

## Weinberger: American system can be exported

by Leo Scanlon

A two-day "Conference on Low Intensity Warfare," sponsored by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and held in the facilities of the National War College at Fort McNair in Washington D.C., was the occasion for the gathering of 275 of the top-ranking active duty and retired U.S. military officers to develop a U.S. strategy to counter the present phase on ongoing global confrontation being conducted by the Soviet Union. Many months of planning went into the conference, a unique event designed to bring together a "who's who" of counterinsurgency specialists, and feature a broad spectrum of current thinking focused on the strategic problems posed by the advanced stage of Soviet political, military, and cultural offensive against the West.

Not surprisingly, the conference did not yield any immediate prescriptions for action, but was useful precisely to the extent that it highlighted, for the perceptive observer, two distinct trends of thinking which now coexist in the policy shaping arena, each of which draws upon very different conceptions of the nature and purpose of the American republic.

The conference was opened by an address delivered by Secretary Weinberger (printed below), which situated the classical dimensions of the problem "from Augustine to Aquinas to Grotius"—the struggle to establish republican nation states as the vehicle to defend human dignity. To do that, and do it with no concession to the expediency of adopting policies which "make of craven survival the ultimate value," is the task outlined by Mr. Weinberger. "The question, then, is what forms of government, what kinds of economic systems, are most in accord with human realities and conduce to the betterment of mankind? On our own terms, we can compete with shovels and win. Our adversaries require guns," Weinberger stated.

The first panel of the conference opened with a paper presented by U.S. Gen. Paul Gorman (ret.), former head of the U.S. Southern Command, containing broadside attacks on many features of what is called "the Weinberger Doctrine." General Gorman began with a frank declaration of his premises: "I believe that the U.S. value system and experience is essentially unique and non-exportable. . . ." This statement should surprise few who have followed the general's repeated and contentious demands for U.S. military intervention into Central America. Arguing from this premise, Gorman asserted that use of limited force is an essential aspect of U.S. policy, and to make limited force effective we "need incalculability."

The respondents to his paper included Gen. John Galvin, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Southern Command. General Galvin posed the problem quite differently. Speaking as the senior military man representing the United States in Ibero-America, he pointed out that the practical problem confronting the nations of the region, is how to maintain and nurture viable mechanisms of national sovereignty when the threats from terrorists and insurgents give an immediacy to strict military considerations which can overwhelm the process of self-rule in a targeted nation. Galvin asserted that there does exist a model which can serve to shape the republican relationship between the military and a civilian government, and it is an American model—the nation-building role played by the U.S. military in building the railroads, canals, and river systems which secured the viability of our nation, without respect to particular factional political concerns.

The limitations of this observation, valuable as it is, were brought out by Gen. Adolfo Blandon, chief of staff of the Salvadoran Army, who was in the audience. "There is some-

thing I must say. . . . I must report to you that I have just returned from a tour of Latin America, and it is my sad duty to report that the perception of the United States among the peoples of Latin America is one of disillusionment. . . . [The problem facing our countries] is that U.S. policy forces decisions to be made by our leaders, which undermine the foundations upon which they rule . . . decisions are made daily which turn the population into a rabble. . . . They become a rabble because they feel hunger, they feel the elements, they feel the lack of education, and they feel the lack of many things they need, and feeling these things, they no longer think . . . and when they can't think they cannot govern themselves, yet these decisions are made as a result of U.S. policies. . . ." The remarks had a sobering impact, and elicited the observation by General Galvin: "We need a large effort to overcome the problem of debt."

Former U.N. ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick next took the stage, and picked up the philosophical trail begun by Gorman. Her admirers are quick to champion her as an educated, profound thinker. Her remarks, on this and other occasions, betray a deep cynicism with respect to the viability of the principles of our republic, a cynicism which has led her to champion the hated Sparta as the model to follow in this crisis. Her demoralized musings included extensive quotes from the noted "philosopher" Saul Bellow and began with the assertion: ". . . We are engaged in a struggle for which we are ill-suited. . . . The Soviet Union, in 1917, staked a total claim on the future . . . we have become internally weak with our own uncertainty. . . . The problem is ourselves." (One can agree with the last statement precisely to the extent that demoralized positivists like Kirkpatrick enjoy such a wide following!)

She then got to the base of her conceptions: "We are a 'Benthamite people' . . . we want to pursue private benefits, private lives . . . we are not suited to 'collective effort' in the pursuit of 'collective goods' . . . War is the ultimate in collective efforts. . . ."

"Politics is a power process, it determines who gets what when and where in the world. . . . [We must be prepared to use] *force as an instrument of public policy*—total war is no longer a credible threat, and to go to the source [of the problem] is too dangerous."

These remarks directly captured the outlook which leads General Gorman, and his co-thinkers, to reject the American system as an "exportable model." Fundamentally pessimistic, they are unable to find the universal nobility of the ideals of the American revolution. Finding themselves worshipping at the altar of "power" and "force," they suffer some discomfort upon discovering "the enemy" in the pew next to them, but for expedient reasons, nevertheless demand that we pursue policies which ultimately work to the benefit of an enemy whose premise is "force as an instrument of public policy"!

Secretary of State George Shultz provided the luncheon address, and true to his theme, "The Challenge of Ambiguity," unambiguously stated his commitment to "prudent, lim-

ited, proportionate uses of our military power . . . as a means of crisis management, power projection . . . localized military action . . . and to coordinate our power with our political and diplomatic objectives. . . ." Unlike Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Shultz does not bother to probe the origins of his conceptions, but simply attempts to develop his theme: "The United States needs an active strategy for dealing with ambiguous warfare. We must be better prepared intellectually and psychologically as a nation; we must be better prepared organizationally as a government. Many important steps have been taken. But more needs to be done. First of all, our policy against ambiguous warfare must be unambiguous." What is he talking about?

Shultz's remarks, indeed the entire conference, occurred at a point when Soviet-backed forces in the Mediterranean had maneuvered a "showdown" between the mad Colonel Qaddafi and the Reagan administration. Ariel Sharon and his cohorts in Israel, in coordination with these Soviet maneuvers, were orchestrating a frenzied demand that the United States shed Arab blood in the Middle East. Shultz's speech, like Kirkpatrick's dramatic confession that she "for the first time ever in public" would advocate force as an instrument of policy, was geared to play to the "mob" demanding immediate action.

Shultz's remarks were provocative enough that Fred Iklé of the State Department felt the need, in his conference summary, to say that the secretary of state had "perhaps been carried away" in his demands for action!

The afternoon panel, chaired by Brian Jenkins, and featuring Sir Robert Thompson, El Salvador's ambassador-at-large Rivas-Gallont, and a spokesman of AIFLD (American Institute for Free Labor Development), tried to deal with the practical problems being faced in places such as Central America today. The panel fell far short of the morning discussion; the most interesting contribution came from Lt. Gen. Phillip C. Gast USAF, director of the Defense Security Assistance Agency, who provided a history of the formidable legal barriers to civic action programs which were created by Congress, during the post-Vietnam years, when all authority for shaping military aid policies to our allies was removed from the Pentagon and placed in the control of Congress and the State Department. This unusual arrangement is one of the major problems facing military planners today.

General Blandon once again re-focused the conference with a final intervention from the floor. He summarized his perceptions with a remark which drew cheers and applause from the assembled military brass: "It is clear to me that the United States still has no plan or strategy to deal with the crisis which has been discussed here today." He continued, with an eloquent refutation of General Gorman's opening thesis: "Latin America represents a great opportunity for the United States. We look to the U.S. as a model, the *only* model for the future . . . if you cannot take this into account, and do it quickly, then you better begin to run now, and don't look back, because you will not get a second chance."