

A. The Secretary: WE discussed the problem of defense today. Our view is that as strategic weapons become more complicated, and as the defense of the North Atlantic area takes on a more differentiated character, that the role of conventional weapons and, at any rate, of sub-strategic options, becomes more and more crucial; and that means that all of the members of NATO, and particularly those whose contributions primarily in the conventional field, have to look again at the assumptions that were formed in a period when American strategic predominance was the principal field of NATO. So, it is in this sense and in this framework that our discussions have been conducted.

Mr. Hargreaves: The gentleman from N.B.C.

Q. Richard Valiriani, N.B.C.: Mr. Secretary, the United States and Canada signed an agreement in 1972 to clean up the Great Lakes, but the United States has been dragging its feet ever since and most of the American projects are far behind schedule.

What is the United States going to do to live up to its part of the agreement?

A. The Secretary: We agreed that we have an obligation under this agreement and, regrettably, we are behind schedule. The Administration will make a major effort with the Congress to encourage it to allocate the funds that are needed and to prevent the diversion of funds that have already been appropriated that might cause further delays. We agree with the objectives. We recognize we have an obligation, and the Administration will do its utmost to live up to these obligations.

Mr. Hargreaves: Ed Ellison, Radio Canada International.

Q. Edwin Ellison, Radio Canada International: Mr. Secretary, a few days ago I was talking to Dr. Loucks, in Brussels, and he expressed, shall I say, concern about Canada's contribution to NATO. A few moments after that a gentleman who described himself as a senior NATO official -- I must confess, a phrase that sounded vaguely familiar -- went on to say that Canada's contribution was utterly contemptible, and that Canada apparently had no concept of the importance of the problems facing NATO vis-a-vis Portugal and other sectors of the defense front.

Would you like to comment on those rather high ranking statements, and perhaps Mr. MacEachen would like to as well.

Q. The Secretary: Was that an American NATO official?

A. Mr. Ellison: It was not an American. It was an official with a European accent. (Laughter)

The Secretary: I do not share these views. I had the opportunity to listen to your Prime Minister at the NATO Summit Meeting and I had the opportunity to talk to him at great length today, to your Foreign Minister and your Defense Minister. I think that the problem of the defense of the Atlantic is fully understood in Canada, and while we would, on the whole, prefer to see a larger effort in conventional defense by several of our allies, I do not believe that these adjectives were appropriate.

(MORE)