

The original documents are located in Box D35, folder “Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 28, 1973” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Remarks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, International Club Bldg., 1800 K Street, N.W., at 9:15 a.m. Thursday, June 28, 1973. Topic: Defense and Detente. Discussion scheduled to last from 9:15 until 12~~x~~ noon.

The word, detente, has a magic ring to it. It has a most appealing sound. Apart from that, from a substantive point of view, detente is most ardently to be desired-- provided that from the standpoint of the American people it is a condition achieved without loss of vigilance.

We are moving steadily toward detente. The summit meetings last week between President Nixon and Soviet Leader Brezhnev produced a definite improvement in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, an Agreement for the Prevention of Nuclear War, a pledge that the two nations would work together to maintain world peace and to avoid serious international confrontations, and a Declaration of Principles which promises to pave the way for a treaty next year limiting offensive nuclear weapons and even a reduction of strategic weapons. Meantime it has been announced that ~~the~~ ^{East-West} conference on mutual balance force reductions will begin Oct. 30 in Vienna.

The era of negotiations is well under way with the agreements we have already concluded--such as SALT I and Berlin--and with SALT II and MBFR talks to continue.

There is a tendency on the part of some Americans to see in the new era of negotiations a reason or excuse to reduce U.S. and NATO defense efforts. Yet it must be apparent to all westerners that we still have a long way to go on the road to detente--and that it was U.S. military strength which helped bring the new era of negotiations about and produced the agreements we already can point to.

It should also be apparent that western positions and interests cannot be adequately protected and advanced in upcoming negotiations unless the West shows continued will and ability to maintain its military strength.

Do not misunderstand me. I look forward to the day when genuine detente, manifested



by concrete actions on the part of the Soviet Union, makes it possible for the United States and NATO to lower their military profile. I honestly do not know if that day will ever come. Certainly detente without what I would regard as an adequate defense is delusion, whatever actions are taken by the other side.

It is all very well to talk about improving relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union--and we should do that. But we cannot, despite Mr. Brezhnev's outward show of great friendliness, ignore the fact that the Soviet military buildup--conventional as well as nuclear--continues with vigorous momentum.

We should be honest with ourselves and the rest of the world. We should face up to reality and make this recognition a starting point for our further negotiating efforts. Unless we do this, we jeopardize the chances for achieving peace, while subjecting our vital interests to serious danger.

In that connection, we must not view possible results in the MBFR talks as a reason for reducing defense expenditures over the longer term. MBFR will not obviate the need to maintain and improve our conventional capabilities, overall. On the contrary, reduction of our forces in Europe will mean we must make the most efficient possible use of our defense resources. However, MBFR can be the vehicle which lowers the level of confrontation between East and West. Our objective in MBFR is a more stable military balance at lower levels of forces. Negotiated mutual reductions, East and West, are the only prudent path to this objective.

Our NATO allies have made a commendable effort to maintain and improve their forces. In the period, 1970-73, allied defense expenditures increased 30 per cent. Significant improvements to allied forces also are taking place as the equipment program established by the Eurogroup continues on schedule. But there is an excessive amount of duplication with the NATO Alliance in research and development of weapons systems. Progress

in NATO armaments has been slow, particularly in the fields of armor and anti-armor and naval modernization. The overall process has been inefficient because of national attempts to maintain a wide range of similar defense industries. We have been trying to encourage greater cooperation and rationalization among our NATO allies. We are offering our latest designs to other NATO nations and are testing their designs for possible adoption by our forces.

There is potential for greater NATO progress in the exercise field, particularly in the maritime area. Our allies possess important naval assets whose capabilities are not fully realized because the ships spend so much time in port. If certain allies operated these ships more often, their training, readiness, and ability to work together with other allied naval forces would be greatly enhanced. This could lead to creation of an Allied Standing Naval Force in the Mediterranean, as a counterpart to the Atlantic force which has been so successful.

Apart from this,

~~we~~ we need cooperative measures among our allies in such areas as the organization, command and control of our NATO Air Forces in the center region; better use of manpower, both active and reserve; and R&D to achieve truly effective armaments cooperation.

For a quarter of a century we and our Allies have operated on the basic belief that it was fitting and feasible for the United States to assume primary responsibility for countering all threats to the common security. The lesson both we and our Allies have to learn is that partnership, not predominance--sharing, not supremacy--is in our common interest.

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