

# Weinberger flings cold water on Gorbymania

by Leo F. Scanlon

Lyndon LaRouche's article (p. 37) on the true history of the SDI program points to the real factors which are shaping Soviet actions at the moment; they have nothing to do with the utopian theories which are being presented to the Congress in support of the Bush administration's defense budget. One voice conspicuous by its absence in congressional hearing rooms, is that of Caspar Weinberger, the secretary of defense who shepherded the Reagan administration's push to create the SDI.

Below are excerpts from a debate sponsored by the University of Tennessee in December, moderated by newsman Hedrick Smith, in which Weinberger counterposed his view of strategic events to those of James R. Schlesinger, Robert Strange McNamara, and other former secretaries of defense—an exercise which makes it clear why he has not been called to brief the Congress on these matters.

First, on the nature of Soviet strategy and deception, and what value can be placed on the current Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) negotiations:

**Weinberger:** The Soviets are now using a different tactic. They haven't changed the strategy. The strategy has been to end NATO. Previously, they tried to do it by threat and intimidation, and moving their submarines closer to the United States if we didn't do what they liked, or if we deployed, and so on. Now they're trying to show there's no threat to NATO because they present this smiling face, this kinder, gentler Soviet Union that's letting all of its satellites go their own way. And that does not remove the threat.

**McNamara:** . . . The CFE . . . will make us better off. . . . I believe that we can go down this path, we can run the risk that Gorbachov fails and is succeeded by Stalin, and not endanger ourselves in the process. . . .

**Weinberger:** I'd like to say a little bit about this idea of—that we aren't really taking any risk. The Soviet Union is a country in which you can take 500,000 people out of the Central Front and turn them into farmers overnight, and you can turn them back into soldiers also overnight. And we can't do that. And we cannot make this quick recovery from deep, deep cuts that may or may not be being made in the Soviet Union overnight. It takes us about seven, eight, nine years to do it. . . . So, we have a lot to worry about if we rush into any idea that the threat is down and that it is perfectly all right to make the deep, deep reductions, which are so hard to recover from for us, and so easy for the Soviets. . . .

Bringing your troops home, saying the Cold War is over, on the basis of some kind of assumption that everything that the Soviets are now saying, or one man in the Soviets is saying, is true and is going to be permanent. And if you do that you're going to run into all kinds of problems.

## Have Soviet objectives changed?

Equally specious, Weinberger points out, are the arguments which assert that Soviet objectives in Europe have altered from their historic course:

**Weinberger:** What you're seeing is a situation in which there may be an occasional dip for a short time but the secular trend is indeed up. And as far as their being able to reconvert quickly or not, the problem that we really have had all this time is that they spend about 23 to 25%, that we know about, of their gross national product on military matters. And they do have easily convertible factories. . . . It is very easy for them. . . . And so, you've got all of these things pointing toward a lack of permanence in what we're seeing now that we like. And we've only been seeing it for a very few months. And we must never forget that that can shift.

## A blunt warning about the East bloc

While the Congress and administration have concluded that the time is ripe to abandon Europe militarily, Weinberger questioned one premise of the common wisdom in Washington, the idea that American isolationism will have no effect on the course of events in the East bloc:

**Weinberger:** I think we have a tremendous interest in how it comes out. And there are 424,000 Soviet troops in East Germany right now. If it comes out in such a way that there is domination by East Germany of the new unified Germany, it would pose an absolute. . . .

**Smith:** Can you really conceive of that? [hubbub]

**Weinberger:** Everybody talks about what they can't conceive of. But nobody could conceive of a few things that happened in China. And nobody could conceive of the fact that Gorbachov—

**Smith:** You can conceive of 17 million East Germans dominating 63 million West Germans?

**Weinberger:** No. I can conceive of 17 million East Germans, augmented by 400,000 or 500,000 Soviet troops, with the United States out and NATO out, because everybody says it's no longer necessary. That would be a series that you'd have to worry about.

**Schlesinger:** Well, you see a million and a half East Germans fleeing to West Germany in order to establish Communist control in West Germany. [laughter]

**Weinberger:** With Germany unified, with Germany unified on a basis that ensured that Western ideals and the ideals that are followed now by the Federal Republic, the West German Republic, would prevail. And that is a very vital point. And it is not, I think, despite all of the easy sophistries now, it's not guaranteed.