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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*Dick Cheney*



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BY ILR NARA, DATE 8/27/12

REMARKS FOR RESTRICTED SESSION OF THE  
DEFENSE PLANNING COMMITTEE MINISTERIAL MEETING  
DECEMBER 10, 1975  
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your "Summary Appraisal,"  
Mr. Chairman. I'm impressed how succinctly you stated the problem.

As a new Secretary of Defense, it is clear to me that I am not in a  
position to cast much light on the details of the problems you have  
been wrestling with this past year or two, so my remarks will be  
somewhat personal.

When I left Brussels some 14 months ago, my support for the  
Alliance was strong, as you, Mr. Secretary General, and the members  
of the Permanent Council know. It is, if possible, even stronger  
today. My belief in the need for an effective collective defense  
was firm in 1974; it is even firmer today.

There are reasons why this is so. One, paradoxically, is the  
policy of detente -- something we have all thought a great deal about.  
Detente, of course, means, literally, relaxation of tensions. But  
what some outside of our ranks seem to forget is that no one seeks to  
relax tensions that do not exist. The fact of our world in 1975  
is that there are real tensions and they pose dangers for us all.

I believe that detente should be seen for what it is. And in  
trying to define it in the remarks I made at my swearing in ceremony  
at the Pentagon, I described it as "the word for the approach we use  
in relations with nations who are not our friends, who do not share  
our principles, whom we are not sure we can trust; and who have great  
military power and have shown an inclination to use it to the detriment

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of freedom." That is -- very simply -- what it is to me. In a world where real tensions exist -- and they do, our efforts to reduce some of that tension safely and effectively can succeed only if our efforts are rooted in a strong defense and deterrents. Indeed, a strong defense and deterrents are the foundation of any hope for success along this path. President Ford, as you know, knows this well with some 22 years of involvement as a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee of the House.

We seek to reduce confrontations, to lessen dangers, to put relations on a somewhat less precarious footing, to see if there might not be some interests that we share. But where East and West are concerned, we must not forget that in many of the most basic matters, including the fact that we cherish freedom, we are fundamentally opposed. Detente begins with an awareness of basic political differences, dangers, and tension. As has been suggested here in the DPC, it must include an awareness of the need for enough military strength to lend weight to our political and ideological principles, as well as to deter adventure or outright aggression. It is clear to me that it has been our defense capabilities and their deterrent effect that have made possible such improvements in relations with the Soviet Union as we have seen in recent years. It is off of this base, which must remain firm, that Foreign Ministers negotiate.

If we are to make real, as opposed to illusory, progress in the reduction of tension, we must continue to ensure that the use by the Soviets of their military weight in pursuing political gains, or ideological acceptance, or even crisis advantage, remains foreclosed.



The United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, who has been so successful in this effort, knows this well.

For example, while the negotiations for Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions are taking place, it would, as we have all agreed, be exceedingly unwise for any of us to take unilateral steps to reduce our capabilities in NATO. It is natural that we should seek to achieve a stable military situation in Europe at lower levels of force, but at what point we might successfully stabilize the balance or to what extent it can be stabilized by negotiation, remains to be seen. In the meantime, we should do nothing to undermine the prospects of these discussions -- which reductions in strength would surely do.

Of even more fundamental importance, collective defense remains essential because of the grave questions raised by the steady growth of Soviet military power in recent years, during this process of detente: continued improvements in Soviet strategic nuclear forces, increases in Soviet troops deployed in Central Europe and along the Sino-Soviet border, and expansion of Soviet naval operations across the world's oceans. We now estimate that the Soviets have a military establishment of about 4.4 million men, and we are quite confident that in recent years they have added at least 100,000 men to their forces facing Western Europe. In spite of the numerical advantage in tanks that the Soviets already had in Central Europe, they are adding still more to both tank divisions and motorized rifle divisions. They have increased their artillery by about one-third in the past five years; they have deployed a new array of surface-to-air guns and missiles; and they have introduced new high performance



combat aircraft. With that growth in weaponry at Soviet disposal, our nations, individually and collectively, would not be prudent if we failed to look to our own military posture.

All of us, I recognize, have other worthy uses for our resources. All of us must wrestle with constraints on defense budgets. I am doing so now. But despite any limitations, there is a great deal we can and should do to maintain defense, deterrence, and detente. We must maintain and improve our strategic, theater nuclear, and conventional forces as the essential combination for credible deterrence. It is essential that we have the ability to meet any level of attack. To do that, we must be able to conduct military operations at the lowest level of force and damage consistent with achievement of our objectives. And we must be seen by the Soviets and by our own people to be able to do precisely that.

There is a tendency in some quarters, I realize, to equate provocation with belligerence and strength. But history suggests that one can also provoke by being weak. Evident weakness on our part -- and particularly conventional weakness in an era of nuclear equivalency -- just as surely as belligerence, could provoke rivals into adventures that they might otherwise avoid. Despite the continued Soviet buildup, an adequate conventional balance is within our reach, as my predecessor has emphasized, and we must make certain that, while we guard our nuclear power, the non-nuclear balance does not shift away from us.



In the light of these circumstances, I have observations on several areas of particular interest to me.

First, considering the pressures on our resources, we must be confident that our own military programs and plans are keyed to deterring and dealing with the real threat. Programs that are geared to the past or are marginal to that purpose should be ended, and the resources being used for them moved into the vital programs for today and the period ahead. Our able, and I believe, very effective SACEUR, has suggested this, as has the Military Committee.

Second, we need to restore political and military cohesion to the Southern flank. No one nation in the Southern region can defend itself alone; each requires the Alliance, and we must be frank to the nations of the Southern region in acknowledging that the Alliance, and each nation in the Alliance, needs each of them. We must make sure that our allies on the Southern flank work together again and are capable of receiving the reinforcements which other NATO members plan to provide as necessary.

On a delicate subject, I will speak delicately, however uncharacteristic of me this will prove to be. As we consider the Southern flank, we should note the changes in Spain. I submit that the situation may now be evolving, so that we can -- together -- explore ways of developing closer cooperation with Spain in the defense of Europe and the Mediterranean area. I will say no more.

Third, sometimes in life we have a chance to ride a wave rather than swim against it, to push toward an important goal. I believe the Alliance may well have such an opportunity now, in the area of



standardization, rationalization and interoperability. With pressures on defense budgets, a growing intolerance of waste, and a lack of standardization and rationalization is waste -- let there be no doubt -- and recognition of the growth in Soviet capabilities, we have both the incentive, but, more important, the opportunity, to achieve real progress toward standardization.

As Defense Ministers, we must look ahead systematically, as Georg Leber suggested yesterday, to determine our common needs for modern weapons and to develop a basis for sharing in the development and production of new weapons. This does not mean cartelization which would result in higher costs and less effective weapons. It does mean selection of the most cost effective weapons and shared production within the Alliance. We should not let that wave go by and pass us, with respect to this oldest and most disturbing problem. This is the time to reach out -- not back.

On SALT, which I anticipate Secretary Kissinger will cover later this week, there are, of course, two contentious issues facing us at this time -- the BACKFIRE and Cruise Missile issues. You are well aware of the views on each. I shall merely state my belief that, however the matter is to be handled, we have to take into account first the fact that BACKFIRE exists and affects Soviet capabilities; and, second, that cruise missiles of various types constitute potentially important weapons systems. The task before us is to find a mutually acceptable arrangement for resolving these issues.



Beyond these two issues, there are other unresolved problems such as MIRV verification, definition of what constitutes a heavy missile, land-and-air mobile ICBMs, and the task of finding ways to limit Soviet throw-weight. The status of these issues has not changed significantly from those which Ambassador Johnson outlined to the NAC on September 12. There have been discussions, but we do not yet have a clear idea of how far the Soviets are prepared to go.

Finally, and very personally I cannot fail to say the obvious -- particularly as my country approaches its bicentennial celebration -- that our peoples - plural - are the embodiment of political liberty and decency in the world. We have a solemn obligation to ourselves, our citizens and, in fact, to all mankind to make every necessary sacrifice to preserve freedom. There must be no doubt among us, or in the world at large that the continuity of our policy can be relied upon by friend and foe alike. In the case of my own country, our strength continues to be dedicated to the preservation of the United States and the Alliance. The two, in my view, are not separable.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for permitting me to make these somewhat personal remarks.

