their purpose, these people are in fact advocating a return to post World War I isolationism. While they may maintain in principle that military force has a role in foreign policy, they are never willing to name the circumstance or the place where it would apply.

On the other side, some theorists argue that military force can be brought to bear in any crisis. Some of these . . . are eager to advocate its use even in limited amounts because they believe that if there are American forces of any size present they will somehow solve the problem.

Neither of these two extremes offers us any lasting or satisfactory solutions. The first—undue reserve—would lead us ultimately to withdraw from international events that re-

quire free nations to defend their interests from the aggressive use of force. We would be abdicating our responsibilities as the leader of the Free World—responsibilities more or less thrust upon us in the aftermath of World War II—a war incidentally that isolationism did nothing to deter. These are responsibilities which we must fulfill unless we desire the Soviet Union to keep expanding its influence unchecked throughout the international system based on mutual interdependence among nations, and alliances between friends. Stark isolationism quickly would lead to a far more dangerous situation. . . . We would be without allies and faced by many hostile or indifferent nations. . . .

The second alternative—employing our forces almost indiscriminantly—and as a regular and customary part of our diplomatic efforts—would surely plunge us into the sort of domestic turmoil we experienced during the Vietnam war, without accomplishing the goal for which we committed our forces. Such policies might very well tear at the fabric of our society, endangering the single most critical element of a successful democracy: *a strong consensus of support and agreement for our basic purposes*. . . .

Our adversaries can also take advantage of our open society and our freedom of speech and opinion to use alarming rhetoric and disinformation to divide and disrupt our unity of purpose. While they would never dare to allow such freedoms to their own people, they are quick to exploit ours by conducting simultaneous military and propaganda campaigns to achieve their ends.

They realize that if they can divide our national will at home, it will not be necessary to defeat our forces abroad. So, by presenting issues in bellicose terms, they aim to intimidate Western leaders and citizens, encouraging conciliatory positions to their advantage. Meanwhile they remain sheltered from the force of public opinion in their countries, because public opinion there is simply prohibited. . . .

Our freedom presents both a challenge and an opportunity. It is true that until democratic nations have the support of the people, they are inevitably at a disadvantage in conflict. But when they do have that support they cannot be defeated. For democracies have the power to send a compelling message to friend and foe alike by the vote of their citizens. And the American people have sent such a signal by reelecting a strong chief executive. They know that President Reagan is willing to accept the responsibility for his actions and is able to lead us through these complex times by insisting that we regain *both* our military and our economic strength. . . .

Recent history has proven that we cannot assume unilaterally the role of the world's defender. So, while we may and should offer substantial amounts of economic and military assistance to our allies in their time of need and help them maintain forces to deter attacks against them—usually we cannot substitute our troops or our will for theirs.

In those cases where our national interests require us to

commit combat forces, we must never let there be doubt of our resolution. When it is necessary for our troops to be committed to combat, we must commit them in sufficient numbers and we must support them as effectively and resolutely as our strength permits. When we commit our troops to combat, we must do so with the sole object of winning.

Once it is clear our troops are required, because our vital interests are at stake, then we must have the firm national resolve to commit every ounce of strength necessary to win the fight to achieve our objectives. In Grenada we did just that.

Just as clearly, there are other situations where United States combat forces should not be used. I believe the postwar period has taught us several lessons, and from them I have developed six major tests to be applied when we are weighing the use of U.S. combat forces abroad.

First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should *declare* beforehand as we did with Korea in 1950, that a particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.

Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives we should not commit them at all. Of course, if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly. When Hitler broke treaties and remilitarized the Rhineland, small combat forces then could perhaps have prevented the holocaust of World War II.

Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should send the forces needed to do just that.

As Clausewitz wrote, "No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it." War may be different today than in Clausewitz's time, but the need for well defined objectives and a consistent strategy is still essential. . . .

Fourth, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed—their size, composition, and disposition—must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements. We must continuously keep as a beacon light before us the basic questions: "Is this conflict in our national interest?" "Does our national interest require us to fight, to use force of arms?" If the answers are "Yes," then we *must* win. If the answers are "No," then we should not be in combat.

Why NATO needs

As part of a five-part series in favor of the Strategic Defense Initiative, the West German daily Die Welt published a full-page interview with SDI Director Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson on Dec. 1. Below are excerpts from the interview, translated from the German:

Abrahamson: . . . The overriding goal is not simply to create new weapons, but to reduce those that exist and create a more secure world. . . . The fact that the Soviets are so interested in what we are doing is a good omen.

Die Welt: So you think that it is this new American space program that has brought the Soviets back to the negotiating table? A kind of enticement to negotiate?

Abrahamson: I am not an expert in Soviet motives . . . who is? But it must have helped, because this topic is now on the agenda in Geneva.

Die Welt: How can you claim your program is allowed by the ABM treaty?

Abrahamson: Research is permitted. Just look at the Soviet research program that they've been running far longer than we have. Most people overlook this. In addition, the Soviets have the only working [ABM] system in the world. That means, they have considerable experience with it, and have worked with it in their offensive and defensive planning. Beyond this existing system, they have also been researching beam for a long time, as I said. I have a Soviet article right here, written in 1982—very interesting. It describes the plan for the entire architecture that we are just now trying to draw up, and this was written long before the President's [March 23, 1983] speech.

Die Welt: Isn't the conclusion then that both sides, the Russians and the Americans, will quickly go ahead to the development and test phase, and then get together and say: We have to renegotiate the ABM treaty, the progress of technology has made it obsolete?

Abrahamson: No, not necessarily. But your question contains an interesting premise: that the two sides, A and B, will be successful in their research. Secondly, that they will get together and agree that defensive systems are an important contribution to security and to deterrence. That is part of

Fifth, before the U.S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case in Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win but just to be there. . . .

We must also be farsighted enough to sense when immediate and strong reactions to apparently small events can prevent lion-like responses that may be required later. We must never forget those isolationists in Europe who shrugged that, "Danzig is not worth a war," and "Why should we fight to keep the Rhineland demilitarized?"

Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.

These tests I have just mentioned have been phrased negatively for a purpose—they are intended to sound a note of caution. When we ask our military forces to risk their very lives in such situations, a note of caution is not only prudent, it is morally required.

In many situations we may apply these tests and conclude that a combatant role is not appropriate. Yet no one should interpret what I am saying here today as an abdication of America's responsibilities—either to its own citizens or to its allies.

Nor should these remarks be misread as a signal that this country or this administration is unwilling to commit forces to combat overseas.

While these tests are drawn from lessons we have learned from the past, they also can—and should—be applied to the future. The President will not allow our military forces to creep—or be drawn gradually—into a combat role in Central America or any other place in the world. And indeed our policy is designed to prevent the need for direct American involvement. This means we will need sustained congressional support to back and give confidence to our friends in the region.

I believe the tests I have enunciated here today can, if applied carefully, avoid the danger of this gradualist incremental approach, which almost always means the use of insufficient force.

We will then be poised to begin the last decade of this century amid a peace tempered by realism, secured by firmness and strength. And it will be a peace that will enable all of us—ourselves at home, and our friends abroad—to achieve a quality of life both spiritually and materially, far higher than man has even dared to dream.

We must be prepared at any moment to meet threats ranging in intensity from isolated terrorist acts to guerrilla action to a full-scale military confrontation. We find ourselves then face to face with a modern paradox, the most likely challenge to the peace—the gray area conflicts—are precisely the most difficult challenges to which a democracy must respond.