

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Perle insults Europe at NATO Seminar

Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle hurled a barrage of insults at European allies of the NATO alliance during a Capitol Hill forum, "NATO in the 1990s: A New Definition of the Transatlantic Bargain," June 23. Perle denounced the European partners of the Alliance for being unwilling to participate in out-of-area deployments, and to protect NATO's northern and southern flanks.

He justified growing American isolationism by pointing at the recent cases of military-related high technology transfers to the Soviets from Japan (the Toshiba case) and Norway. His cavalier remark about Norway drew a sharp rebuke and demand for an apology from Thor Knudsen, a representative of the Norwegian Conservative Party on the panel.

Perle attacked the Danes for "being in bed with the Canadians in expecting the U.S. to pay all the bills for NATO," and criticized Europe's own space program for "squandering resources" by engaging in "redundant activities already being carried out by the U.S."

Another panelist, West German Christian Democrat Manfred Abelein, lashed out at the Reagan administration's INF zero-option proposal during the forum, saying that it "pulls out a key element of the flexible response, and creates extremely negative psychological reactions in Europe." He accused Reagan of "forcing strategic agreements for the achievement of internal policies," and warned of the

strengthened role of Soviet conventional forces, including the use of new technologies such as "reactive" tank armor. He said the dangerous trend toward a nuclear-free Europe will encourage the Soviets to exploit the political environment toward "Finlandization."

Francois Fillon of the French Gaullist RPR party, also on the panel, warned that the zero-option proposal is a "fast bobsled to a de-nuclearized Europe."

'Zero option a Soviet trick'

"The zero-option is a trick by the Soviets. It is a great mistake to accept in its present form," warned Eugene Rostow, former director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), speaking at the "NATO in the 1990s" forum. He said that it is mandatory that the allies remedy the current situation by negotiating for a reduction in INF missiles to equal levels, but not to zero, and that this apply to missiles based both in Europe and Asia. He said that the INF treaty also must not be ratified until effective accords on ICBMs and defensive weapons are also ready.

Rostow warned that if a "secret agenda" of a U.S. disengagement from Europe lies behind the arms control proposals, then this will lead rapidly to a breakdown of the alliance, as well as of all non-proliferation agreements, as nations will begin scrambling to put together their own nuclear defenses as best they can.

Rostow said, "Our job is to convince our publics, on both sides of the Atlantic, that the cold war is still going on, that Soviet policy hasn't mellowed and it keeps getting worse."

Richard Burt, U.S. ambassador to West Germany, delivered his usual

threats to Europe, saying the European Union must "bite the bullet" to deal with political and economic problems to maintain the viability of the Atlantic Alliance.

Burt said he favored a "greater European defense identity" such as giving each nation in the alliance a particular strategic task within the Alliance.

Irving Kristol, editor of the *Public Interest* magazine, questioned the presence of Canada in the NATO alliance. In fact, he said he could not justify the presence of any of the "smaller nations" in the Alliance. The remark was so "off the wall" that even Burt has forced to denounce it as "irresponsible."

McFarlane says debt is gravest crisis

Former National Security Adviser to the President Robert McFarlane told me in an exclusive interview June 23 that the gravest strategic crisis facing the West is not military in nature, but is the looming international debt crisis. He said if this is not solved, the Soviets' ability to move with impunity in every major theater through political and irregular warfare means within the next three to four years they will be unstoppable.

This comment followed an analysis of a number of crisis spots around the globe. He expressed special alarm about exotic new technologies, such as reactive tank armor, that the Soviets are putting onto the battlefield. "It's things like that that really trouble you," he said. "You look up, and suddenly they have this new capability, and you say to yourself, 'Where the hell did that come from?'"

However, when asked which he felt was the single one posing the greatest strategic threat to the West right now, he said, "The debt."