



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When Senator Sam Nunn and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger called for higher defense spending as the price for their support of SALT II, they were iterating fears, publicly, that haunt many Americans. They were expressing grave doubts about the growing and unfavorable U.S.-USSR power balance.

United States military power has been steadily waning in relation to that of the Soviet Union.

For more than a decade, the United States has been trimming its forces, reducing "real dollar" defense spending, deferring crucial defense programs...and agonizing endlessly over the questionable "lessons of Vietnam."

Russia, meanwhile, has been conducting one of the most massive military buildups in modern times in its effort to outstrip the United States. If it hasn't yet become the No. 1 military power on the globe, then it's just a matter of time, and no amount of euphemistic rationalizing over such non-strategies as "essential equivalence" can alter that harsh fact.

What disturbs us most deeply is that the growing disparity between Soviet and U.S. military power is of our own making, stemming directly from the conscious decisions of American leaders and legislators in the traumatic years since Vietnam. Revulsion over Vietnam caused us to confuse the sloganized chants of street demonstrators with viable national policies. Instead of our age-old precept that peace is a product of strength, we seemed to have burdened ourselves, as Navy Admiral J.B. Stockdale recently phrased it, with "a self-inflicted wound of guilt, a national shame for being strong."

Of late, however, hopeful signs

The Rebirth of an Old Truism—Power Counts

have appeared. Americans appear to be showing increased concern over Russian power and Russian intentions. Political figures who must campaign for re-election seem to be reading the polls and re-learning the implications of inadequate national defense.

An eminent student of international affairs recently noted in *The New York Times Magazine* ("It's Time to Stop America's Retreat," by Ben J. Wattenberg, July 22, 1979) that we appear to be re-discovering that "power counts" in this less-than-perfect world, as do the perceptions other nations have of our power and the international developments that will persuade us to use that power.

Wattenberg labels suggestions that the nation can't afford whatever military power it requires to counter Soviet actions for what they are—"hokum." And he makes a point that many Americans have trouble accepting, that "America's defense spending must be determined by the Kremlin, not by the poor condition of our cities." We may resent the necessity of reacting to Soviet thrusts, but to ignore it poses a great risk.

A growing concern over the risks we are running may be, in part, an underlying factor in the increasingly strident debate over

such critical defense issues as SALT II, resumption of Selective Service registration, and the pro's and con's of increasing our defense budget.

It hardly needs to be said that the National Guard has a sizable stake in such issues and in the outcome of any new soul-searching over America's proper role as a world power.

We are a part of—a dominant part of!—the so-called conventional military power of the nation. It is the part that has been most neglected in the past decade because we were preoccupied, for a time, with the notion that large-scale non-nuclear war was not a likely Russian option. We have moved slowly to modernize and fully equip our conventional forces, also, because it is a shockingly expensive proposition, and growing more costly every day!

But SALT II or no SALT II, the nation and its leaders must recognize that it is absolutely essential that we halt the deterioration of our conventional military capability. In fact, if SALT II is approved by the Senate, the balance of conventional military power becomes even more critical than before.

The Guard and other elements of our conventional forces live in the real world—a world where there's only one question on the final exam, "Can you perform your wartime mission effectively?" As long as we must rely on such concepts as "come as you are war", "deep standby" Selective Service, a recall of veterans instead of a viable IRR, and inadequate equipment, the answer to that question just might be "No" someday.

We endorse the Kissinger/Nunn/Wattenberg theme. It is indeed time to stop America's retreat!

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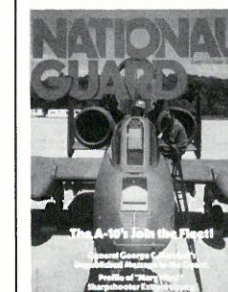
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COVER: When the 103d TFG of Connecticut received its A-10s, the new bird was quickly checked out by Major John J. Collins, a pilot, and Technical Sergeant Leonard L. Beaudry, crew chief. Photo by Master Sergeant John McHugh and cover design by Tom Powers of Bill Duffy Associates.

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