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U.S. Defense Strategy

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The Reagan Administration took office in 1981 committed to rebuilding American military power. We are encouraged by the results of the past four years. The Reagan defense program is having its intended effect on the Soviet Union.

The sequence of annual Soviet aggression against new targets that began in the mid-1970s in Angola, and culminated in the invasion of

Afghanistan in late 1979, has ceased. After walking out of the Geneva negotiations in protest over NATO's deployment of theater nuclear weapons in November 1983, the Soviet delegation is back at the bargaining table. Just prior to the recent meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviets began for the first time to talk seriously about deep cuts in strategic offensive forces. Indeed, the Soviet Union now appears to be moving toward President Reagan's "zero option" proposal for eliminating land-based intermediate range nuclear forces—a proposal that was dismissed in 1981 by most American arms control advocates as a propaganda ploy.

In 1980 the crucial issue was whether the United States could afford to acquiesce in the Soviet Union's attempt to achieve a position of global military superiority. The answer from the American electorate was clear. We agreed to pay the price for military strength to deter war.

My purpose in this article is not to review all of the programs and policies of this Administration. Rather, I want to describe U.S. defense strategies and to summarize the major changes we have made in our thinking at the Department of Defense over the past five years.

II

When the Reagan Administration entered office in 1981 it inherited strategic concepts formulated more than a quarter-century ago. Consider the list: nuclear deterrence, extended deterrence, escalation control, strategic stability, offensive dominance, counterinsurgency, limited war, and escalation ladders. The dominant features of the 1950s, when most of these ideas were first formulated and applied, can be summarized in two phrases: American nuclear preeminence and American military superiority. In the nuclear arena we had a decisive advantage. Across the board in military forces we invested more than the Soviets and had a

margin of superiority in most military dimensions.

That era has vanished. The Soviet Union has become a military superpower through an effort that has consumed more than twice as large a percentage of its gross national product as U.S. defense spending does. Whether the United States should be willing to accept a position of parity in military power with the Soviet Union over the longer run can (and should) be debated. But about our current defense programs there should be no illusions. We are not trying to regain the earlier margin of advantage. Rather, we are struggling to win the resources necessary to enable us to maintain sufficient military strength to ensure deterrence.

What does this transformation of the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union imply for the relevance of our basic strategic concepts? Should ideas formulated in an era of American military predominance apply with equal validity in an era of parity?

The world has changed profoundly since the 1950s and early 1960s, when most of our conceptual arsenal was formulated—so profoundly that some of these concepts are now obsolete. Thus, as we reaffirm the central concepts of postwar American policy, we are reformulating others and reaching out for new ideas in a search for ways to make our deterrent more effective. In 1981 we could not delay rebuilding American military strength while we conducted a lengthy conceptual debate. There could be but one overriding priority: to reestablish the balance of military power necessary for stable deterrence. But even as we moved decisively to restore military parity with the Soviet Union, we also began to reassess those strategic concepts inherited from past policymakers.

Now, five years later, I believe we have made significant progress both in strengthening our military forces and in modernizing our defense strategy and policy. Neither task is complete. But as we address the

agenda for the remaining years of the Reagan Administration, it should be useful to state succinctly the core of our defense strategy.

Our strategy is simple. We seek to prevent war by maintaining forces and demonstrating the determination to use them, if necessary, in ways that will persuade our adversaries that the cost of any attack on our vital interests will exceed the benefits they could hope to gain. The label for this strategy is deterrence. It is the core of our defense strategy today, as it has been for most of the postwar period. Moreover, this strategy is working. It has succeeded in winning for the United States and our allies four decades of peace with our primary adversary—a period nearly twice as long as the time-span between World War I and World War II.

To be effective, deterrence must continue to meet four tests:

Survivability: our forces must be able to survive a preemptive attack with sufficient retaliatory strength to threaten losses that outweigh gains. Credibility: our threatened response to an attack must be of a form that the potential aggressor believes we could and would carry out. Clarity: the action to be deterred must be sufficiently clear to our adversaries so that the potential aggressor knows what is prohibited. Safety: the risk of failure through accident, unauthorized use, or miscalculation must be minimized.

Beyond these aims, a more complex concept of deterrence places a greater emphasis on three interrelated ideas. First, effective deterrence must address not just the objective facts of the military balance sheet, but also Soviet leaders' perceptions of those facts. It is not sufficient for us to believe that the costs we will impose in response to an attack will exceed the benefits the Soviet leadership hopes to achieve. Interpreting the facts within their own framework, the Soviet leaders must conclude they cannot advance their objectives by attacking us.

Recognition that an adversary's perceptions are an essential dimension of deterrence is not a new idea. As the Scowcroft Commission's report stated: "Deterrence is the set of beliefs in the minds of the Soviet leaders, given their own values and attitudes, about our capabilities and our will. It requires us to determine, as best we can, what would deter them from considering aggression, even in a crisis—not to determine what would deter us."

Because of our relative ignorance of Soviet perceptions, U.S. planners tend to rely on their own calculations. But all the evidence we have suggests that preparing to deter an attack only by assembling forces adequate to deter us under similar conditions could provide too little to deter the Soviets. For example, many strategic analysts have opposed this Administration's modernization of strategic nuclear forces with the argument that such investments are "sterile," since the marginal gain in attack and retaliation calculations is relatively small for the level of investment. The issue for a strategy of deterrence that takes perceptions seriously, however, is whether the Soviet leadership shares the judgment that additional expenditures are pointless. The fact that for the past decade Soviet investment in strategic forces (as measured in dollars) has been two to three times the size of our own investment would suggest that they do not share this judgment. Moreover, our forces must be adequate not only to deter Soviet aggression, but also to be seen by our allies as sufficient.

The second element is risk, the key issue in defense planning. Unfortunately, many discussions of deterrence are led astray by a misunderstanding of this concept. For example, consider the argument that because our current capabilities are insufficient to meet all our commitments, we must cut back our commitments. Our commitments are based on our interests. We can never afford to buy the capabilities

sufficient to meet all of our commitments with one hundred percent confidence. The critical questions are: What risk of failure are we prepared to accept in our plans for meeting particular contingencies? How much are we prepared to pay to reduce this risk?

The third point is that deterrence is a multilayered concept. The way in which we persuade the Soviet leaders that the costs of an attack would exceed any benefits they might hope to achieve includes three layered components: defense, escalation and retaliation.

If the adversary calculates that his aggression is likely to fail in its own terms, he will not attack. Further, he must know that even if his aggression should succeed in achieving its immediate objectives, he faces the threat of escalation to hostilities that would exact a higher cost than he is willing to pay. In addition to defense and escalation, the third layer is retaliation: if the adversary confronts a credible threat that aggression will trigger attacks by a surviving U.S. retaliatory capability against the attacker's vital interests that result in losses exceeding any possible gains, he will not attack.

Of these three layers of deterrence, the safest and most reassuring is defense. Our "warfighting" capability to defeat an attack and restore the peace is therefore not something separate from our strategy of deterrence. In fact, it forms the foundation of effective deterrence. If an adversary believes that his attack could be defeated at a low level of violence, and at low risk, why would he attack? We understand that the costs of maintaining the capability to meet every contingency effectively on its own terms can be prohibitive. Thus the United States must maintain a credible threat both of escalation and of retaliation to secure deterrence across the spectrum of potential conflict.

The Reagan Administration has reaffirmed the basic U.S. defense

strategy of deterrence. In challenging ourselves, our colleagues in the Administration, and the broader strategic community to reassess the conceptual arsenal of the 1960s and reach out for new ideas, our aim is to find ways to make this strategy of deterrence more effective. Our principal difference with our immediate predecessor arose from our judgment that it was urgent to fund defense at levels adequate to restore our neglected military so that we could maintain deterrence and to do so as quickly as possible. We have accomplished a great deal, but we still confront major Soviet advantages in capital assets purchased since the 1970s and a continuing Soviet military buildup. In light of U.S. congressional demands that deficit reduction be given highest priority, maintaining forces adequate for the missions essential to our vital interests remains our largest challenge.

To the basic defense policies that have guided defense planning since the 1950s, the Reagan Administration has made a number of revisions and additions. We have added four pillars of defense policy for the 1990s that attempt to address the most important changes in the strategic environment that have occurred since the 1960s. These four pillars are: the Strategic Defense Initiative and secure nuclear deterrence; uses of military force and secure conventional deterrence; a strategy for reducing and controlling arms; and competitive strategies.

In the sections that follow I will discuss each policy.

III

The President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) stunned many traditional thinkers because, as so often is the case with the President's proposals, it flew in the face of conventional wisdom. In fact, strategic defense represents a change of strategy, but it is motivated by the search for a more secure deterrent. It offers a far safer way to keep the peace.

Critics of strategic defense are, in most cases, proponents of the concept of mutual assured destruction (MAD). This concept describes a condition in which, after suffering an all-out nuclear first strike, either superpower would retain the nuclear capability to retaliate and destroy its opponent as a modern society. It is a mutual suicide pact. Currently, both the United States and the Soviet Union have the capacity to destroy each other. And according to advocates of MAD, this mutual suicide pact is the bedrock of strategic stability. Because each has the capability to destroy the other's society, it is argued, neither can contemplate war, and war is therefore deterred. Indeed, some proponents of MAD advocate actions to make nuclear war as horrible as possible, since that makes it as unthinkable as possible. Many oppose any defense, from civil defense to strategic defense. Some even attempt to rewrite the history of U.S. policy to claim that the United States embraced MAD and based its deterrent in the 1960s and early 1970s on retaliating against Soviet cities. This, of course, was never the case, and for good reason.

This MAD logic ignores three fundamental questions. First, is a strategy that amounts to a suicidal response sufficiently credible to deter all Soviet attacks? Second, what form of retaliatory threat would be the most moral and effective deterrent? And third, while secure retaliatory deterrence is necessary today, can we not move to a safer world in the future?

Is a nuclear deterrent that simply threatens the end of modern society credible? If the Soviet leadership believed that in response to a nuclear attack by them, we would be forced to choose between suicide and surrender, might they not conclude that we would decide not respond to an attack at all? Would deterrence not be gravely weakened? To avoid that dilemma, every president and every secretary of defense since the early 1960s has said we should maintain the capability to respond to a range of

possible Soviet attacks with a range of appropriate options. Our Administration has accelerated the development of more selective, discriminate and controlled responses, and, most important, has sought and been voted much of the resources to accomplish this. Such limited options both pose a more credible threat to meet any level of Soviet attack, and increase the likelihood that escalation could be controlled and collateral damage minimized.

Misguided critics have sometimes confused our efforts to create credible response options for the purpose of deterring Soviet aggression with a malign intention to fight limited nuclear wars. Some have even gone so far as to confuse prudent planning for deterrence with insensitivity to the horrors of nuclear war. This is nonsense—springing from either ignorance of our policies, or a desire to search for any means to attack our policies. No one who has received as many briefings on nuclear weapons or participated in crisis exercises as I have could hold any doubts about the absolute necessity of avoiding nuclear war. It is precisely because of this necessity that the United States must have a secure deterrent. Moreover, developing selective, discriminate responses is manifestly moral.

It is not in our interest to inform the Soviets precisely how we would respond to every possible contingency. Nor is it possible to be certain that our efforts to limit escalation and terminate a conflict once begun would succeed. But it is imperative that we take every step possible both to deter war and to limit the destruction of any conflict. Without these credible limited options, our critics' view that any response to a Soviet attack would automatically lead to mutual suicide could become a tragic self-fulfilling prophecy. In short, while our policy cannot guarantee success, our critics' policy can only guarantee failure.

The knowledge that any conflict between the United States and the

Soviet Union might escalate to nuclear catastrophe is certainly part of deterrence today. But that knowledge also impels us to ask whether there is not a better way to provide for the defense of the West. Because nuclear deterrence is necessary today, we must seek to make it secure; yet because it poses dangers, we must seek better alternatives for the future. The President and I believe that the answer lies in the Strategic Defense Initiative.

We hope that strategic defense will eventually render nuclear missiles obsolete. That is our long-range vision. But we have already rendered obsolete one of the concepts of the MAD logic: the belief that deterrence must rest on the threat to destroy a certain high percentage of the Soviet population. We do not, in fact, plan our retaliatory options to maximize Soviet casualties or to attack deliberately the Soviet population. Indeed, we believe such a doctrine would be neither moral nor prudent.

It is not moral because the Soviet people should not deliberately be made the victims of any U.S. retaliation to an attack launched by the Soviet leadership—a leadership for which the Soviet people are not responsible and cannot control. It is not prudent because secure deterrence should be based on the threat to destroy what the Soviet leadership values most highly: namely, itself, its military power and political control capabilities, and its industrial ability to wage war.

The U.S. government knows that a nuclear war cannot be won. Our nuclear doctrine is designed to ensure that the Soviet Union's leadership cannot escape this same conclusion: that a nuclear war can never be won—however they choose to define victory—and therefore must never be fought.

IV

It seems to me there are three irrefutable arguments for President

Reagan's SDI—any one of which would be sufficient for the research program we have undertaken, and all three of which are, in fact, valid. They can be summarized as: Soviet breakthrough, Soviet breakout and the very real possibility that American science and technology will achieve what appears to some to be an impossible dream. Let me say more about each.

Since the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, the Soviet Union has spent as much on strategic defense as on its extraordinary strategic nuclear offensive buildup. Soviet air defenses now include nearly 12,000 launchers for surface-to-air missiles, and a formidable array of radars and interceptors. The Soviet Union has exploited the one ABM system permitted by the ABM treaty—the system around Moscow—to upgrade, test and gain experience in the operation of an effective full-scale defense against ballistic missiles. Moreover, for more than two decades, the Soviets have been investing heavily in precisely those technologies encompassed by our own SDI program. While the Congress funded only 74 percent of our FY 1986 budget request for SDI research, the Soviet Union continued to spend ten times our level of effort on strategic defense.

Evidence of the Soviet program leads us to conclude that the Soviet leaders have never accepted the theory of mutual assured vulnerability so favored by many American strategists, a theory that served as the foundation of the ABM treaty. Indeed, the Soviet leaders have made a vigorous, sustained effort to reduce the vulnerability of their country, and especially of themselves. Not only are the Soviets ahead of us today in the development and deployment of strategic defenses, but they have invested so much more on these technologies, and in so many different areas, that our SDI research program would be justified as a prudent hedge against a Soviet breakthrough—even if that were the only

consideration.

Concern about a Soviet breakout follows directly from this. The Soviet commitment to strategic defense is so unswerving that we must consider the possibility of a real Soviet breakout from the ABM treaty. If they could deploy today a strategic defense that significantly advanced their interests, who doubts that they would do so, despite the treaty and their criticism of our program? What prevents the Soviets from abrogating the ABM treaty is their calculation of what each of us would do in its absence. A vigorous American strategic defense research program is thus essential to ensure that we do not awake some day to find the Soviets rushing to full-scale ABM deployment.

The third and, in my view, most conclusive argument for our strategic defense research program is the very real possibility that science and technology can in fact create a future in which nuclear missiles become less and less capable of their awful mission.

This journey to a safer world will not be easy, or short. Our research program is the necessary first step. But given the past record of experts' declarations about what could not be done in the future, I am dismayed by the absolute assurance with which some distinguished American scientists and others declare the President's dream to be impossible. Recall that Albert Einstein predicted in 1932: "There is not the slightest indication that [nuclear] energy will ever be obtainable. It would mean that the atom would have to be shattered at will." Such distinguished errors only strengthen my belief that we should not be dissuaded from a vigorous research program. The President's purpose and resolve are, quite simply, to do all we can to help create a much safer world for generations to come.

If we could defend our people, who would prefer to avenge them? If we

could live secure in the knowledge that our survival did not rest upon the threat of retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, would this not be a preferable moral position? The search for something beyond reliance on retaliation is neither cynical nor naïve. From the outset, we have insisted that progress toward an effective SDI will have to proceed hand in hand with regaining an effective offensive deterrent and, paradoxically enough, with arms reduction as well. A persistent and patient dialogue with the Soviet Union is a necessary condition for life in today's world.

Indeed, in pursuing SDI, we are aware of alternative modes of delivering nuclear weapons. Even a thoroughly reliable shield against ballistic missiles would still leave us vulnerable to other modes of delivery, or perhaps even to other devices of mass destruction. Despite an essentially leakproof missile defense, we might still be vulnerable to terrorist attacks against our cities. Our vision of SDI therefore calls for a gradual transition to effective defenses, including deep reductions in offensive nuclear weapons. Thus, SDI is part of the President's larger goal to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons and the role of nuclear weapons in international politics.

For the foreseeable future, however, nuclear weapons will be part of the inescapable backdrop of U.S.-Soviet relations. Even if at some future point the United States and the Soviet Union were to abolish their nuclear weapons, we cannot eradicate the knowledge of how to make them, nor the fact that other nations and terrorist organizations have that capability. These facts make it absolutely essential that we should undertake every feasible effort to reduce to the lowest possible level the risk of nuclear war.

V

I have elsewhere outlined six major tests that should be applied by the

United States in deciding to commit U.S. conventional military forces to combat. I argued that U.S. military forces have an essential, but circumscribed and necessarily limited, role in the larger framework of national power. That speech spawned a continuing debate inside and outside the government. In light of that continuing commentary, let me now reiterate the key points I made.

According to theories developed in the 1950s and early 1960s, limited war was essentially a diplomatic instrument—a tool for bargaining with the enemy. As such, it had to be centrally directed by the political leadership and applied with precise control. The gradual application of American conventional power, combined with the threat of incremental increases in the application of that power, would, according to the theorists, persuade America's opponents to accept a settlement while they avoided strategic defeat.

The fatal flaw of these theories of the 1950s was their neglect of the domestic political realities of American democracy. Both these theories and the actual experience of Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam in the 1960s applied an eighteenth-century approach to war. In that period, as Clausewitz noted: "War was still an affair for governments alone, and the people's role was simply that of an instrument."

The framers of the American Constitution rejected this concept of war. Our Constitution reserves for the Congress alone, as representative of the people, the right to declare war. In fact, prior to Korea and Vietnam, except for occasional short excursions, presidents worked hard to build public support before taking America to war. From 1939 to 1941, Franklin Roosevelt worked and waited to build a consensus, even though Europe was under siege. He had no other feasible option. Though he would have preferred to do so, President Roosevelt never considered sending American forces into combat without the approval of the Congress and

the assurance of support of the American people. In Korea, and then Vietnam, America went to war without a strong consensus or support for our basic purposes and, as it turned out, without the firm commitment to win. Indeed, as one of my predecessors, Secretary Robert McNamara, once observed: "The greatest contribution Vietnam is making—right or wrong is beside the point—is that it is developing an ability in the United States to fight a limited war, to go to war without the necessity of arousing the public ire." As successive administrations discovered, the American people had the final word. The "public ire" was aroused as perhaps never before—and never again should the imperative of public support be ignored.

Despite our best efforts to deter or prevent such developments, situations will arise in which it may be appropriate to commit U.S. military forces to combat. From our reading of the postwar period, this Administration derives several lessons that can be stated as tests to be applied in facing such choices. These tests cannot be applied mechanically or deductively. Weighing the evidence in specific cases will always require judgment. But applying these tests to the evidence will make it clear that while there are situations in which U.S. troops are required, there are even more situations in which U.S. combat forces should not be used. These tests are:

—The United States should not commit forces to combat unless our vital interests are at stake. Our interests, of course, include vital interests of our allies.

—Should the United States decide that it is necessary to commit its forces to combat, we must commit them in sufficient numbers and with sufficient support to win. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, or if the objective is not important enough so that we must achieve it, we should not commit our

forces.

—If we decide to commit forces to combat, we must have clearly defined political and military objectives. Unless we know precisely what we intend to achieve by fighting, and how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives, we cannot formulate or determine the size of forces properly, and therefore we should not commit our forces at all.

—The relationship between our objectives and the size, composition and disposition of our forces must be continually reassessed and adjusted as necessary. In the course of a conflict, conditions and objectives inevitably change. When they do, so must our combat requirements.

—Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, the U.S. government should have some reasonable assurance of the support of the American people and their elected representatives in the Congress. Of course, this does not mean we should wait upon a public opinion poll. The public elects a president as a leader, not a follower. He takes an oath to protect and defend the Constitution. The people also expect a Congress sworn to the same principles and duties. To that end, the president and the leadership of the Congress must build the public consensus necessary to protect our vital interests. Sustainability of public support cannot be achieved unless the government is candid in making clear why our vital interests are threatened, and how, by the use, and only by the use of American military forces, we can achieve a clear, worthy goal. U.S. troops cannot be asked to fight a battle with the Congress at home, while attempting to win a war overseas. Nor will the American people sit by and watch U.S. troops committed as expendable pawns on some grand diplomatic chessboard.

—Finally, the commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort—only after diplomatic, political, economic and other efforts have

been made to protect our vital interests.

Each of these tests deserves lengthy discussion. For present purposes, several limited comments must suffice.

American interests are nowhere etched in stone. We should never succumb to the temptation to define a perimeter of vital interests, as Dean Acheson did in early 1950, in effect announcing that certain areas are "beyond our strategic perimeter." This virtually, albeit unintentionally, invited North Korea, with Stalin's approval, to invade South Korea. Judgments about our vital interests will sometimes depend on the circumstances of the specific case and trends, as well as on intrinsic values. Our vital interests can only be determined by ourselves and our definition of the threat. In his discussion of "the common defense" in The Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton argued that "it is impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national exigencies, or the correspondent extent and variety of the means which may be necessary to satisfy them. The circumstances that endanger the safety of nations are infinite." For this reason, we not only can never say never; we can never think never.

When using force, the necessity to win requires a clearly defined, achievable objective on which there is clear agreement. In Korea, we paid the full cost of this lesson—though this lesson still eludes many. There, our original purpose had been to defeat North Korean aggression and restore South Korea's territorial integrity. But we had divided counsels: many thought this could only be done if we eliminated the unnatural division between North and South Korea. We crossed the 38th Parallel and pushed forward to the Chinese border. But we were not united or determined to achieve the objective of uniting Korea. Again in Vietnam, failure to define a clear, achievable goal, and a belief that we could achieve what some wanted without a military victory, led to confusion,

public frustration and eventual withdrawal.

When we define a clear objective, we must commit the forces necessary to achieve it. Gradualism is inherently attractive to some, but almost always a mistaken way to achieve military success. It exaggerates the illusion of control, violates the strategic principle of concentration of force, and encourages underestimation of the domestic political costs entailed by any use of American military forces abroad. If combat forces are required, they should be introduced rapidly and in the strength necessary to achieve our objective at the least possible cost. Where force has been committed to a peacekeeping buffer role, as in Lebanon, and circumstances change so that the original objective cannot be achieved, there will always be those who discover some further objective that might be served by a continued American presence. But a peacekeeping buffer force cannot always achieve a wholly different objective quickly, if at all. If, for example, a peacekeeping force, sized accordingly, cannot fulfill its mission because there is no peace to keep, then it should be withdrawn. And this was our decision in Lebanon.

No aspect of the doctrine I have enunciated for determining the use of force has received more comment and criticism than the requirement that we have reasonable assurance of the support of the American people. There can be no such assurance, the critics say. A government forced to wait for its people will be paralyzed in international politics. Recognizing this handicap, our adversary will be emboldened. One critic put it this way: even if Secretary Weinberger had a favorable public opinion poll for using force, who could guarantee that the public would not change its mind?

My purpose is not to wish away the frustrations of leadership in a democracy. Perhaps if President Roosevelt had been willing to defy the opinion polls and act on his own authority in 1939, 1940 or 1941, the

enormous losses of World War II could have been reduced. But perhaps only by waiting until the full force of American public opinion was clearly mobilized behind the necessity of winning an all-out war was President Roosevelt able, with our allies, to secure the unconditional surrender of both the Nazis and the Japanese.

It is not necessary for me to argue that the considered judgment of the American people is always correct. My thesis is more modest, but more important. It is that American democracy is constructed on the principle, not that the American people will always be right, but that there exists no better guide to a wise policy. Our government, therefore, constructs a process that forces the president and the Congress to lead and argue, to seek and win the support of the American people in order to sustain a course of action. The inherent assumption here is that this process will, in the long run, produce wiser choices than any other mechanism yet discovered. Our Constitution does not say that this will be easy. But as Churchill once remarked: "Democracy is the worst form of government known to man—except for all the others." Our government is founded on the proposition that the informed judgment of the people will be a wiser guide than the view of the president alone, or of the president and his advisers, or of any self-appointed elite.

Taken together, these tests remind us of our most important and precious political feature: we are a democracy. Nothing distinguishes us more sharply from our Soviet adversary than the fact that whether at home or abroad, our government policy can be challenged and vindicated or reversed by a majority of our citizens. Any U.S. government that attempts to fight where our vital interests are not at stake, when we have no good reason to suppose there will be continuing public support, committing military forces merely as a regular and customary adjunct to our diplomatic efforts, invites the sort of domestic turmoil we

experienced during the Vietnam War. Such a government has no grounds for expecting any less disastrous result.

The caution sounded by these six tests for the use of military force is intentional. The world consists of an endless succession of hot spots in which some U.S. forces could play, or could at least be imagined to play, a useful role. The belief that the mere presence of U.S. troops in Lebanon, or Central America or Africa or elsewhere could be useful in some way is not sufficient for our government to ask our troops to risk their lives. We remain ready to commit our lives, fortunes and sacred honor when the cause warrants it. But the hope that a limited U.S. presence might provide diplomatic leverage is not sufficient.

It has been said that I am relentless in building up our military strength on the one hand, but reluctant to use our military forces on the other. I have noticed that our commanders who would lead our men into battle and who sometimes have to order them to their deaths are equally determined that the need for such ultimate sacrifices must be fully warranted. Some critics will charge that commitments both to strength and caution are inconsistent. I believe that together they express a vital truth and a profound paradox. Recognition of our democracy's inherent reluctance about asking our troops to die for their country places an even larger premium on the need to have the military power required to deter opponents. The central thread in the Reagan Administration's policy is to combine sufficient military strength with such a clear determination to resist aggression that we discourage challenges. By preventing the attack that would make necessary an American commitment of forces in response, we achieve our objectives without war. Thus, peace through strength is more than a motto—it is a fact.

What fires this Administration's determination to build up our conventional military capabilities, emphasize readiness and sustainability,

and reduce reliance upon nuclear weapons is our commitment to make conventional deterrence work. The stronger our conventional deterrent, the less likely an attack, and the lower the risk of war. The more vigorous our conventional deterrent, the less we must rely on the threat of nuclear retaliation.

VI

Reviewing the results of the first SALT interim agreement and the ABM and SALT II treaties, we can see why President Reagan has labeled this "pseudo arms control." The two premises behind the ABM treaty were that both sides would keep only limited defenses, and that both would sharply reduce offensive forces. Neither of these premises proved true. The United States chose not to deploy the full ABM system permitted by the 1972 ABM treaty and the 1974 Protocol—and in fact dismantled its one ABM site in 1975. But the Soviets not only have improved and upgraded significantly their Moscow ABM system over the past several years, they also have invested as heavily in their strategic defense programs since 1972 as they have in their offensive buildup.

In the mid-1960s, the United States ceased building silos for its land-based ICBMs. In contrast, the Soviets leaped ahead in numbers and far ahead in missile throw-weight. In submarine-launched ballistic missiles, we stopped building; again they raced ahead. Only in the area of total strategic nuclear warheads, a basically irrelevant category since it does not consider modernization of launchers, accuracy or any other factors, did the United States maintain a lead. Soviet programs may finally overtake that. Harold Brown once summarized the phenomenon of constant Soviet additions: "When we build, they build. When we stop, they build."

Misinformed arms control advocates continue to talk about a "spiraling"

arms race. Yet the facts are significantly different. Today, the U.S. stockpile of strategic offensive and theater nuclear forces has some 25 percent fewer weapons than it did in 1967. The megatonnage of this diminished stockpile is approximately 70 percent lower than it was in 1967. Moreover, in October 1983, the NATO alliance agreed to reduce by 1,400 the number of nuclear warheads deployed in Europe. These reductions are under way and, together with the 1,000 warheads previously withdrawn, will reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the alliance stockpile to the lowest level in 20 years.

While we cannot give similar precise estimates for the Soviet nuclear stockpile, we do know that the Soviets have added more than 7,000 new warheads to their strategic offensive systems since 1967—6,500 of them since 1972, when the SALT I agreements were signed. Even with the SALT II restraints, the Soviet Union has built more warheads capable of destroying our missile silos than we had initially predicted they would build without any SALT agreement.

Treaty compliance—or noncompliance—is another verse in the same song. It was assumed that while the Soviets might exploit ambiguities in an agreement, they would avoid blatant cheating. But even in the case of the ARM treaty, the Soviets have engaged in gross violations.

Ignoring Soviet violations of arms control agreements will not make them go away. Indeed, reluctance on our part to respond can only encourage further Soviet noncompliance. The United States will continue to inform the Soviet Union of discoveries of its violations and give it the opportunity to discuss ambiguous situations. But when we have determined that the Soviet actions are deliberate and dangerous, we must respond. Arms control treaties are not like domestic laws, which can be enforced by civil authorities. Instead, arms control violations must be met by firm American reactions. But U.S. responses should be

proportionate (though not necessarily identical in nature), and clearly in the United States' interests. The Soviet leadership must understand that the United States has no intention of accepting one-sided compliance with arms control agreements. Progress on this issue is essential if arms control is to remain a useful component of our national security policy. Without exaggerating past mistakes, we must nevertheless learn from this experience of Soviet violations of past treaties.

The Reagan Administration's approach to arms control is quite different from that of its predecessors. Let me underscore four key differences.

First, President Reagan has insisted that we focus steadily on the goal of how to prevent nuclear war and build a more secure world so that this generation, and future generations, will live in peace with freedom.

The President's proposition—"A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought"—not only bears repetition but deserves contemplation. The President's determination to ensure that a nuclear war will never be fought is the mandate for our defense program and arms reduction initiatives. Our goal can be stated simply: to ensure that the defense of America's vital interests never requires the United States to fight a nuclear war. In our approach to arms reduction, as in our overall defense programs, we seek to protect and defend vital U.S. interests by reducing the risk of nuclear war to the lowest possible level.

Second, arms reduction is a component of our larger national security policy—not an isolated objective or independent instrument.

Arms reduction is one of the ways in which we pursue our national security objectives. Recognition that arms control negotiations and agreements are but a strand in the overall relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union brings into sharp focus a major dimension of any effective strategy for achieving arms reductions. This

dimension—Soviet incentives—was entirely neglected in the previous approach. What are the Soviets' incentives to agree to useful, effective agreements for real reductions? Even more vital, what are the Soviets' incentives to comply with what they have agreed to?

In strengthening U.S. forces and acquiring arms while simultaneously negotiating with the Soviet Union, we are creating the necessary incentives for them to reach agreements that meet our interests. Why should the Soviets agree to reductions, if we reduce voluntarily without any corresponding Soviet reduction? Why should they comply, if we accept their violations? Ask yourself: Why is General Secretary Gorbachev now beginning to consider real reductions in strategic nuclear forces? Why are the Soviets beginning to move on INF negotiations? Quite simply, it is the new strength and resolve we have demonstrated. Not only should we negotiate from strength—this is in fact the only way we can negotiate effectively. It is not Soviet goodwill, but our strength, that is bringing about their changes.

Third, negotiated, structural arms agreements must reduce arms, not legitimize increases.

President Reagan has identified the primary criteria for acceptable, negotiated arms reduction agreements. They must significantly reduce the number of offensive systems, bring us to parity (measured not just by numbers of warheads but by effectiveness) at much lower levels than each side has now, be effectively verifiable, and contribute to a broad policy of strengthening peace and stability. In view of past and current Soviet violations of arms control agreements, it is essential that future agreements establish comprehensive verification regimes that reverse the current Soviet pattern of denial of information essential to verification, facilitate U.S. monitoring and deter Soviet cheating. Without such an effective verification regime, an arms control agreement will serve only to

limit U.S. options and programs without providing assurance that the other party has been similarly constrained.

Fourth, beyond negotiated agreements on forces lies an array of initiatives to control nuclear arms and reduce the risks that they might ever be used.

These initiatives focus on factors that could prevent accidents or unauthorized escalation; improve communication capabilities; and remove ambiguities, misperceptions and misunderstandings. This part of our arms negotiation agenda includes a large number of actions that the United States can take independently—without Soviet concurrence or agreement—but in ways that will actually reduce the risk of accidents, unauthorized use or inadvertent escalation. Continuing improvements in our command, control and communication (C3) and in our warning systems will reduce even further the already low risk that the Soviets might somehow come to believe that a surprise attack might succeed and the equally low risk that weapons could be used accidentally or in an unauthorized fashion. As we modernize our arsenal, we seek to improve weapons' safety and command and control procedures.

Operational arms control also includes a number of bilateral and multilateral actions—sometimes referred to as confidence-building measures—that seek to reduce the possibility of conflict through accident, miscalculation or failure of communications. During our first term, we proposed several new initiatives to the Soviet Union. Some of them have met with success. In June 1985, both countries agreed to clarify their obligations under the 1971 "Accidents Measures" agreement to consult in the event of a nuclear incident involving terrorists. In October 1985, technical testing of the upgraded Moscow-Washington hotline was successfully conducted, and operational testing of the new capability to send facsimiles began in January 1986. In November in

Geneva, President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev agreed that both governments will examine the possibility of creating risk-reduction centers to lessen the chances of miscalculation or accidental conflicts. We also have conducted a series of policy-level discussions on regional issues.

VII

Implementation of our overarching strategy of secure deterrence requires an array of strategies that capitalize on our advantages and exploit our adversaries' weaknesses. Even when U.S. military investment was substantially larger than that of the Soviets, it would have been advantageous to have more explicit strategies for competing. After a decade in which the cumulative Soviet military investment has been 50 percent greater than our own, it is essential that we rebuild our forces in ways that emphasize our specific comparative advantages.

Exploiting our comparative advantages requires a purposeful direction of research, development and procurement programs, as well as adaptations of doctrine, operational concepts and changing organizations. This effort also means we will have to pay greater attention to the timing and phasing of U.S. initiatives, for example, the introduction of new weapons or major modifications of weapons or tactics.

The potential impact of competitive strategies is illustrated by the decisive advantage achieved by the combination of American technology and Israeli tactics in the 1983 air war between Israel and Syria. The "score" in that air war was 86 to 1 against Soviet MiGs. Another example is our new technology popularly referred to as "stealth." If American technology were able to create airplanes, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles essentially invisible to current Soviet radar technology, massive Soviet investments in defense against aircraft over the battlefield in Europe would become obsolete. Or, if the United States had a capability

to reach into the Soviet Union and destroy selective, highly valued targets, Soviet confidence in its nuclear warfighting plan would perforce be greatly reduced. While specific details of this technology are appropriately classified, publicly available evidence should suggest that these possibilities are by no means fanciful.

We are not likely to regain the position we had in the 1950s. Even now, we are just matching the Soviet levels of weapons procurement (measured in dollars), and it will be the mid-1990s before the "dollar cost" of our weapons stock roughly matches that of the Soviets. Soviet research, development, testing, evaluation and military construction programs remain substantially larger than ours, as do a wide variety of nominally "civilian" programs designed to create a stock of militarily useful assets. In these circumstances, well thought out strategies for competing effectively with the Soviets are no longer something that it would be "nice" to have. They have become a clear necessity.

An intelligent and sensible use of competitive strategies will allow us to maintain an effective force even if our overall budget is constrained. It should enable us to retain a secure deterrent without having to match the Soviets plane for plane, ship for ship, and tank for tank. Even without much systematic effort in the past, we were able to benefit from such an approach. For example, our shift to a strategy of low-level penetration by our bombers forced a large diversion of Soviet resources into air defense. This was certainly preferable to allowing Soviet investment of those resources in offensive forces.

Another area where competitive strategy has produced beneficial results is in antisubmarine warfare. Our ASW capability has reinforced the Soviet navy's defensive orientation, keeping it close to the Soviet homeland in order to protect its ballistic-missile submarine fleet. This limits the Soviet navy's threat to our sea lines of communication with our

European and Asian allies in the early period of a war.

In the future, we must vigorously expand the number of areas in which we compete. We must develop thoughtful strategies based on areas of natural, sustainable U.S. advantage. Where possible, we should adopt strategies that make obsolete past Soviet defense investments. We should devise programs for which an effective Soviet response would be far more costly than the programs we undertake. If possible, we should try to move the competition into areas in which we have natural advantages and to channel Soviet defense efforts into areas that are less threatening to us and less destabilizing to the overall military balance.

In order to capitalize on these opportunities and implement competitive strategies more effectively, we must also gain a better understanding of Soviet programs and policies. This Administration has already committed significant funds to, and is making progress in, rebuilding our intelligence capabilities. We must make a concerted effort to improve our understanding of Soviet perceptions, to identify Soviet weaknesses and to assess trends in the military balances. We will not only know our enemy better, we will be able to attend to his weaknesses more effectively.

In sum, I have decided to make competitive strategies a major theme of the Department of Defense during the remainder of this Administration. There are a number of reasons for believing we can successfully develop strategies for competing more effectively in selected areas. We are entering into a period of rapid technological change that can work to our advantage. We have superior skills in the development of military systems embodying some of the leading technologies and superior manufacturing techniques and skills. And having at last realized the danger of giving critical technologies to the Soviets, or allowing them to steal them, we are now more effectively slowing that flow.

VIII

The central lesson of World War II and the past four decades is this: American military power is the prerequisite of peace. Strength is the price for peace. If peace seems expensive, consider the alternatives. By scrimping on strength we will reduce our security and increase the risks of war. But if we fail to keep the peace, the costs will be incalculable.

In 1981, with broad bipartisan support, this Administration began rebuilding American military strength. As I said in my first appearance before the Congress, the road to recovery of a secure deterrent would be neither short nor easy. To reverse the results of a decade in which U.S. defense efforts declined by 20 percent in the face of a 50-percent increase in Soviet military strength required a long-term program. Our urgent need was to regain sufficient military strength to persuade the Soviets that we would allow them no significant exploitable military advantage against our vital interests.

Looking back on the first five years of our rebuilding program, the prime result is that, unquestionably, U.S. military forces are stronger, readier, better trained, better equipped and therefore more capable than at any previous time in our peacetime history. The consequences of this are profound. Our rebuilding of American military strength is redefining the terms of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Rather than dealing from weakness (and the prospect of greater relative disadvantage), the United States is now beginning to deal from strength and the promise of greater relative strength. Now we must persuade the Soviets that this is not a short-term commitment. Nothing could so enhance the prospects for peace as Soviet acceptance of the proposition that they can achieve no significant, exploitable military advantage over us. Denying the Soviet Union

exploitable military advantage cannot by itself guarantee peace. But if we allow the Soviet Union such advantages as they had in 1980, we can be assured that we will then be tested in ways that risk war.

Seventy-five years ago, Theodore Roosevelt enjoined Americans to "speak softly and carry a big stick." His counsel of caution is as relevant today as then. But we must also carry a stick as powerful as our adversary's, for our strength is the foundation of our strategy for peace.