

Major General William E. Ingram (Ret.), President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

FINANCING A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE

In this election year, we will not find many politicians who do not say they support a strong national defense. However, many such candidates, when asked about their defense-spending views, will answer you with something like, "I believe in a strong national defense, but" That "but" can cover a lot of territory, and usually means the politician doesn't support President Reagan's and Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger's idea of what constitutes a strong national defense.

Critics of Weinberger's \$305 billion fiscal year 1984 defense-spending proposal respond in a variety of ways when confronted with the question "Where would you cut if you don't like what the president and Defense Department have proposed?"

One. They want to get at fraud, waste and abuse. Few would suggest there is no waste in a \$305-billion spending proposal. However, what is usually heard in this regard are tales of \$400 claw hammers and \$916 stool caps. The reason these incidents occur is not because huge sums are expended in this way, but rather because the item like the stool cap is procured infrequently. That doesn't mean the Air Force should have been paying \$916 for it, but neither does it mean the Air Force is paying \$916 apiece for thousands of stool caps.

Two. Another frequent response from defense-spending critics is to say they fully support a strong national defense, but they oppose such weapons systems as the B-1 bomber, the MX missile, the M-1 tank and the AH-64 attack helicopter because they are too expensive. This is generally a prelude for the argument to buy more weapons cheaper. There are two things wrong with this argument.

First, the easiest thing in the world is to single out one expensive weapons system for criticism and cancellation without explaining how its elimination would affect a coherent defense program. President Reagan sometimes is criticized for "buying everything" without the critics noting that it requires more than one weapons system or even a handful to make a coherent, worldwide, superpower defense work. Just as an example, it doesn't make much sense to have a number of rapidly deploy-

able light infantry divisions stationed in the United States if the Air Force doesn't have the airlift capability to deploy them.

Second, what many critics of specific systems ignore is that much of the spending for things like the MX and the M-1 tank is for modernization. Just as businesses don't use computers nor motorists drive cars designed in the 1950s, neither can the military rely on intercontinental ballistic missiles nor main battle tanks designed 25 years ago. They provide no deterrence and little ability to survive and prevail in combat, if need be.

Three. When one peels back the layers

"When one peels back the layers of criticism of defense spending, one frequently finds isolationism of the type that was popular in the 1930s."

of criticism of defense spending, one frequently finds isolationism of the type that was popular in the 1930s. Another name for this is "Fortress America."

There can be little doubt that if the United States adopted a foreign policy of only "defend our shores," our requirements for defense spending would plummet. One such proposal was published recently by Dr. Earl C. Ravenal, professor of international relations at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. He suggested that \$176 billion could be saved by withdrawing our forward-deployed forces in Korea and Europe and \$47 billion could be saved by scrapping the U.S. Central Command in its mission of keeping the Persian Gulf open to shipping and defending the Persian Gulf nations from attack.

What isolationists like Ravenal do not usually explain—he did not in his newspaper articles—are the assumptions that underlie such a proposal. They assume a 180-degree turn in U.S. foreign policy as we know it today and as we have known it since World War II. That turn would include a vast restructuring of the world and its alliances, allegiances and friendships. It would assume a Western Europe that was neutralist at best and probably pro-Soviet in part. Many small, weak European countries would believe they had no choice but to make a deal with the Soviets if they lacked strong U.S. support and defense.

Such a Fortress America foreign policy would mean some, though not all, Latin American countries would be under Fidel Castro's domination. Mexico could become an unfriendly neighbor. It could mean a Middle East and Persian Gulf region under the domination of governments that might or might not be friendly to us. What is certain is that Persian Gulf oil would be available to western nations at the sufferance of our foes—and probably only if we acted mighty polite toward them.

This is not the posture of a superpower. It is the posture of a supplicant, the kind of supplicant the United States has not been since President Thomas Jefferson decided to fight the Barbary Pirates rather than send them tribute, which, no doubt, would have been less expensive.

Freedom is not cheap. Delaware Governor Pierre S. du Pont IV commented on this to a small group of Guardsmen the day of the arrival home of some of the bodies of the victims of the Marine massacre in Beirut: "Freedom has a price, and sometimes that price has to be paid."

That price is composed of both dollars and lives. We'd like to suggest that the easiest part should be the dollars needed for a strong national defense. Perhaps by paying these dollars, difficult though that is, we can avoid some of the human costs associated with a weak national defense that is vulnerable and inviting to attack.

*Ravenal expands on his presuppositions in a booklet length article published recently by the Cato Institute, Washington, D.C. These include dismantling NATO and other U.S. treaty alliances and withdrawing all forward-deployed U.S. troops to the continental United States.

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Features

7 NGAUS' NEW LEADER

Lieutenant General LaVern E. Weber, former chief of the National Guard Bureau, is selected to be the new executive vice president of the NGAUS, effective July 1.

16 ANZIO BEACHHEAD

As D-Day was the beginning of the end in the western and northern European Theater, so was the landing, defense and breakout at Anzio the beginning of the end in Italy. This chapter from the history of the 45th Infantry Division tells the story.

20 29th DIVISION AT D-DAY

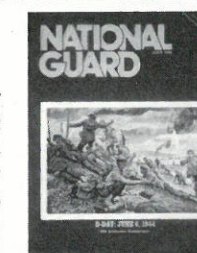
The 29th Infantry Division, Maryland, Virginia and District of Columbia National Guard, was one of the Army divisions in the first wave on Omaha Beach. It was a tough day, but retrospectively, a day of glory for the Blue and the Gray.

26 AIR FORCE SECRETARY SPEAKS OUT

Secretary of the Air Force Verne Orr addresses National Guard concerns on benefits, manpower issues and equipment status for the Air National Guard as part of the Total Air Force.

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COVER: Assaulting Omaha Beach in the first wave on D-Day, June 6, 1944, was the National Guard's 29th Infantry Division, the Blue and the Gray. This illustration is one painting of the National Guard Heritage Series, painted by Ken Riley.

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