

Secretary Weinberger hails ABM defense for 'lifting hopes of all mankind'

On April 11, Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger spoke before the Aviation and Space Writers Association convention in Arlington, Virginia. In his remarks, Weinberger reiterated and elaborated on the pronouncements for a new strategic defense policy made by President Ronald Reagan on March 23. Short excerpts from this speech were carried in the Washington Times on April 12. Aside from this, the very fact that the Secretary of Defense delivered this address has been ignored in the press. What follows is the text of Mr. Weinberger's April 11 speech.

I am delighted to be here this morning to speak before such a distinguished group of aviation and space experts. I imagine that you have been more than a little busy lately analyzing the proposal on ballistic missile defense that President Reagan put forward two weeks ago. The President's initiative has created quite a bit of interest, on the part of our allies, Congress, the defense community, the media, and within government. Some have been skeptical, others cautiously supportive, and some merely confused. This was not unexpected, nor should it be considered unusual. New ideas, particularly when they go against conventional wisdom, are often greeted with doubt, cynicism, or wide speculation.

I would like to talk this morning about the President's proposal that we develop strategic defense, and report that we think it is not only a realistic goal, but argue that, if obtained, it could reduce the fears and lift the hopes of all mankind. First, however, I would like to discuss what the President's proposal is *not*:

It is not a hasty, ill-conceived scheme

It is not a Star Wars fantasy

It is not a quest for a first strike capability

It is not a retreat to Fortress America

It is not a substitute for deterrence or arms control

It is not a hasty, ill-conceived scheme; indeed the vision of defending against nuclear attack and freeing us from the terror of nuclear weapons is one the President has held for many years. Before announcing this proposal the President held lengthy meetings with his top advisers—both civilian and military—on technical and policy matters. We all recognized that the search for strategic defense will not be with-

out problems—technical, diplomatic, and political—but we all agreed with the President that the goal of strategic defense is so eminently desirable that we can and will find solutions to any problems that might develop along the way.

The quest for a system to defend against ballistic missile attack is not a Star Wars fantasy or a pipe dream, as some skeptics have suggested. While we are fully aware of the magnitude of this challenge, we have, understandably, great faith in our technical and scientific genius. Time and time again we have seen yesterday's science fiction become today's reality. Who would have believed in 1870 that the *Nautilus*, the self-sustaining undersea vessel Jules Verne described that year in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, would become a reality by 1955? Who would have believed when we formed NASA in 1958 that we would have a man on the moon by 1969? Thirty years ago television sets were just coming on the market; today you can turn a dial and watch a continent away. Thirty years ago the prospect of converting the Sun's energy into useable power was considered preposterous. Last week a solar powered airplane flew the English Channel. Twenty years ago an electronic computer filled an entire room and cost thousands of dollars; today one fits in the palm of a hand and costs less than 20 dollars.

This list could go on and on. What it tells us is that no one of us can say with certainty what can be accomplished—or what cannot—if and when we turn our creative talents to it. The fact that we do not yet know the answer should not be an excuse to delay the quest. As President Kennedy once said, "All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin."

Some, wedded to strategic theories and literature of the past, have called the President's proposal the drive for a first strike capability that would upset superpower stability and provoke the Soviet Union. The President's proposal would in fact do just the opposite. An effective shield against ballistic missile attack would prevent aggression by neutralizing an aggressor's offensive capability. We know the Soviet Union has been working to achieve these same defensive systems for many years, and we hope that they will continue.

A truly stable superpower relationship would be one in which both sides were protected from attack. Deterrence would be strengthened because we would remove an aggressor's capability to attack us rather than merely threaten retaliation after an attack has taken place. In the President's great phrase, we would protect our people, not avenge them. By developing defensive systems we would make the world more stable and secure by providing a shield against ballistic missile attack.

There has been some concern that by pursuing defensive systems we aim to cover only the United States with a protective shell and retreat from our alliance commitments. As the President said in his speech, we seek the capability to defend ourselves *and* our allies from the threat of military force. Our offensive weapons exist today for the sole purpose of deterring attack on the United States and our allies. Any defensive system we can develop would serve the same purpose—to deter attack against the United States *and* our allies by defending us all from ballistic missile attack. . . .

Many would have you believe that we seek to develop a single system which can intercept and defend flawlessly against all missiles and all attacks. We know there is no such "magic bullet." What we are trying to develop first is a defense network—a series of systems, not necessarily based on the same technology or physical principles—which taken together will provide a reliable defense against nuclear ballistic missiles.

The concept we will need to perfect is not dissimilar to the one we now employ to defend our fleet against tactical missile attack. The layered fleet defense system consists of F-14 fighters and Phoenix missiles at long ranges, the Aegis cruiser at medium range, and close-in weapon systems. All are under control of computers which keep track of dozens of incoming missiles, and direct interceptors to destroy them. The ballistic missile defenses we seek to build must do these functions also, not against dozens of targets, but against thousands and at vastly greater ranges.

We are focusing on ballistic missile defense because since the 1960s, defense against these weapons has been the pacing factor in providing a complete and effective shield against nuclear attack. The speed of these missiles, and the fact that they can carry multiple warheads and penetration devices, has confounded the ability of traditional antiballistic missile efforts to provide a capable defense. However, new technologies—in computer-aided detection and tracking, in defensive weaponry and in many other technologies—offer a means by which the ballistic missile may be defeated. In fact, one of the fundamental ingredients in ballistic missile defense, the "glue" that holds these systems together, is the ability to make millions of arithmetic operations and logical decisions per second in space, in the air and on the ground. Ten years ago, even five years ago, we did not have this capability. Today the tremendous technological explosion in microelectronics makes possible physically small, highly capable computers which allow us to consider BMD systems that orbit,

that fly, or are ground mobile. This capability, coupled with other technologies such as directed energy weapons, "smart" missiles, and sophisticated sensors, allows us to think about developing the kind of ballistic missile defense the President called for in his recent speech. And if we are indeed able to master this technology and develop a defense against ballistic missiles, we should also be able to cope with the easier task of defending against the slower flying and other threats. We know the Soviets are working to develop defenses against the cruise missiles, for example. We can do no less for our people.

A second reason for concentrating initially on defending against ballistic missiles is the fact that those systems, because they can reach their targets so quickly, pose a special danger. We have recognized this already in our START and INF arms control efforts which place special emphasis on limiting ballistic missiles. If we are able to develop defenses which offer the promise of depriving ballistic missiles of their military utility, we may achieve what over a decade of negotiations has failed to do—the reduction and eventual dismantling of these systems, offering a safer and more stable environment in which to live. . . .

As the President indicated, we must continue, for the interim, to rely on the offensive arm of deterrence to preserve the peace. Deterrence through a credible retaliatory capability has worked for nearly 40 years, and there is every reason to believe that this policy will continue to prevent aggression against ourselves and our allies. We also must—and will—continue to pursue reductions in nuclear arms, and to seek agreements which are balanced, equal, and verifiable. But it is important to remember that both deterrence and arms reductions require that we modernize our nuclear forces.

As a result of over a decade of relative U.S. military neglect coupled with two decades of Soviet major strategic and other force expansion, we are now confronted by significant strategic imbalances. The strategic modernization program which the President announced in October 1981 provides a balanced and prudent approach to redressing the strategic imbalance and strengthening our deterrent. . . .

We also need to continue, along with our allies, to maintain and improve our defense against conventional attack. We will need to have a strong conventional defense even if our efforts to develop new defense against nuclear attack are achieved. But as we strive to develop new technologies for nuclear defense, we and our allies must, as the President stated, exploit advanced technology to provide for increased effectiveness of our conventional forces too. . . .

Twenty years ago this spring, President Kennedy gave this answer to those who refused to accept the prospect that we have the ability to shape our future and manage our own destiny: "Our problems are man-made, therefore they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. Man's reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable, and we believe they can do it again." How can we accept less?