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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

TELEVISION-WORLDNET

VIDEO DIALOGUE WITH
GENERAL JOHN W. VESSEY, JR.

CHAIRMAN,

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Wednesday, June 27, 1984

MODERATOR:

HARRY ELLIS, CORRESPONDENT,

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. ELLIS: Welcome to our 28th Worldnet program for Europe. I am your host in Washington, Harry Ellis. Our program today features participants in Bonn, Brussels, Geneva, the Hague, London, Paris, and Rome.

Joining us in our Washington studio is General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Appointed to his post by President Reagan in 1982, General Vessey serves as senior military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.

In a distinguished military career as a U.S. Army officer, General Vessey has served in North Africa, Europe, Vietnam, and Korea. He is a recipient of numerous military decorations and awards. General Vessey, welcome to Worldnet.

GENERAL VESSEY: Thank you.

MR. ELLIS: General, before we go to Europe for our questioners there, NATO has just celebrated its 35th anniversary. This comes at a time when there have been the Nunn and Cohen amendments in Congress which, in effect, urge the European allies to do more to support the

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Alliance. What about the state of the Alliance and your comment on those amendments?

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, as you said, we've celebrated the 35th anniversary of NATO. It's the great success story of the last half of the 20th century. It's kept the peace. That was its objective. I think the Nunn-Cohen amendments point to the future of NATO. What we need to do is keep the Alliance healthy for the years ahead. We all need to do more and that's, in effect, what the Nunn-Cohen amendment said.

I think that there's a lot to do for everyone in the Alliance.

MR. ELLIS: A domestic question. There have been a number of critics here in the United States who say that although overall the defense buildup is proceeding well, that not enough attention is being paid to our conventional forces, to the training, equipping, and transporting of rapid deployment forces, which would be needed in any kind of small engagement. What about that?

GENERAL VESSEY: I think that's not true for the United States. We are paying extraordinary attention to our conventional forces. We have a solid buildup of conventional forces in the land, sea, and air forces. Some

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of those criticisms come from the Alliance as a whole. More needs to be done there. We need to meet our force goals. We need to meet the sustainability goals for NATO. We need to have the ammunition that the nations have pledged to have. So, there's more to be done.

MR. ELLIS: General, we will go now to our colleagues in Europe, with the first question coming from Brussels.

QUESTION: General, I am at the Defense Institute in Brussels. Sir, I would like to have your comment on -- (inaudible) -- and what precisely about revival of the Western European Union. Do you think it's a good way to do more?

GENERAL VESSEY: The way to do more, I believe, is to do what the military committee has suggested to the political authorities. That is, meet the force goals, meet the sustainability goals, particularly in ammunition, and to provide the infrastructure money so that we will have the facilities to make the force effective.

The West European Union, I believe, can be helpful as an adjunct to NATO. It certainly can't be a substitute for NATO. But the European nations cooperating on arms production can be helpful to NATO.

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QUESTION: This is Paul Taylor of Reuters in Brussels.

General, it was mentioned just now the Nunn and Cohen amendments. Although the Nunn amendment didn't pass, Congress has set a limit of 326,000 on U.S. forces in Europe. Can you tell us how you feel about that as NATO moves to improve its conventional forces, what constraints that might put on U.S. forces in Europe in the long term?

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, from the point of view of the military commanders, we would not like to have limitations put on the size of our forces. On the other hand, there is some reasonable limit to what the United States will do. That's a reasonable limit for the present time.

What the amendment itself says is that if you look at the vote on the Cohen amendment, where the vote was 94 to five, I believe, it says we need to do more as an alliance. We need to meet our force goals and sustainability goals. And if those people represent the people of the United States, 95 percent of the people of the United States believe the Alliance should do more.

Now, if you look at the other vote, 55 percent

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of the people believe that we should not withdraw our forces if the Alliance doesn't do more.

So, there are some messages in there for the Alliance and for us in the United States.

QUESTION: General, nobody -- (inaudible) -- in Western Europe about the closer European coordination in conventional defense. There are three points that I would like to raise about that. The first one is what do you think about the new doctrines which can be referred to in a general way as the Rogers doctrine? The second point: New ideas are coming out as the debate showed a while ago, about coordinating some rapid deployment forces, already existing, or to be created in Europe. What do you think about better integration among those existing or to be created forces?

And the third point, there is a large talk now about the Western European Union. There is a danger that the whole debate ends as the London economic talks ended a few days ago, in a few platitudes. The concrete point which will probably be raised is a better cooperation, both within Europe, NATO European countries, in research and arms procurement, and a better tradeoff between Western Europe and the United States.

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GENERAL VESSEY: Well, concerning, first, new doctrines, new ideas, let me say that the -- General Rogers, the SACEUR, and the military committee, have consistently confirmed the soundness of the NATO strategy, flexible response, forward defense.

The so-called "new doctrines, new ideas", are opportunities to take advantage of new technologies to make the conventional defense more effective. I believe that we need to go ahead with those ideas and we need to do so in a cooperative fashion.

Secretary Weinberger has consistently made it clear to the NATO ministers that he wants the United States to cooperate in the development of new equipment that will help capitalize on these new technologies to make the conventional defense more effective.

We have some good success stories. I think the F-16 consortium is a good example of the sort of cooperation that can exist among the NATO nations. We just need to move ahead with that sort of thing. There are an array of opportunities to do that.

But as you said, if we don't do the work and let it just slip into platitudes, nothing will be done.

MR. ELLIS: Will our questioners please

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identify themselves before asking the question? And now, Rome, your next question.

QUESTION: I am Enrique Perigares (?) from Rome.

General Vessey, you just mentioned emerging technology. Everyone now speaks about them but they're very controversial. Yet, as a military man, don't you believe that before deciding what to acquire from the very exciting shopping list we should make up our mind on what strategy NATO Europe should adopt for the near future? We have not yet defined whether to go all the way for deep strikes, as suggested from some, and I believe also from General Rogers, or to raise our forward defense, or the third option is your American doctrine of the air-land battle. Which one, in your opinion, is going to be adopted for the future, the first, the second, the third, or a combination of the two and the three together? Thank you.

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, first, let me say that I believe we have decided on the strategy. Our strategy is to deter a war with the strategy of flexible response. The rest of those thoughts, how to integrate new technologies into the battle, the war-fighting capabilities,

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which we hope we won't have to use, are ideas on tactics. Now, tactics have always been a combination of tactical theory and the technical capabilities of the weapons in the hands of the troops. And this calls for an examination of both tactics and the technical capabilities that are being presented to us as possibilities for the future.

Well, I think that you are, in a sense, correct in that we must decide how we want to fight and, for the most part, the nations have decided how to fight. There is some debate on whether or not one particular technology will permit you to go, perhaps, deeper with a strike capability than another, and that needs to be sorted out as we examine the technologies.

QUESTION: This is Hans-Pieter Riezer (?), German Broadcasting in Bonn asking.

Sir, General Rogers has been quoted in Germany as saying that if every state of the Alliance would support NATO as much as the Bundeswehr, the German Bundeswehr did, the Alliance would be in a better condition. Can I have your comment on that?

GENERAL VESSEY: I would say that all the nations of the Alliance need to meet their force goals and their sustainability goals and make a contribution to the

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infrastructure funding that will make the forces effective.

QUESTION: General, could you comment on the Dutch decision, on the decision of the Dutch government, not to implement the double track decision of NATO? And could you comment on what that means for the strategy of NATO?

GENERAL VESSEY: I think that in the view of the Dutch, probably, they believe that their decision was a decision to implement the double track decision, with the budgetary point of view. Obviously, many other nations in NATO disagree with that.

The decision to deploy the intermediate range nuclear weapons to Europe was made by NATO in 1979 to respond to the deployment of the Soviet SS-20s. The Soviets have walked out of the arms control negotiations and continue to deploy SS-20s and warheads in far greater numbers than NATO plans to deploy if they deploy the entire force.

The opportunity to continue the arms control negotiations is certainly there from the point of view of NATO and the United States. The Soviets need to come back.

It is my belief that in the Western political process if we limit our own arms, there is very little

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incentive for the Soviets to come back to the arms control negotiations. We want to limit their arms, they want to limit ours.

It's important that NATO did stay together despite great political pressure, much of it instigated by the Soviet Union, to have NATO divide itself over the issue of the intermediate range nuclear weapons. They did not do that. It's important that they not do it in the future.

QUESTION: From Geneva, this is --
(inaudible) -- Between the U.S. and USSR will resume here in Bern?

GENERAL VESSEY: I'm not sure I understood the question but it seems to me it was about the anti-satellite negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has made some public announcements suggesting that there be anti-satellite negotiations. I personally find it a little strange that the Soviets should walk out of the nuclear arms control negotiations and then make a great fuss about anti-satellite negotiations or space negotiations, when in fact they are away from the table, that is set there for negotiations to limit the weapons that kill people and the weapons that

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are now poised both in the Soviet Union and in the West.

It seems to me important that the Soviet Union come back to the table and negotiate on those issues.

Now, what our government's response, if there will be one, I can't say. I am sure that -- I know that President Reagan is interested in talking to the Soviet Union about all issues that are in contention between us. But certainly it seems to me that the Soviets need to get down to the fundamental issues, and that is the limitation of nuclear weapons.

QUESTION: General Vessey, this is Sheana Lewis from Radio 74, German speaking, in Geneva.

From your reply to an earlier question I couldn't tell whether your answer was to the question or not. I was interested in knowing whether deployments in the future, such as General Graham's proposed "high frontier" would have a profound effect on the NATO strategy?

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, the United States has made no decision to deploy any sort of an anti-ballistic missile defense at this particular time. When President Reagan made the initial announcement indicating that he

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wanted to examine more intensively the research that might permit defense against ballistic missiles, he made it very clear that he wanted that umbrella to cover not only the United States, but the allies as well.

So, I really don't see it affecting NATO's strategy and I would hope that it would help NATO unity for us to go ahead with that sort of research. We will have to see what it develops.

QUESTION: General, this is Nick Cook of Interadio Magazine in London.

Many observers here find it strange that NATO relies on a conventional air arm that is based on conventional takeoff aircraft such as the F-15 and 4-NATO when it is likely that nuclear weapons would render the air fields useless on day one of a confrontation between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. Do you believe, therefore, that there should be a move by the U.S. Air Force or NATO air forces to rely more heavily on a vertical, short takeoff and landing, or VSTOL air force, which would not be reliant upon the availability of runways during such a conflict?

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, certainly we need to defend our air fields. We need to have air fields from

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which we're going to operate, if we have airplanes that need air fields. We, in the United States, particularly in the Marine Corps, we are continuing to use vertical takeoff and landing planes and we'll find out more and more about them as we go ahead.

It would be nice to have a fleet of very efficient airplanes that don't need airfields. But I want to tell you that we need to make our airfields difficult to knock out. As you know, there's a NATO shelter program. We spend a great deal of effort in airfield repair capability.

The vertical takeoff and landing airplanes, unfortunately, are not nearly as efficient as are those that use runways.

But, as a helicopter pilot myself, I'm a great fan of vertical takeoff and landings, and certainly it's a technology that we need to continue to examine vigorously.

QUESTION: General, Simon Edward Rosiloff (?) of Defense (?) magazine in London.

Could I ask you, in view of the failure of the multinational force in Beirut earlier this year, do you see any future joint out of area operations by the NATO

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allies as feasible, and secondly, would the U.S. Joint Command seek assistance from her European NATO allies if intervention in the Gulf would be necessary?

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, first, you say in view of the failure of the allied multinational force, I'm not -- failure to do what? The Lebanese have had great difficulties throughout the years. They continue to have those difficulties. That force went in there to help cover the extraction of the PLO. That was done. Hopes grew as the force stayed on. Those hopes weren't materialized. And I think that only history will judge whether or not that was a failure.

Certainly it doesn't look like a booming success at the present time.

Now you addressed the question should the western allies cooperate for security in the Gulf? One needs only to look at the amount of world's -- of the world's oil reserves that are in the Gulf to see that that's a very important place for the rest of the world. There's a tragic war going on there now between Iran and Iraq. It would be very nice to have that war settled, first for the lives of the Iraqi and Iranian people involved, but secondly, for the health of the economies of

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the rest of the world.

I believe that it is wise for the nations of the world to do all they can to limit the effect of that war, both to the countries involved and to the rest of the world. We don't want to become involved. We in the United States would not like to become involved in that war. And we want to use our good offices to help prevent the spread of that war. We are trying to help the nations in the area help themselves to control that war now.

But at the same time, should it spread, I believe it would be wise for the nations of the West to cooperate in limiting the effects of that war.

QUESTION: General Vessey, my name is Kett (?) von Blanco from COV Radio in Holland (?).

Star Wars seems to be already prepared. We just remembered D-Day 40 years ago. How great is the chance that there will ever be such a war with conventional weapons again, considering the costs and so on?

GENERAL VESSEY: If we do our job right, we're trying to prevent such a war. That's been the entire goal of NATO for the last 35 years. We've been successful. It is my prayer and the object of my work to help prevent such a war in the future.

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Now, wars of the present have always been different from wars of the past. Those people who have been in trouble in wars of the present are always those who thought the next war would be fought exactly like the last war, and certainly if one looks at conventional tactics, conventional weapons, those alone would change the character of the battles that we saw in 1944, in Normandy, or those battles that we saw in the Soviet Union in '43-'44.

But there is another factor that has been added. Nuclear weapons are here. We cannot wish them away. They won't go away. I think it is unlikely that God will let us disinvent nuclear weapons. So, whoever goes on the battlefield of the future must go there understanding that there are nuclear weapons in the world, and you have to be prepared for that. So, we won't see forces massed as we did in World War II, and certainly it is my hope, I repeat again, that if we do our job right we won't have to go on that battlefield.

(Pause.)

MR. ELLIS: We're going to have to ask you to repeat your question in The Hague. We could not get that. Will you repeat it, please?

QUESTION: Robert Carlton (?), Hars de Culan (?),

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The Hague.

Sir, the proposed introduction of neutron weapons in Europe was not successful because of public disapproval. The introduction of Cruise missiles and Pershings II is more or less successful so far. But it also aroused a lot of conflicts in the public field. Now the European people are confronted with the introduction of a new generation of high tech. conventional and outer space weapons. Are you not afraid that the credibility of the United States wish for disarmament is really coming at stake now?

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, certainly from my point of view the credibility of the United States' hopes for disarmament, that is, the reduction of nuclear arms, should not be at stake. We have not walked out of the arms control negotiations. I think the introduction of new technology is inevitable.

It is -- we say that the people of the West are concerned about the introduction of the intermediate range nuclear weapons. It's sort of a curious thing that most of those weapons, on the other side -- are on the other side of the East-West zonal border and the demonstrators are on our side of the border. That says

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something about what we're trying to protect. That is, the freedom of our people to express their opinions. We need to continue to do just exactly that.

NATO has kept its unity, in light of these both political and military threats. We need to continue to keep that unity.

QUESTION: Harfar Osten (?) from Paris.

The Soviet military writings have, for practically every -- all the time since the past 35 years, expressed the view that if there was a war in Europe it would inevitably be nuclear and that even from the start.

Now, we have a Soviet political leadership that speaks a different language. We've had Mr. Andropov and Mr. Gromyko and I don't know if Mr. Chernenko has said anything about it yet, but both Mr. Andropov and Mr. Gromyko have said if there is a war, the Warsaw Pact will not go nuclear first, but should NATO use nuclear weapons, then the punishment on Europe would be terrible.

Now, are there signs in the Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces buildup, are there signs that they are preparing to adjust their military doctrine or posture to the political language, or is their political language

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simply spoken in order to get the upper hand in any crisis before actual fighting breaks out, but to frighten Europeans of their own weapons even more so than that of the Soviet Union?

GENERAL VESSEY? As you say, the Soviet military doctrine has consistently -- the literature has consistently said that they would expect the war to be nuclear. I think we look at the Soviet military preparations and we see preparations for a nuclear war. But we also see a vast conventional force. The Soviets have very strong conventional forces.

The Soviet talk about them not using nuclear weapons first, I would say, is in sharp contrast to NATO's pledge, and that is that NATO is a defensive alliance. It has no intention of starting a war. NATO doesn't endanger the Soviet Union nor the Warsaw Pact.

It seems to me that what's happened over the past few years, particularly with the deployment of the intermediate range weapons, we've seen a great Soviet attempt to try and divide the Alliance, particularly to try to divide the United States from the Western European allies. We need to continue to understand what the Soviets are doing and watch what they're doing, and at the same time

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we need to go ahead with a very sound strategy that we've agreed on, to prevent a war, to build forces that make it very clear that the Soviets will be unable to achieve their wartime objectives by attacking us, and in doing that we'll keep the peace.

QUESTION: General Rogers has said, in an article written in Foreign Affairs about two years ago, that is conventional warfare broke out he would ask for permission to use nuclear weapons within a matter of days or even hours. Now NATO is embarked on a conventional buildup with the hope that that decision of early use could be considerably postponed and, therefore, put the Soviet Union themselves in difficulty as to implementing their own strategy. Do you think that that goal can be achieved with raises of three to four percent of the defense expenditure in the Alliance?

GENERAL VESSEY: We need to recognize that the Soviets continue to build their own forces at a rate that's absolutely astounding. We, in the United States, have proposed building our forces, with primary emphasis, I must say, on conventional forces, at a rate considerably greater than the three percent. As you know, our proposed defense bill for this year will come someplace between what

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the two authorizing committees have proposed, somewhere between 3-1/2 percent and seven percent. It will be difficult to do it at three to four percent. We will have to use our best minds and exploit our best technology and cooperate in the best possible way.

But I believe there are some exciting opportunities for us to strengthen our conventional defenses. We are strengthening our conventional defenses right now. Since that time that General Rogers wrote that article, we have added to our forces in NATO, conventional forces, new tanks, new infantry fighting vehicles, new artillery pieces, multiple launch rocket systems, new helicopters, new fighter airplanes with extraordinary capability, and we will continue to do that, and I think if the rest of the nations in NATO, many of whom are also modernizing their forces, their conventional forces, continue to modernize them at the rate we've agreed to, that we will make it clear to the Soviets that starting any kind of a war will be difficult, and show no promise of success for them.

MR. ELLIS: General, I'd like to amplify on that last series of questions. You said earlier that if we do our job well as an Alliance, hopefully we will not have

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to go to the battlefield. You stress that if we do have to go to the battlefield, hopefully it would not become nuclear. And then you have just said that it would be difficult at a three to four percent defense growth rate, to do the job well. My question to you is can you be specific as to where there still is a lag, a shortfall, in the conventional forces field that you would like to see improved within the Alliance?

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, of course, I don't have a position in the Alliance other than serving on the military committee. So, I think it is best to go back and look at the Alliance itself, what the Alliance has said. We need to look at what SACEUR has said, what his general priorities are, and they are, first, getting the most out of the forces at hand, keeping the readiness up, modernizing the forces, improving the sustainability, that is, having the ammunition on hand that ensures that the forces will be able to fight effectively, and then improving the reinforcing capabilities. And that's primarily in providing infrastructure money for sheltering aircraft and protecting the airfields, having ammunition shelters and things of that nature on the ground.

MR. ELLIS: General, back to Europe with the

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next question from Bonn.

QUESTION: This is Gunnar Guyer(?) from the MRT (?), Bonn.

Sir, we all know that the Soviet Union has a great superiority in ground-based ICBMs. This means the Soviet Union is superior in hard target true capability. And there results the window of vulnerability for the West. We discuss this problem very much here in Germany. Would you comment on this problem and the introduction of the new strategic Cruise missiles by the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy?

GENERAL VESSEY: Yes, you are right. The Soviet Union has a superiority in hard target kill capability with their nuclear weapons, with their ballistic missiles. There is another bit of jargon called the time-urgent hard target kill capability which means that they can do it very quickly because of the short flight time of ballistic missiles.

You are correct in implying that the Cruise missiles are hard target killers. They have very good accuracy and with relatively small warheads can provide the required damage on hard targets, such as the hardened command and control facilities or ICBM silos.

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As you also know, I am sure, the United States has proposed modernizing its ICBM force with the so-called "peadekeeper" or MX missile, and the Congress has authorized the first year's production. The second year's production now is being debated in the Congress. And that will help take away some of the advantage that the Soviets have in hard target kill capability.

QUESTION: Pieter Rezer (?), German Broadcasting in Bonn.

Sir, Before the interruption of the Soviet and American intermediate range talks, the Soviets have built up their potential of short range nuclear missiles in Europe, of SS-22s and 23s. What will be the answer of NATO to this?

GENERAL VESSEY: I think that whether or not the talks were suspended, that the Soviets probably had plans to go ahead and modernize their forces with the SS-22s and 23s. The NATO answer needs to be to deploy the intermediate range nuclear force and then continue to modernize its forces to be able to deal with the other aspects of the Soviet deployments.

QUESTION: This is Paul Taylor of Reuters in Brussels, General.

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Given the economic constraints that you've talked about that are even now beginning to bite on U.S. defense spending in Congress, don't you think that there's a danger that NATO's effort could become misfocused into some of the more complex and enormously expensive high technology gadgetry rather than the things that you mentioned, sustainability, ammunition, boots and bootlaces?

GENERAL VESSEY: That danger exists and every country has to deal with that in designing its own forces, and certainly we have to deal with readiness for today and readiness for tomorrow, and the readiness for today means being able to fight today in a fashion that's so self-evidently capable that we deter war today.

At the same time, technology will march on. That's inevitable. The Soviets will continue to explore new technologies just as we will.

So, we need to continue to examine the technologies for the future, not be entranced by gadgetry, but make sound decisions on those that will help carry out our strategy, and as you imply, meet our force goals, meet our sustainability goals, and go ahead and cooperate on ways to look at technology to help us fight more effectively in the future.

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QUESTION: I would like you to comment on the French and British modernization, going from about 300 warheads to 1,200. What will the impact be of that trend on East-West relations and, more specifically, on arms control, and even on West-West relations, on all sorts of strategy now?

Thank you.

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, I think I'm the wrong one to ask on what will be the impact on East-West relations. Obviously, the French government and the United Kingdom government believe that it's important to do that for their security. I see no move by France or the United Kingdom to separate themselves from the rest of the western nations. I believe that they believe it's important for their contribution to the security of the West.

The Soviets would be the best ones to answer the question on what will it do to East-West relations. I am sure they will complain about it. But in the long run I would hope that it would convince them that the West is strong and that we need to sit down and find a way to solve the differences between us without resorting to war.

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QUESTION: Ricard de la Garz (?) from Rome.

General Vessey, let me come to how --

(inaudible) -- of money. The defense budgets are already over-stretched, and according to some, with only a four percent increase we should be able not only to acquire modern technologies but to modernize the whole defense in Europe. That means increasing -- (inaudible) -- improving ability of readiness, to finance present R&D and acquisition programs, to bring up to date the whole structure, and several others.

Don't you believe that we are trying to do too much with too little? Thank you.

GENERAL VESSEY: Well, in the case of our own defense budget, the one that the military leaders proposed, in fact, the one that the President first sent to the Congress, was obviously higher than what the Congress is going to improve.

That's a decision that each nation has to make. But I would say to you that through the years the United States has, since the end of the Korean War, we've averaged well over six percent of our gross national product for defense. It has been a reasonable amount for us to spend for defense. We have prospered while doing that and

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it seems to me that that sort of a budget for all the NATO nations, and I would point out that very few NATO nations are close to six percent, is reasonable for us to spend for defense.

Now, there are some real questions about how we spend our defense budget. We certainly need to do it efficiently. We can't afford to do it inefficiently. And part of that efficiency is the way we and NATO cooperate with each other to make the most use out of the money that we spend in total for the defense of the Alliance.

QUESTION: From Rome, this is Paolo Vittorelli.

General, in my country as well as in other countries from Northern and Southern Europe, we have sometimes the feeling that NATO strategies have concentrated or over-concentrated upon Central Europe. Even conventional disarmament has been always conceived in MBFR as a disarmament limited to Central Europe. Can you make a hint about what you think on the defense and the security, both in political and military terms, of the northern and southern flanks of NATO? Thank you.

GENERAL VESSEY: I can not only make a hint but I can tell you very directly that from where I sit

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the northern flank and the southern flank of NATO are very, very important to the security of NATO. NATO is one and weaknesses on the flanks threaten, certainly, the security of the center. And we in the United States have tried to focus attention on help for the nations on the flanks and certainly many of the other nations of NATO have done the same thing, with help for the nations on the flanks, particularly for Turkey.

We need to continue to do that in order to make NATO secure. And I would simply say that not only is NATO one from flank to flank but NATO cannot be separated from the security of the rest of the world. The whole world is one now that we're inextricably tied to the rest of the world. I'm not suggesting that NATO expand its boundaries, but certainly NATO needs to look at troubles in the entire world.

QUESTION: Radio 74 from Geneva, Flemish speaking.

General, you said that part of the NATO plan or the project is to protect freedom of opinion and individual liberty. How much influence then do peace march demonstrations and anti-missile demonstrations and such programs have on NATO thinking?

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GENERAL VESSEY: Well, certainly they have to be considered by the political leaders in every country. I want to say that I am a member of the largest peace marching group in the world, and that's the NATO military forces, 5 million strong, all in uniform, marching for peace. And I think that we in the West need to understand that that's what we're doing. We're preventing war and keeping the peace.

QUESTION: Nick Giles, Jane's Defense Weekly in London.

Generally, you have spoken about conventional and nuclear forces. But chemical weapons have reared their ugly head again. Now, we're told that the Warsaw Pact has large stockpiles of chemical weapons. Do you think NATO would benefit from an offensive chemical warfare capability, to act as a deterrent against the Warsaw Pact?

GENERAL VESSEY: Yes, I do. Anyone who has had to perform battlefield tasks in chemical protective gear understands that he doesn't want to have to do that as a steady diet. And I believe that if the Warsaw Pact nations understand that we have the defensive capability to protect ourselves against nuclear weapons and we also have the offensive capability to be able to put them at the

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same disadvantage that our forces would be at, that then we are unlikely to see chemical weapons used on the battlefield.

QUESTION: General, Herman Edwyer (?) from Attache magazine.

Do you think it's detrimental to NATO's cohesion, the divergence in doctrine that's emerged between U.S. forces in Europe, adhering to the air-land battle doctrine, while the Western European allies remain committed to a defensive doctrine, largely to avoid the deep strike element?

GENERAL VESSEY: No, I don't think that that's divisive. As a matter of fact, the air-land battle doctrine is a defensive doctrine from the strategic point of view. What it is is using what we have now developed in the way of capability on the battlefield to conduct an offensive defense. We've build forces with extraordinary mobility, we've built an unusual intelligence capability that lets small unit commanders be as wise as division commanders were a few years ago. We have given them weapons with extraordinary capability. We need to have tactics that capitalize on that.

The deep strike capability is simply doing

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what I say is feeding the front line forces the enemy in digestible doses. That's to make sure that the enemy forces can't, the second and third echelon forces, can't arrive in time to overwhelm our own front line forces. It's an important part of our tactics and I don't believe it's much different from the tactics that we have had. It's simply exploiting the new technological capabilities on the battlefield.

QUESTION: This is Jank Herz (?) from The Hague, Netherlands.

General, you mentioned the NATO infrastructure program, in relation to reinforcements from the United States in case of emergency. It seems that the Allies are divided over the extent of the program for the coming six years and, of course, also of the financial cost. My question is can you put a figure to the infrastructure program from the point of view of what you regard as to be the absolute minimum from the military point of view?

GENERAL VESSEY: The military committee told the political authorities that they needed to fund certainly the high priority programs for the major NATO military commanders, that they had proposed. And the two highest priority categories came up to \$3.8 billion IAU over the

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next period.

The military committee also told the political authorities that there were many important programs beyond those two initial priorities that were important to get on with. So, the United States has consistently proposed to the NATO fora that \$3.8 billion IAU be the minimum for the next six years.

QUESTION: General, Ronald Harten.

In addition to my earlier question I would ask you if there is not a danger that spending enormous amounts of money on emerging technologies will drain the funds for social security in Europe, and in that way will create great political controversies which will not particularly contribute to the unity in Europe?

GENERAL VESSEY: I suspect that the European budgets are developed very much the way ours are in this country, that is that we decide what we need for defense and then we decide to spend that that we need for defense. Then we look at our social issues separately and decide what we need to spend for social issues and appropriate the necessary funds to do that.

There's a great myth that money goes from social security into defense programs. No such transfer is

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allowed in this country and I suspect that none is allowed in the European countries. The nations of the West need to look at their priorities, what is needed for defense. Let's only spend the minimum amount that's needed for security. But let's spend enough to make sure that we do keep the peace, because if we don't spend enough to prevent war, then we'll pay in a different coin. We'll pay in the blood of our citizens. And that, I would suggest to you, is certainly a much more precious commodity than dollars or marks or francs or pounds.

QUESTION: What about the French proposal for a five-year moratorium on space war technology? President Mitterrand and the Soviets seem to be in agreement on that subject.

GENERAL VESSEY: We think it's very important to go ahead with the research and development programs that we have going on. We know the Soviets have had extensive research and development programs in ballistic missile defense. We believe that some of these technologies may provide us the capability to defend our populations and our forces from ballistic missiles rather than avenge them by replying to attacks.

I often hear mentioned, "Let's demilitarize

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space or let's not let space become militarized." Space has been used for military purposes now for 25 years. There are important things that both we and the Soviet Union do in space and we would want to be able to continue to do those things.

So, I'm not sure what that moratorium implies. We believe it's important to go ahead with our research programs, and we plan to do that.

QUESTION: Here's another question from Paris. Regarding the three percent increment, do you think that given the state of western economies, this goal is achievable?

GENERAL VESSEY: The short answer to that is yes. Also the long answer is yes.

MR. ELLIS: We have time for just one more question and this goes to you, Brussels.

QUESTION: This is Brussels, Cosa Mirinuz (?).

General, in the last edition of NATO-Warsaw Pact comparison of forces, it can be traced, the number of Warsaw Pact fighter bombers deployed in the countries facing the southern flank of NATO have increased by more than a hundred percent in the last two years. Can you tell us if this development has been taken into account

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while defining the last force goal for the Alliance?

GENERAL VESSEY: I must confess to you that I got the new NATO-Warsaw Pact balance book last night and I had some other work that I had to do and I simply didn't have an opportunity to read it. The force goals, generally, take into consideration projections of what the Soviets are doing and I'll just simply have to look at that to give you the right answer to that question. I think, of course, the NATO military committee has to come up with the answer to that question.

MR. ELLIS: Unfortunately, our time is up. We have been talking today with General John W. Vessey, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Vessey, thank you very much for having been with us.

GENERAL VESSEY: Thank you and thanks to the questioners. All good questions.

MR. ELLIS: This concludes today's Worldnet transmission. I am Harry Ellis and I look forward to being with you again on Worldnet.

END

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