

Weinberger attacks no-win strategy

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger came out swinging against the liberal Eastern Establishment's foreign policy in the last week of November. A reportedly "very angry" Weinberger at a Nov. 29 meeting of the Reagan administration bucked attempts by all of the President's economic aides and Secretary of State George Shultz to slow the growth of the Pentagon's budget by as much as \$10 billion next year and \$30 billion over the next three years.

On the previous day, in a speech to the National Press Club, Weinberger attacked the State Department over what he called attempts to win "diplomatic" ends by military means in Central America. The speech was characterized by the Pentagon as having been months in the making and approved by President Reagan.

In what was widely understood as a swipe at George Shultz, Weinberger said that "employing our forces almost indiscriminately and as a regular and customary part of our diplomatic efforts would surely plunge us headlong into the sort of domestic turmoil we experienced during the Vietnam War, without accomplishing the goal for which we committed our forces." Last April, in a speech to the Trilateral Commission, Shultz had said that "power and diplomacy are not alternatives. They must go together or we will accomplish very little in the world."

Excerpts from Weinberger's Nov. 28 speech follow.

Under what circumstances, and by what means, does a great democracy such as ours reach the painful decision that the use of military force is necessary to protect our interests or to carry out our national policy?

Our policy has always been to work hard for peace but to be prepared if war comes. Because we face a spectrum of threats—from covert aggression, terrorism and subversion to overt intimidation, to use of brute force—choosing the appropriate level of our response is difficult. Once a decision to employ some degree of force has been made, and the purpose clarified, our government must have the clear mandate to carry out that decision until the purpose has been achieved.

The issue of which branch of government has authority to define that mandate and make decisions on using force is now being strongly contended. Beginning in the 1970s Congress demanded and assumed a far more active role in the

making of foreign policy and in the decision-making process for the employment of military forces abroad than had been thought appropriate and practical before. As a result, the centrality of decision-making has been compromised by the legislative branch to an extent that actively interferes with that process. At the same time, there has not been a corresponding acceptance of responsibility by Congress for the outcome of decisions concerning the deployment of military forces.

Recent history has proven that we cannot assume unilaterally the role of the world's defender. So while we may and should offer substantial amounts of economic and military assistance to our allies in their time of need and help them maintain forces to deter attacks against them—usually we cannot substitute our troops or our will for theirs.

In those cases where our national interests require us to commit combat forces, we must never let there be doubt of our resolution. When it is necessary for our troops to be committed to combat, we must commit them in sufficient numbers and we must support them as effectively and resolutely as our strength permits.

Just as clearly, there are other situations where United States combat forces should not be used. I believe the postwar period has taught us several lessons, and from them I have developed six major tests to be applied when we are weighing the use of U.S. combat forces abroad.

First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies.

Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly and with the clear intention of winning.

Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that.

Fourth, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed—their size, composition, and disposition—must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.

Fifth, before the U.S. commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case in Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win but just to be there.

Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.

The President will not allow our military forces to creep—or be drawn gradually—into a combat role in Central America or any other place in the world. And indeed our policy is designed to prevent the need for direct American involvement.