

Caspar Weinberger's defense package: neocolonial warfare in strategic garb

by Steven Bardwell, Military Editor

The first year of the Reagan administration has seen the most intense debate in 20 years over military strategy. With the announcement of proposed budget cuts by Secretary of Defense Weinberger and the President's Oct. 2 military

tion, which entered office with the promise of a revision of the disastrous, self-defeating military policy of the preceding several administrations, has put itself firmly on the side of the policy explicitly described in the Carter administration's *Global 2000 Report*: a strategic policy setting the nation on a course whose successful completion would guarantee the destruction of the United States.

In the recent debate over U.S. military deployments, the most fundamental question has been implicitly answered in common by both sides of the debate. For both the "Team B" hawks, like Richard Burt or Richard Pipes, and the doves like Fred Iklé and Cyrus Vance, the Malthusian premises and genocidal conclusions of the *Global 2000 Report* are the starting point for military deliberations. The tendencies in the Reagan administration which earlier this year threatened to break the unspoken terms of this debate, seem now, with Weinberger's and Reagan's most recent statements, to have been effectively silenced.

The basis for any military debate must be a definition of the *goal* of a nation's war-fighting capability. This statement of objectives had been largely unspoken until the *Global 2000 Report* provided a lengthy justification of the policies that had, in fact, dominated to a greater and greater extent U.S. military policy since the late 1950s. It is worth noting, however, that the military argument for this Malthusian policy was enunciated in 1960 by James Schlesinger, who, when he became Secretary of Defense under Gerald Ford, inherited a DOD already primed with almost 15 years of the policy. He summarized in his book *The Political Economy of National Security* the underpinnings of what is now the mission of the U.S. military:

We have gone around the world spreading the "gospel of plenty," raising the level of expectations. In the nature of things, these rising expectations can never be satisfied. Despite the modification of the original Malthusian dogma over the years, the danger remains that excessive growth of population will wipe out the gains of economic

progress. Any economic revolution will be shortly wiped out by a Malthusian counter-revolution and the illusion of growth. It is unwise to overstate the importance of economic growth per se.

We must in our strategic policy return to the days before the Industrial Revolution [and] prepare to fight limited wars. Higher Soviet industrial development rates than attained in our production will have very little strategic significance. The industrial mobilization base is only one of several gauges of power. A strategic menace may be based upon a rather modest economic structure. We must build our military force on the exact opposite of the industrial potential notion.

The logic of Schlesinger's doctrine is terrifyingly simple: each nation must fight for resources obtained at someone else's expense. Since more people consume more resources, every country except our own is, again of logical necessity, overpopulated relative to our security needs. Thus, the twofold mission of the military becomes control of natural resources and regulation of population growth. That is, the strategic mission of the U.S. military, as defined by these strategists is *not* confrontation or containment of the Soviet Union or other enemies, but rather the maintenance of regional hegemony in actually or allegedly resource-critical areas like southern Africa and the Middle East, and the determination of demographic dynamics in highly populated areas like Southeast Asia and Latin America.

This policy has been argued for in some of its particulars in the "military posture" statements of the most recent Secretaries of Defense, but no one has stated it so clearly as Caspar Weinberger in his statement to Congress this spring, in his lengthy description of the Rapid Deployment Force and necessity for the United States to maintain geopolitical control over areas critical to U.S. national security—a security that he defined as based on resource control. The *Global 2000 Report*, and the military documents based on it (see *Military Review*, August 1981, "Military Implications of Global 2000") have made explicit the population control aspect of this policy. They state that uncontrolled population growth is the primary determinant of international instability, and that, as a result, control of already "overpopulated" areas (specifically Central America) is essential to U.S. security. This control must prevent emigration of improv-

erished populations to the United States, and institute measures to prevent "overpopulation." The means to this end are explicitly stated to range from contraception to civil war, starvation, and plague.

Perhaps the most damning indication that the Reagan administration has adopted this strategic conception is provided in the internal evidence from the recent policy statements by the President at his Oct. 2 news conference. The President noted proudly that his restructured "strategy for deterrence"—his plans for an MX missile, the B-1 bomber, new submarines, and new communications systems—will consume only 15 percent of the U.S. military budget in the 1980s, compared with more than 20 percent spent on strategic defense during the 1960s. The changed structure of the military budget does not in fact reflect Reagan's frugality, but rather of the new strategic mission of the armed forces. It is to be carried out not by ICBM forces or long-range bombers, but by the Rapid Deployment Force, by highly-armed, highly mobile conventional forces capable of fighting limited wars in the Third World—the "regional wars" of which Weinberger and Schlesinger are so fond.

What kind of war?

The contrast between this mission and the traditional American armed forces' mission could not be more striking: starting with George Washington, Sylvanus Thayer at West Point, and Abraham Lincoln, through Douglas MacArthur, the mission of the U.S. military has been *nation-building*. Starting from a commitment to economic growth and industrial development, the military's role as an arm of that policy was first, to destroy the enemy with all available means (specifically, to deny the enemy the means of continued resistance and political power), and second, to rebuild the defeated country with the most advanced means possible. As many military men have noted, the American army was a force of engineers, whose success was measured in terms of deployment for reconstruction rather than destruction.

In the past two decades, this historic mission has been displaced by a "colonial" policy of control rather than construction. Even the Table of Organization of the U.S. Armed Forces shows the change. It used to prescribe a fifth captain for each brigade, whose responsibility was to advise the battalion commander on civil affairs. This position is now almost non-existent, and the Army Civil Affairs School, long located at Fort Gordon, Georgia, has been phased out, its responsibilities now borne by the army reserve!

All the military policies which Weinberger and Reagan described flow from this Malthusian mission of the U.S. military. In any other context, the planned deployment of the MX missile, the fantastic array of *Wunderwaffen* (the cruise missile, for example), the almost total avoidance of crucial R&D, and the refusal

to consider advanced systems like the various beam weapons—in any other context these policies would be explicable only as the acts of madmen or secret KGB agents. But if the mission of the U.S. military is limited conventional wars for resource and population control, all this becomes, if not brilliant military thinking, at least self-consistent.

The kind of war that becomes winnable and thinkable is a regional war, fought either with U.S. forces or with what these strategists call "proxy forces," known in less polite circles as mercenaries. Whether the specific strategist in question is willing to admit it or not, general nuclear war is *unthinkable* and *unwinnable*. The Pentagon has, according to a recent wire story, officially removed the very term from its list of accredited military terminology! Without a commitment to civil defense, in-depth defense production, and the most advanced scientific research in space exploration and high-energy plasma physics, no military man can seriously consider all-out nuclear war with an adversary who does have such a commitment. To argue otherwise, as Richard Pipes or Richard Burt do, is bravado of the ugliest sort.

The traditional American military doctrine, by contrast, has held that any war worth fighting must be pursued with all appropriate means at hand. The idea of a limited war was internally contradictory. This policy recognized that any means in the pursuit of economic and industrial development was justified, as long as that means did not itself preclude economic development after the war's conclusion.

In the Malthusian doctrine, since the aim of war is to protect American hegemony and prevent industrialization, then "victory" involves neither the conquest of an enemy's political power nor the imposition of American objectives of political stability and economic growth. In fact, as several military analysts have noted, the outcome of the Vietnam war in Southeast Asia was a victory for the Maxwell Taylor conception of war. The development of Vietnam and Laos was set back several decades by the wanton (and admittedly unnecessary) policies of indiscriminate bombing. The American-Chinese alliance installed the most effective population control policies in Cambodia, where the American-supported faction of the Khmer Rouge took power. The result was the reduction of consumption of resources by the population of that area by several orders of magnitude for many decades.

The Malthusian order of battle

In the traditional American system, the infantry played the central role, since that was the only "system" that could, in the end, win a war. The enemy's territory had to be occupied (or be capable of being occupied), the reconstruction process begun, and new political power established. The peace had to be won. Infantry

with logistical support was the foundation of the order of battle, and all other deployments essentially played support roles for this infantry: the air forces provided long-range artillery and enhanced logistical capabilities (but *not* an independent strategic capacity); the navy expanded the transport and communications capabilities of this infantry; armor was a new sort of cavalry for this infantry. The advent of the ICBM and strategic nuclear weapons did not change this doctrine in any essential way. Nuclear war is neither more unthinkable nor unwinnable than any previous kind of war, and it will be won or lost on the basis of an infantry-based order of battle.

However, the advent of nuclear weapons did highlight what was always the most fundamental aspect of the logistics: the industrial, technological, and scientific base. The source of war materiel, the resupply capabilities, the reservoir of skilled manpower, and the constant revolution of the ways and means of war depend almost exclusively on a nation's industrial and scientific abilities.

Weinberger's order of battle is instead based on an enhanced capability for neo-colonial war-fighting. Thus, the primary mission is his Rapid Deployment Force, which requires only a relatively small, highly mobile conventional force. The fact that this force is prepared to use theater nuclear weapons is militarily irrelevant, since this order of battle has removed strategic nuclear war from its lexicon. On this basis Reagan can enunciate what he mistakenly calls the country's strategic deployment.

1) The proposed MX missile development is absurd if its aim is to deploy a modern ICBM force. The hardening of silos, as Reagan himself pointed out in answer to a question at his Oct. 2 press conference, provides a significantly enhanced survivability for these missiles for at best several years. Furthermore, as so many observers have noted, the hardening of silos is irrelevant, since these missiles will have been launched before the Soviet missiles have a chance to hit them.

The need for a more powerful, more accurate missile like the MX is indisputable; but the deployment of that missile as proposed by Reagan, in such small numbers and in such an absurd basing, shows that this deployment is actually determined by a *psychological bluff* against the Soviet Union—actual nuclear war will not be fought by the United States, this doctrine explains, since our principal problem is resource and population control in the Third World, we need these weapons only to deter the Soviets from using their nuclear weapons. Therefore, as Maxwell Taylor argues, we in fact have enough nuclear weapons right now—any increase is purely for psychological effect—to demonstrate our determination, or, as Reagan argued in his speech, to use for tradeoffs in arms negotiations.

2) The development of the B-1 bomber and following it the "stealth" bomber is likewise strategically insignificant in a period when totally new strategic weapons are on the verge of development. The fact that both bombers are almost certain to be extravagant white elephants, technologically obsolete or irrelevant by the time they are produced, does not, in itself, argue against their development. However, the fact they are touted as a strategic capability reflects the attempt to project a Schlesingerian "aura of power."

The post-R&D era

Most telling is the role given to advanced technology in both Reagan's and Weinberger's statements. Reagan's policy statement on the U.S. strategic position never mentioned advanced R&D. After a nod in the direction of advanced ABM systems, Reagan elaborates a plan whose significance is correctly stated: "The Reagan program will determine, to a large extent, U.S. strategic capabilities into the next century. Not since the Eisenhower years has an administration proposed a nuclear program of such breadth and scope." Yet this program does not mention what almost all military planners agree will be the determining technologies already by the mid-to-late 1980s, directed energy beam weapons. That family of lasers, ion beams and microwave sources has the proven capability to not only destroy aircraft with unrivaled efficiency, but also effectively neutralize ICBMs. The result is a total *change in the significance of all present weapons*, most especially the strategic nuclear forces on which Reagan's program concentrates.

These weapons will be deployed by the Soviet Union in the next several years: yet the core of the Weinberger military program is the destruction of advanced research and development. In the message Weinberger sent to Congress in late September, he elaborated the cuts deemed sustainable in the defense budget. These included, besides significant decreases in conventional forces, a \$2 billion cut in the \$9 billion Navy R&D program and a corresponding cut for the Air Force and Army. The R&D program is *already* less than 10 percent actual R&D (the rest being engineering enhancements on existing weapons, a quantity which scales almost directly with the size of the procurement budget and so is grossly overstated in Weinberger's military buildup budget).

Senator John Tower's assessment is very apt: "The program is far less powerful than was implied by the original Reagan defense budget request, and I am not at all sure that the President's program is as capable as that which was projected at the end of the Carter administration." Both administrations shared a commitment to the Global 2000 military doctrine; Weinberger is merely one year closer to its final implementation.