

EIR: Ambassador Dubinin, can you tell me whether it is the Soviet view that any arms agreements can be reached with the U.S., given President Reagan's refusal to abandon the Strategic Defense Initiative?

Dubinin: In my view there cannot be. One of your Presidents [John Kennedy—ed.] once said, "He who rules space rules the Earth." Therefore, if the United States insists upon trying to rule space, then how can there be any possibility of an agreement on any arms reduction on Earth?

EIR: Then there is no chance of separate agreements on some of the arms control issues raised at the summit?

Dubinin: Not as long as the U.S. insists on Star Wars. Absolutely not.

EIR: What about the Soviet Strategic Defense program. Isn't it true that you have a program at least as advanced as that of the U.S., but are not willing to admit it?

Dubinin: No. We have no program.

EIR: You claim you have no research or testing of lasers or directed-energy systems?

Dubinin: Well, we have certainly done research in lasers. We have a couple of Nobel Prize winners in this. But it is only in laboratories.

EIR: What will the Soviet Union do, then, if President Reagan persists with the U.S. SDI program?

Dubinin: As the General Secretary said at his press conference, we will respond "asymmetrically."

EIR: What does that mean?

Dubinin: I cannot tell you at this time. But we will respond differently.

EIR: There are many rumors that Mr. Gorbachov is having a difficult time getting parts of the Soviet bureaucracy to accept the reforms he is trying to implement. Is this true?

Dubinin: Of course, there are some who do not understand fully what it is that Gorbachov is trying to do. But, no, there is no problem. Everyone is in support of his efforts.

EIR: What about the removal of [Foreign Minister] Gromyko?

Dubinin: Mr. Gromyko now enjoys a very high position within the party, after over 20 years in a very difficult job.

EIR: But he is no longer directly influencing Soviet policy.

Dubinin: He is now more involved with internal matters of the party.

EIR: And what of the role of Marshal Ogarkov?

Dubinin: Marshal Ogarkov is a very important and loyal part of Mr. Gorbachov's team.

Weinberger answers Soviets in Asia

by Susan Maitra in New Delhi and
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While the eyes of the world in the second week of October were riveted on Reykjavik, Iceland, and the Reagan-Gorbachov pre-summit of Oct. 11-12, U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was in China, India, and Pakistan, as part of a three-week tour that also takes him to Western Europe. With President Reagan taking the point with the Soviets on the Strategic Defense Initiative, Weinberger traveled to Asia to counter the high-powered Soviet diplomatic drive in the region, launched with the July 28 speech delivered by Mikhail Gorbachov in Vladivostok.

In that speech, Gorbachov had unveiled a policy of Soviet concessions toward China in the hopes of achieving the full normalization of relations with Beijing and a Chinese acquiescence in a Soviet-dominated collective security pact for Asia. Weinberger's alternative for Beijing is not a replay of Henry Kissinger's "China card"—which functioned as a cover through the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations for U.S. withdrawal from the region.

Policy toward China

As Weinberger stated in New Delhi: "We believe a secure, modernizing, and friendly China, with an independent foreign policy and developing economic system, is an essential part of international policy."

Weinberger was in Beijing Oct. 7-11, simultaneous with the arrival of Soviet chief negotiator and deputy foreign minister Ivan Rogachev, for the ninth round of "normalization talks" with Moscow. Against this backdrop, Weinberger was accorded the highest-level treatment, including a 20-minute discussion with leader Deng Xiao Ping, who met with Weinberger in his official capacity as Central Military Commission Chairman. He also met with Chinese Defense Minister Zhang Aiping for nearly four hours.

Soviet designs on Asia were a major point of discussion. With Reagan and Gorbachov in Iceland debating decreases

in intermediate missiles, Weinberger told the press: "We want to let you know that Asia is also a priority with us and we want the number of SS-20 missiles cut in Asia as well as Europe." Two days later, the Chinese demanded that Moscow remove its SS-20 missiles in Asia.

What Afghanistan withdrawal?

Weinberger also raised the issue of the alleged Soviet withdrawal of six regiments from Afghanistan, promised by Gorbachov in his Vladivostok speech. Weinberger reported to Zhang that the United States possesses "very substantial information" that the Soviet Union recently sent six regiments to Afghanistan to set up a mock troop withdrawal later.

"They [the Soviets] have also said they're going to withdraw their air defense units," Weinberger told ABC news from Beijing. "Well, the new regime has no air power. So that is not a very significant change in capabilities."

When a member of Weinberger's team was then asked if the administration had approved Weinberger's attacks on the Soviet Union—coming as it did on the eve of the "pre-summit," the official replied: "We don't do anything without White House knowledge and full support."

Among the other points of discussion with Zhang were U.S. technology transfer to China, the presence of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia, and the Strategic Defense Initiative. In his meeting with Chinese leader Deng Xiao Ping, Weinberger delivered a personal message from President Reagan.

The U.S. defense secretary toured Chinese defense and space facilities, flying to Sichuan province to tour the Zichang space center from which China plans to launch commercial satellites for several foreign companies, including for the United States.

At the end of his stay in Beijing, Weinberger announced that the first U.S. Navy port call to China since 1949 would soon take place. A U.S. port of call, agreed upon in 1985, was scotched in August of that year over the issue of nuclear capabilities of the U.S. ships.

A fresh start in Delhi

On Oct. 11, Weinberger became the first U.S. defense secretary to visit India. Emerging from a 90-minute meeting, without aides, with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Weinberger told the Indian press corps: "Ladies and gentlemen, we had a very long and extremely informal, and, to me, enormously pleasant and happy and productive conversation with the prime minister. . . . We went over all the points that I think are of interest to both sides, and I believe it portends the development of increasingly warm and friendly relationships between our two countries and between the military of our two countries."

The essence of this assessment was confirmed by Indian officials at the end of the visit. "On the whole, we are very much satisfied," Minister of State for Defense Arun Singh is quoted. There was a considerable increase in mutual respect, he added, and both sides had understood each other's con-

ceptions of the security environment in the south Asian region.

"I believe this being the first visit there will be more awareness of what we believe in, our hopes and our fears," Arun Singh said.

The Weinberger visit is a benchmark in a process begun in 1980 to correct India's then-overwhelming military dependence on the U.S.S.R. and to retrieve Indo-U.S. relations from the nadir of the Kissinger-Nixon era. Besides buying technology from several European nations, India has sought assistance from the United States. In the last year and a half, since Deputy Defense Secretary Fred Iklé came to "break the ice," some 18 U.S. defense delegations have visited India.

But India is not interested in a mere arms deal; it seeks to bolster and modernize its indigenous defense capabilities with assistance in the development and transfer of "cutting edge" technologies across a wide spectrum. A qualitative improvement in the underlying relationship between the two nations is clearly prerequisite.

It was this, rather than signing agreements or making proclamations, that was the point of the secretary's visit. The military-strategic aspect of the relation was highlighted by the fact the Indian foreign office was kept out of the discussion.

Briefings on the SDI

In response to press inquiries when he arrived, Weinberger said there were two things he most wanted to communicate to his Indian counterpart: Reagan's strategic conceptions, especially the Strategic Defense Initiative, and the possibility of total elimination of offensive nuclear weapons—things not "sufficiently understood or appreciated"—and the White House's conviction that a constructive relationship with India is compatible with continuing friendship with both Pakistan and China.

On Oct. 14, Weinberger received the most detailed briefing ever given to a foreign dignitary on India's "threat perception," given by Indian Army Chief of Staff Gen. K. Sundarji, known as the "thinking general." India's scientific adviser to the Defense Minister, Dr. V. S. Aranachalam, then detailed India's R&D plans, indicating how technological cooperation fits into India's long-term goals for self-reliant development.

Weinberger placed a very broad-scope relationship—including an offer of advanced weapons systems—on the table. So far, various technologies relating to India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) project, instrumentation for a new missile test range in Orissa, and several other areas have been identified. Agreement has been finalized for the sale to India of 11 General Electric-404 engines for the LCA.

India's purchase of the Cray XMP supercomputer was also confirmed following the talks. In November of this year, U.S. Secretary of the Air Force Alridge and a team of experts will visit India to finalize the security terms for the sale, the first of such sophisticated technology to a non-NATO nation.