

Weinberger: U.S. won't trade Star Wars for Soviet accord

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger said Monday the United States would never trade "Star Wars" or balanced conventional strength in Europe for a new arms-control accord with the Soviet Union.

In an address prepared for delivery to a symposium here on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Weinberger said the United States and its European allies desired deep reductions in offensive ballistic nuclear missiles.

But regardless of whether such an accord is negotiated, he continued, the Western alliance must continue improving its conventional strength.

"In any event, we can never leave the equation of deterrence unbalanced by taking out some effective deterrents without replacing them with other deterrents," Weinberger said.

The defense secretary appeared before a symposium on NATO,

which was sponsored by the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis. A text of his speech was released in advance at the Pentagon.

Weinberger spoke just a few hours after meeting West German Defense Minister Manfred Woerner, who is in Washington for consultations with American officials. Woerner told reporters after his meeting with Weinberger that the Western allies could not match Soviet-bloc conventional strength if all nuclear weapons were eliminated.

"The more we limit and restrain nuclear possibilities the more important it becomes also to correct that conventional imbalance, preferably by arms control and disarmament," Woerner said.

Weinberger, following the lead of other administration officials, said Monday that President Reagan had focused his talks with Soviet leader

Mikhail Gorbachev during the recent Iceland summit on the goal of eliminating intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"It is these weapons, with their lightning speed and unspeakable power, that should be at the core of arms-reductions agreements," Weinberger said.

"Certainly all nuclear weapons threaten massive destruction, but only ballistic missiles threaten to overwhelm us in the blink of an eye."

The defense secretary lauded Reagan for refusing to bow to Soviet demands to curtail research on the "Star Wars" anti-missile defense system, describing that Soviet position as "insistence that the free world give up the hope of defending itself."

America's NATO allies have reminded the United States that nuclear weapons help compensate for smaller conventional armies.

AT&T plans 8.1% cut in '87 rates

WASHINGTON (AP) — AT&T announced on Monday long-distance rate cuts averaging 8.1 percent as of Jan. 1.

Long-distance customers of AT&T will save an estimated 11.6 percent on daytime calls, 6.2 percent on evening calls and 2.7 percent on calls after 11 p.m.

Different percentage reductions will apply for business services such as toll-free 800 service. Callers with a high volume of calls to overseas locations will also get new discounts.

The rate cuts, the second round this year, will save customers \$1.2 billion a year if the rates are approved by the Federal Communications Commission.

FCC Chairman Mark S. Fowler, who was in Phoenix, Ariz., attending a convention of state regulators, said he was pleased with the news.

A 9.5 percent rate cut, announced last April, went into effect on June 1 and was calculated to save AT&T customers \$2 billion, the largest long-distance rate drop in history.

AT&T's prime competitors, MCI and US Sprint, reduced their rates later in the summer. The spread between AT&T rates and those of its competitors has been shrinking.

Doctors use balloons to open heart valves with new procedure

DALLAS (AP) — Tiny balloons have been used for the first time to open dangerously narrowed heart valves in a procedure that costs one-third as much as surgery and could help an estimated 50,000 Americans annually, doctors said Monday.

The procedure, which first was tried only last year and already has spread to at least 15 medical centers in the United States, has proven effective in patients who were too old or too sick to undergo valve-replacement surgery, and who thus had no other hope of surviving, said Dr. William Grossman of Harvard University, one of the developers of the technique.

The new technique is an important extension of the use of balloons to clear deposits of fats and cholesterol from clogged arteries, a procedure first done in 1980. About 50,000 of those procedures now are performed in the United States each year, in place of more expensive and riskier coronary bypass surgery.

Grossman reported at the annual meeting of the American Heart Association that he has used the procedure successfully on 76 patients with heart valve problems during the past 13 months.

All 76 survived the procedure; three died within one week of the treatment, but they did not die as a result of the treatment, Grossman said. "We feel that we were too late

with too little in these three patients," he said.

Charles McKay of the Los Angeles County Hospital and the University of Southern California said he has had no deaths in the first 22 patients he has treated, although some required blood transfusions and suffered some damage to their arteries as the balloon was threaded through the arteries into their hearts.

Grossman said that hospitals performing the new procedure, called balloon valvuloplasty, have been "flooded with referrals for this."

He warned, however, that the procedure is still experimental. "There have been deaths and there will be more," he said.

In the procedure, a wire is inserted into a vein in the leg and is threaded into the heart, under the guidance of X-ray images of the blood vessels.

A balloon then is threaded along the wire until it is inside the narrowed valve.

The balloon then is inflated with fluid to a pressure about twice that of the air in automobile tires, forcing the valve open.

Narrowing, or stenosis, of the heart valves occurs when fibrous material and calcium deposits build up on the valves, decreasing their flexibility and interfering with their ability to allow blood to pass in and out of the heart's chambers.

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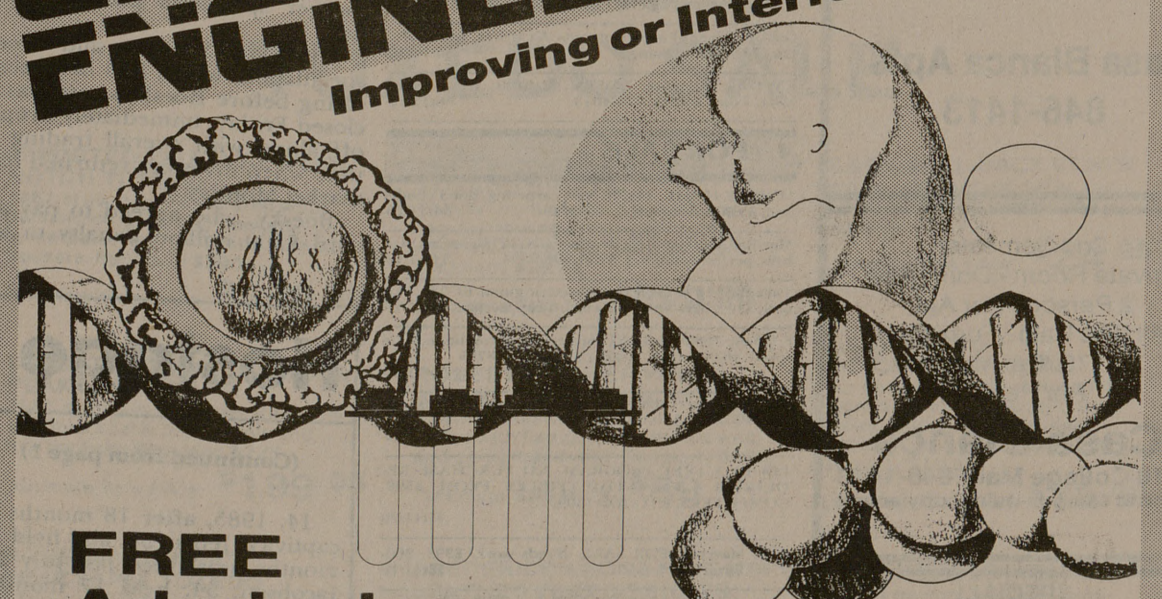
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