

Haig, Weinberger perform Carrington's strategic bluff

by Criton Zoakos, Editor-in-Chief

The entirety of the United States' foreign, economic, and defense policy under the Reagan administration is now, at least temporarily, dictated by Lord Carrington's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Summarizing this lamentable state of affairs is the grand-scale maneuver of combined military/diplomatic ultimata jointly delivered by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and State Secretary Alexander Haig during the Aug. 4 to Aug. 11 week.

These ultimata are addressing three distinct recipients. First, the developing nations of the Third World who are told to instantly abandon all policies of economic development or face the full wrath of "the West"; second, the Soviet Union, which is told not to dare meddle in the ongoing Cambodianization of the Third World; third, the Western allies, especially in Europe, who are told to join the United States in this *and* face the prospect of having a limited nuclear war fought over their territory. Few, including the authors of the currently unfolding policy, would disagree that the present fever of actions emanating from Washington is anything but a headlong flight-forward into the unknown. As one of the principals of the policy, who insists on anonymity, said, "We are taking tremendous risks and we may lose; if we took no risks, we would definitely lose."

Thus, with all the bombast that accompanied the announcement of the neutron bomb decision and Haig's Aug. 11 speech in New Orleans, the foreign policy of the United States is defined by its very authors to be a choice between possible national loss and definite national loss. In our view, they are mistaken in even this self-description. But first, let us resummariize the facts of the matter.

During the summit conference at Ottawa, Canada, last month, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt informed President Reagan that American interest rates were so prohibitively high that unless they went down, his government would be forced into a type of drastic budget cuts that would leave very little for any serious defense spending. The President, under the influence of Paul Volcker and Alexander Haig, engaged in a vehement defense of high interest rates and, moreover, committed himself to a policy



Caspar Weinberger inspects a U.S. army base in West Germany.

of population reduction in the developing sector, one of the main objectives of Volcker's high interest-rate policy. West Germany, therefore, allowed no other choice, went ahead and trimmed its defense budget.

Within days, at a U.S. cabinet meeting, the decision was made to proceed with the manufacture and stockpiling of the so-called neutron bomb, a low-yield enhanced-radiation weapon whose only military significance is that its possessor can claim that he is interested "only" in limited, tactical nuclear engagements. Secretary Weinberger and others orchestrated a thorough propaganda effort to persuade the public that the "neutron bomb" is not as horrible as Russian propaganda makes it out to be, that it in fact is a very effective deterrent against the overwhelming Soviet conventional forces in Europe.

The tactical nuclear war doctrine

Since the Russians' conventional forces in Europe are superior to the West's, the Weinberger argument goes, if and when these forces move to invade, we shall not count on our own conventional forces for defense (those are too weak), nor shall we respond with a strategic nuclear retaliation; that would be risking the safety of the continental United States for the sake of Europe, which is not our policy, as per PD-59, Carter's Presidential Directive. Instead, we shall use limited nuclear weapons, and first among them the neutron bomb. In short, wherever in the world our conventional forces are inferior to those of the Soviet Union, we shall use limited tactical nuclear weapons.

Therefore, the "neutron bomb" announcement was

not what ordinary citizens took it to be. It was an announcement that the current, operative defense posture of the United States is limited nuclear war. In point of fact, the propagandistic objections coming from the Soviet Union are not objections to the purported "inhumane" character of the enhanced radiation weapon; they are objections to the delusions of the U.S. military and foreign-policy strategists that "limited," "tactical," nuclear war is possible.

The Soviets have repeatedly and articulately stated that any military conflict between the two superpowers, anywhere in the world, will be of general strategic/nuclear character, that no "limited" tactical nuclear warfighting will occur.

Weinberger and Haig have now established the counterclaim that the Soviets are bluffing when they say this. Privately and semipublicly, they are disseminating reports to the effect that the Soviets, when confronted with an imminent "limited" nuclear engagement, will not respond in the way they say they will, but rather they will respond to "negotiations." Eventually, the Soviets will negotiate, is the line at the State and Defense Departments.

In this thick atmosphere of self-delusions, Secretary Haig delivered an ultimatum to the U.S.S.R. which, from its internal features, seems to have been designed to "call" what the authors of Haig's speech consider to be the "Russians' bluff." Haig's ultimatum was his New Orleans speech on Aug. 11. Stripped of inessentials, that speech announces the "four pillars" of the new U.S. foreign policy, which are: a) rearmament, b)

beating NATO into line, c) mass genocide in the Third World, d) forcing the Soviet Union to "stay out of it."

As Alexander Haig has it, America's "most persistent problems" with the Soviets arise from Soviet involvement in various regional conflicts of the Third World. As the policy of Global 2000 genocide is now about to be accelerated, these conflicts are bound to multiply. So the Soviets must keep out of these and get out of the ones in which they already are involved.

If the Soviet Union agrees to such an agenda, Secretary Haig announced, then the United States will be willing to negotiate. What will the United States be

The Weinberger argument is that wherever in the world our conventional forces are inferior to those of the Soviet Union, we shall use tactical limited nuclear weapons, and the Soviets are bluffing when they say any military conflict between the two superpowers will be of general strategic/nuclear character.

willing to negotiate with the Soviet Union? Basically two things: a renegotiation of the SALT II treaty to include terms which the Soviets have vehemently rejected in the past and a reduction by the Soviets of their medium-range nuclear weapons now in place in European U.S.S.R.

The Secretary deliberately omitted any reference of what the United States would be willing to offer for the sake of negotiations. The deliberate omission was meant to carry the impression that the Secretary was delivering an ultimatum.

Lord Carrington and Vicar Haig

The question is: what makes Haig and Weinberger so cocksure that the Soviets are bluffing? The answer is: Lord Carrington, the British foreign secretary, told them so.

During early July, Lord Carrington went to Moscow to test some ideas he had with respect to the Soviet leaders' willingness to negotiate a "New Yalta" deal with the West. His visit to Moscow was greeted with a spate of public ridicule against his person and numerous straightforward official statements, made at the Polit-

buero level, to the effect that the "Carrington proposals" are unacceptable to Soviet national interests.

Subsequently, Lord Carrington flew directly to Washington to inform the American government of his impressions of the Kremlin. He stated categorically that the Soviets will definitely engage in negotiations when "push came to shove." Within days, this evaluation was embellished with further folklore and made to read: "the Soviets are bluffing when they talk about general nuclear confrontation."

Certain timid objections were raised by professionals in the intelligence community, which was then terrified into submission as the "Hugel scandal," and the "Casey scandal" hit; the head of National Intelligence Estimates was replaced with Henry Rowen, the man responsible for the "Pentagon Papers" leak. After the terror wave, Secretary Alexander Haig personally told everyone that Lord Carrington's evaluation of the Soviet leadership's frame of mind must be accepted as a matter of policy.

"The Soviets have not given any signals which would contradict Carrington's evaluation," Haig's people are reported to have pointed out. With all opposition out of the way, Haig, the vicar of foreign policy, proceeded to enunciate in New Orleans the "four pillars" of foreign policy.

Policy deductions

We are thus sliding into a thermonuclear confrontation. The question which remains is: Why is Lord Carrington so confident that the Soviets are bluffing?

He no longer claims to base his conclusion on evidence he observed during his Moscow trip. The line from London now is that this conclusion is the result of Her Majesty's Minister's "deductions," not direct observations. "Does Russia have an alternative policy to what we propose?" asks Carrington to himself. "No," answers Carrington to himself. Why?

Because, Carrington thought through the fact that the Soviets have the option of another military lunge across their borders, maybe Iran, maybe Pakistan, maybe even China, most probably Poland. But, Carrington observed, if the Soviets do so, they shall have to pay a much greater political and economic cost than they now are paying in Afghanistan. Are they willing and able to pay such costs? It is possible but unlikely, deduces Carrington.

Therefore, let us make the Soviets' ordeal lighter, concludes Carrington. Let us propose to them negotiations. We shall be nice and offer to negotiate a reduction of Soviet SS-20s in Europe, and also to renegotiate the terms of SALT II. Whereupon Lord Carrington ordered the drafting of Alexander Haig's Aug. 11 speech, which Haig devotedly delivered. And the countdown began for a reverse Cuban Missile Crisis.