

CHAPTER 6

ARMS CONTROL DURING THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION

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Ronald Wilson Reagan became the fortieth President of the United States at one of the more dangerous periods in American-Soviet relations. The nation faced an aggressive Soviet Union with an increasingly lethal strategic nuclear arsenal. But Reagan's optimism in the inevitable triumph of democracy over an inherently evil and corrupt empire was unflagging. His was a vision for America that reflected his confidence in her people and his abhorrence of nuclear war, which would come to be reflected in his approach to arms control. One of Reagan's major foreign policy themes of the 1980 presidential campaign would directly influence US arms control efforts—the consequences of losing military superiority to the Soviet Union.

The chief defense issue for Reagan was his conviction that the United States had lost military superiority to the Soviet Union. The new president felt that Moscow had used *détente* to advance its global strategic interests while America unilaterally disarmed. His major strategic focus would be to reverse this perceived “window of vulnerability” that characterized US-Soviet relations, and move the United States from a position of weakness to strength. In August 1980, Reagan summarized his approach to arms control talks with the Soviet Union:

I think continued negotiation with the Soviet Union is essential. We need never be afraid to negotiate as long as we keep our long-term objectives (the pursuit of peace for one) clearly in mind and don't seek agreements just for the sake of having an agreement. It is important, also, that the Soviets know we are going about the business of building up our defense capability pending an agreement by both sides to limit various kinds of weapons.¹

The purpose of this chapter is to review the strategic context and the arms control climate of the day, appraising the threat the Soviet Union posed, their approach to arms control, and the Reagan Administration's strategy in dealing with them. It will examine the Reagan Administration's approach to arms control and its desired objectives. Although there were many talks with the Soviets at that time, from space to conventional forces,

our primary focus will be on the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) discussions. These two areas are central to the principal concern of the period—imminent nuclear war between the superpowers—which was perceived to be a very real and plausible threat in the early 1980s. It will also examine the negotiating strategy of the US negotiating team and the difficulties and solutions encountered by them. Finally, it will sum up the achievements and consequences from those negotiations.

THE THREAT: THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

When President Reagan took the oath of office on 20 January 1981, General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev had led the Soviet Union since 1964. In his eighteen years of power, Brezhnev had driven the Soviet Union to accumulate an enormous nuclear arsenal. The USSR had surpassed the United States in both steel output and oil production. The living standards of the Soviet people had actually improved in his first twelve years of power.² Under the guise of the Brezhnev Doctrine, the Soviet Union was expanding its influence around the world. Although initially applicable only to Eastern Europe, the Brezhnev Doctrine claimed the right to expand Soviet influence of “national liberation” while simultaneously claiming the right to keep what they had gained. Essentially, it stated that communism was irreversible, and once a nation had become socialist, it was not again to be surrendered to “counterrevolution.”³

In the 1970s, the global situation had begun to change. Détente marked the relationship between the superpowers. According to John L. Gaddis, the 1970s witnessed “the most substantial reduction in American military capabilities relative to those of the Soviet Union in the entire postwar period.”⁴

While the US exercised unilateral restraint over its strategic forces under détente, the USSR had continued producing new generations of missiles, bombers, and submarines, outspending the Americans two to one overall, and seven to one on ballistic missiles.⁵ These included two new ICBMs built in violation of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II (SALT II), the mobile SS-24 ICBM with 10 warheads and the “heavy” SS-25, also mobile. A steady increase in the numbers of Soviet MIRVs (by a factor of four) and in missile capability (with the SS-18 Mod 5 and 6) continued.⁶ The Soviets developed new supersonic Blackjack and Backfire strategic bombers. A large, phased-array radar constructed at Krasnoyarsk, coupled with ABM-related tests of surface-to-air missile components, revealed the Soviets were developing a national ABM defense in violation of the ABM Treaty,⁷ a

violation they would later admit. It was also revealed that the Soviets were building their own Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program.⁸

More alarmingly, the Soviets appeared to be preparing to fight and win a nuclear war. In speeches to the Russian people, Secretary Brezhnev and members of the Soviet military leadership spoke of nuclear war in terms of “victory will be on the side of world socialism” and “the attainment of victory.”⁹ In a meeting of communist leaders in 1973, Brezhnev declared that détente was a stratagem to allow the USSR to strengthen its military so that by 1985 they could exert their will on a global stage.¹⁰ With a superiority of strategic nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union would never again be faced down by the Americans as they were in the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹¹ The Soviet approach to arms control negotiations unquestionably reflected this growing confidence.

THE INITIAL SOVIET APPROACH TO ARMS CONTROL

The Soviet approach to arms control was designed to achieve both general national and specific objectives. These general national objectives included:

1. Legitimacy for the Soviet political system and rule by the Communist Party—including the recognition of the partition of Europe
2. To expand and enhance Soviet global influence
3. Defense of the Soviet Union
4. To dominate the land and sea adjacent to Soviet borders
5. To protect planned Soviet force modernization and developments
6. To constrain and reduce US and Western forces
7. To fragment NATO and decouple the United States from its global friends and allies
8. To undermine support in the West for defense and hamstringing Western military programs.¹²

The more specific objectives included:

1. Insure stability and promote parity in the US-Soviet military competition at the strategic nuclear level

2. Insure Soviet hegemony in Europe at the theater level
3. Prevent the United States from acquiring unilateral strategic advantages over the Soviet Union
4. Preserve as much of the SALT II framework as possible¹³

Later, in the course of negotiations with the United States, additional objectives would be inserted into Soviet arms control strategy and would achieve more prominence. In particular, a key Soviet objective in 1984 became the prevention of an arms race in space (or more accurately, preventing the United States from joining the Soviet arms race in space with their own SDI program).¹⁴

Noticeable by its absence in the list of Soviet priorities is the reduction in militarily significant numbers of nuclear weapons. In fact, early Soviet proposals allowed an increase in the number of Soviet weapons (but not in the number of US weapons). Not until Gorbachev came to power would the Soviets accept the principle of deep cuts in strategic weapons in response to President Reagan's SDI program and policy of seeking deep cuts. Numbers of weapons were not related to strategic stability.

One should note that the Soviet view of stability was associated primarily along political lines. The Soviets believed that a situation was stable when their own military had confidence in its ability to execute assigned functions and could compensate for external or internal factors that might affect war plans. Arms control could therefore make significant contributions to stabilizing the threat environment for planning purposes. A threat constrained by arms control agreement was more predictable and considered more stable. Any change in the strategic environment, and especially changes in the threat, compromised Soviet abilities to plan with confidence and therefore was inherently destabilizing. Although the Soviets never published a list of destabilizing weapons, one can reconstruct a list of those weapon systems based on public statements defending Moscow's positions. According to those statements, the following features characterized destabilizing weapons:

1. Their approach could not be detected with adequate warning time
2. They could hit targets with great precision (ergo, hardened targets)
3. There were few countermeasures against them and they were difficult to defend against

4. The Soviet military could not easily preempt them (they had highly inherent pre-launch survivability)
5. They lacked secure central control and hence were prone to accidents or unauthorized use
6. The United States was ahead of the USSR technologically in a given weapon system development

This view labels as destabilizing precisely those weapons the United States considered as stabilizing—for instance bomber-delivered weapons such as cruise missiles. The Americans did not consider them as first-strike weapons since their time of flight was so long, they had to penetrate very sophisticated Soviet air-defenses, and their launch platforms could be recalled in flight. But as Soviet negotiators insisted,

The cruise missile is a very tricky weapon. I would even say it is the most destabilizing weapon . . . because it is low-flying. It cannot be seen by radar. It can hit the target with great accuracy. . . .¹⁵

The Soviets had no formally developed theory of arms control or a bureaucracy whose sole purpose was advocating arms control as an adjunct to its foreign and defense policies, as did the US and its Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). Consequently, Soviet arms control objectives were not as conceptually elaborate or as well articulated as were US arms control priorities.¹⁶ On top of this fact, the deaths of four Soviet leaders in rapid succession, and the political impact that had on the Soviet bureaucracy, made meaningful arms control negotiations difficult for the first term of the Reagan Administration.

Two dimensions of the Soviet approach to arms control—the political and the military—were especially crucial to understanding Soviet arms control policy, and START in particular. At least three basic considerations probably influenced Soviet political assessments of arms control; the traditional function of arms control diplomacy in Soviet foreign policy, the Soviet concept of strategic stability, and the Soviet attitude toward international treaty commitments. The latter Soviet attitude was influenced by at least three factors. In terms of international law, the Soviets were strict constructionists who believed that whatever was not specifically prohibited by the agreement was allowed. Depending on the needs of the moment, the “spirit” of the agreement would be short-lived. In Addition, a major asymmetry existed between the US and the Soviet Union in that there

was no internal constituency within the USSR to insure compliance. The Soviet bureaucracy, not accountable to the electorate for their actions, assigned arms control compliance a low priority. Finally, the Soviets approached each agreement with an eye toward “options for evasive compliance”¹⁷ Because of this attitude of using arms control as a means to gain an advantage, the Soviets made sure that the text accurately reflected the negotiation record.¹⁸

The Soviet military factor included three aspects in arms control compliance; first, Soviet political-military doctrine which called for deterring war by being prepared to wage it successfully at all levels of conflict; second, Soviet operational targeting requirements to insure they could preemptively destroy an adversary’s nuclear forces; third, to sustain the momentum of the Soviet nuclear force modernization programs. Therefore, the Soviet military played a central role in Soviet negotiating policy.¹⁹ As Secretary of State Shultz pointed out, when Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the equivalent of our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, showed up at the negotiations, the American delegation knew the Soviets were “serious and whatever we agree to, that’s going to stick because the military is clearly represented.”²⁰

From the earliest days of the Reagan Administration, the Soviets waged a vitriolic propaganda campaign against several key policies in an effort to justify the existing balance of forces, as well as Moscow’s own peculiar perspective on the meaning of strategic parity.²¹ This campaign was in response to the Reagan Administration’s Four-Part Agenda, discussed in the next section. The propaganda campaign intended to bring maximum pressure to bear against the US strategic modernization program and to fragment and weaken the moral and political resolve of the NATO alliance, especially the deployment of Pershing II and Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCM) to Europe. A growing nuclear freeze movement was gaining momentum in the West as expectations and fears of a nuclear war increased.²² By portraying President Reagan’s policies as destabilizing and leading the superpowers toward nuclear war, the Soviet propaganda machine hoped to derail Reagan’s key programs. Underlying much of the Soviet attack was the fear that the strategic modernization program would lead to a leap in technological superiority by the United States. The degree to which Soviet actions in START were motivated by Soviet fear of perceived American technological superiority should not be underestimated, although they were always careful to avoid explicitly acknowledging this superiority.²³ Secretary Shultz played on this fear by detailing for General Secretary Gorbachev how the world was about to radically change with

computer and information technology. If the Soviet Union did not also change, it would be left far behind.²⁴

THE REAGAN STRATEGY: BEYOND CONTAINMENT

Throughout President Reagan's speeches and writings, he reiterated that the main goal of the United States' Cold War policy should be to expedite the fall of communism. Because communism suppressed economic, political, and social freedoms contrary to the needs and desires of mankind, he argued, communism had laid the groundwork for its own destruction and could not possibly survive. Reagan saw the first step toward accelerating the fall of the Soviet Union as distinguishing the symptoms of the Cold War from its sources. In this respect, Reagan viewed the arms race as a symptom of the Cold War, and thus concluded that arms control negotiations would neither end the Cold War nor improve relations with the Soviet Union. The only reason to sign an arms control treaty would be if the treaty enhanced the security interests of the United States. Reagan also believed that after a treaty was signed, the US needed to increase its vigilance because the causes of the Cold War, the policies of the Soviet Union, remained.²⁵

One might conclude that because communism was flawed, the West merely had to "hang on" throughout the Cold War and watch communism collapse. Although Reagan did think communism would not survive, he did not think Cold War victory inevitable in the short-term. Reagan believed American leaders had failed to properly situate the arms race into the overall context of the Cold War. They had ignored the Soviet build-up and aggression, and there were only two choices for the superpowers in the Cold War: surrender or victory. In order for America to achieve victory, her leaders had to understand what was required to achieve it as well as have the courage to do whatever was necessary for the United States to emerge victorious.²⁶

Reagan's strategy, therefore, was to move the United States beyond the old Cold War policy of containment. His was an aggressive plan to rollback the gains the USSR made during the 1970s. Reagan was convinced that a stratagem of strategic defense modernization—backed by US resolve—would lead the Soviet hierarchy to conclude that it had no alternative but to come to terms with the United States.²⁷

On the political front, the Reagan Administration developed what came to be known as the "Four-Part Agenda." This outlined a broad agenda that confronted the USSR where it was most vulnerable and put the initiative back into the hands of the United States. The Four-Part Agenda addressed Human Rights, Regional Issues, Arms Control, as well as Bilateral Issues.

This agenda allowed the Reagan Administration to meet the Soviets head-on without increasing the risk of war and acted as an assertive counter-balance to the strategic modernization program. Positive movement by the Soviets in these four areas would be an indicator that they were serious about meaningful contacts with the US. That is why the Reagan Administration gave priority to Soviet behavior, focusing on regional conflicts rather than arms control.²⁸

A popular misconception in the West was that Reagan was recklessly leading the country down the path toward nuclear war. This was based in part on Reagan's insistence on rebuilding America's strategic arsenal as well as his straightforward rhetoric towards Soviet aggression. Nuclear war was in the forefront of popular culture, portraying the President as a cowboy ready to push the nuclear "button." Scientists asserted that "nuclear winter," meaning the end of life on earth, could result from even a small-scale nuclear attack.²⁹ The risk of nuclear war was perceived as more serious than ever before, and Soviet propaganda preyed upon this fear.³⁰

Strategic Modernization: Reversing the "Window of Vulnerability"

Of course, the irony of this image of Ronald Reagan as a maverick ready to hurl nukes at a moment's notice is the fact that Reagan was a nuclear abolitionist. On many occasions—with the summit in Reykjavik as the most remembered—Reagan stated that the world would be better off without nuclear weapons. In his famous "Star Wars" speech of 23 March 1983, he publicly declared that the ultimate goal of the SDI program towards nuclear weapons would be "to eliminate the weapons themselves."³¹

But Reagan was also very pragmatic in his approach to strategic forces and arms control. He was well aware that the United States would only be able to successfully turn back the Soviet Union when US forces were again a credible deterrent. Reagan firmly believed that "Peace is purchased by making yourself stronger than your adversary," and that "Nations that place their faith in treaties and fail to keep their hardware up don't stick around long enough to write many pages in history."³²

The first order of business was to remedy the "window of vulnerability" that had opened during the 1970s. The most pressing initiatives concerned comprehensive increases in ongoing defense programs. Rather than change American strategy, Reagan's initiatives focused on obtaining the resources needed to implement existing strategic goals successfully. In addition to continuing the Carter programs such as air-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs and SLCMs), force modernization involved procurement of the cancelled B-1 bomber, deployment of the MX (Peacekeeper) and

Trident D5 missiles, research and development of the single warhead missile (Midgetman), and acquiring the “Advanced Technology Bomber,” now the B-2 Spirit.

Of equal importance, but less well known, the Reagan Administration gave top priority to improving strategic command and control systems.³³ The destructiveness of nuclear weapons, along with the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) inherent to a nuclear detonation, threatened the coherence of communications networks.³⁴ An estimate in 1982 concluded that less than one percent of Soviet warheads of the period could destroy the US military command, control, communication, and Intelligence (C³I) that connected the National Command Authorities (NCA) with fielded strategic forces. It was concluded that destroying C³I in a first strike was the single most effective target to reduce American strategic power.

A final pillar of Reagan’s strategic modernization program was to stay on schedule with the deployment of the INF missiles in Europe begun by the Carter Administration. This deployment was seen as being key to demonstrating NATO Alliance unity and resolve in the face of Soviet expansionism. A successful deployment of these systems would be a major setback to Soviet aims in Europe and could potentially force them into serious arms control discussions with the United States, the ultimate goal being Reagan’s “zero option,” elimination of all superpower nuclear missiles in Europe. Such an achievement might lead to a more stable superpower environment.³⁵

THE US APPROACH TO ARMS CONTROL

The paramount US arms control objective since 1958 had been strategic stability. The Reagan Administration’s new conception of the proper role of arms control in US security policy was that arms control should complement, not substitute for, strategy. The administration set forth these strategic principles in the 1980 Republican Party platform:³⁶

1. Negotiate from a position of strength
2. Negotiate on the basis of reciprocal benefits from the Soviet Union
3. Unilateral restraint by the US had failed to bring corresponding reductions by the Soviets during the 1970s
4. Arms control negotiations represent an important political and military undertaking that cannot be divorced from the broader political and military behavior of the negotiating parties³⁷

Critics of the administration cited the strategic modernization program and INF deployment as an indication it was not serious about negotiations with the Soviets, and would term these principles as “voodoo arms control,” building up in order to reduce strategic arms.³⁸ Despite the criticism, Reagan was eager to engage with the Soviets, and knew he could be extremely effective if he could meet with Soviet leaders face-to-face.³⁹ With Soviet leadership changing so rapidly during his first term, this desire could not be fulfilled. Nonetheless, the Reagan Administration derived an approach to arms control negotiations that would eventually become START from these strategic principles. It was based on four basic premises, or operating assumptions:

1. The Soviets had, or would soon acquire, a destabilizing first strike capability
2. The SALT approach to arms control had failed to restrain the Soviet threat and had decreased stability and US national security
3. US strength was the best assurance of peace and stability
4. The US must attempt to restore its negotiating capital

The first premise addressed the “window of vulnerability” resulting from the deterioration of US forces and Soviet buildup in the 1970s. It also addressed Brezhnev’s goal of a USSR with global dominance and influence.⁴⁰ The second premise was no surprise, for like détente, Reagan believed SALT only had “meaning if both sides take positive actions to relax the tensions.”⁴¹ Both of the first two premises described the circumstances existing at the beginning of the 1980s as Reagan and his advisors saw them. The second two premises formed a prescriptive basis for an alternative approach to US national security. Mindful of the limitations of negotiating with the Soviet Union, they prescribed a new and subordinate role for arms control.⁴²

The fourth premise recognized that serious negotiating asymmetries had been allowed to fester, leaving the United States at a disadvantage at the negotiating table. Unless the US could restore its negotiating capital, there would be no incentive for the USSR to modify its stand or curb its expansion. Short term attempts to restore it included changing ICBM alert postures from the Carter Administration’s “Launch Under Attack” to “Launch on Warning,”⁴³ proceeding with the INF deployment on schedule, and keeping pressure on the Soviets through rhetoric and the Four-part

Agenda. Long-term attempts included Reagan's strategic modernization and eventually SDI.

SDI would ultimately become the single most important element in the conduct of negotiations with the Soviet Union. Of all the US modernization programs, it would inflame Soviet fears of a US technological leap and a new arms race in space. Much of this Soviet fear was based on their own SDI research.⁴⁴ US negotiators would skillfully use SDI and America's restored negotiating capital to meet the overarching arms control goals of preventing war, limiting the damages if war occurs, and lowering the costs of preparing for war. During the Reagan Administration, these would be manifested through four major objectives.

Four Major Arms Control Objectives

The four major objectives that emerged in the arms control process of the Reagan Administration included enhanced stability, militarily significant reductions, equality of rights and limits, and effective verification. These objectives materialized from a Presidential request to review both US security and arms control policies shortly after he took office in 1981.

The American objectives in the arms control negotiations process sought to translate these premises into explicit priorities. One can clearly see in them an attempt to correct what the administration perceived were flaws in the later SALT II agreement. Many in the Reagan Administration felt that the communists always won negotiations and treaties like SALT II were the result. Reagan certainly expressed this view in his pre-presidential radio broadcasts when he stated, "we are still being out-traded by the Soviets."⁴⁵

Reagan believed that, unlike his predecessors, he would change the focus of the arms control process to make it work *for* American interests. Reagan's team would attack the existing negotiating asymmetries that had favored the Soviets by attempting to match, neutralize, or compensate for them.⁴⁶ He set forth his arms control agenda in his speech to the National Press Club on 18 November 1981, when he called for talks that would bring meaningful reductions in strategic arms, as opposed to SALT's purpose of mere limitations. Reagan also reiterated his campaign theme of making reductions both equal and verifiable, which remained a cornerstone of US strategic arms control agreements.⁴⁷

Although a desired goal, strategic stability was not the pre-eminent goal.⁴⁸ The US recognized that other objectives would help to clarify and substantiate the overall goal of enhancing stability. Therefore, achieving militarily significant reductions, equality of rights and limits, and

verification were also interwoven into the fabric of arms control negotiations in order to achieve strategic stability. Since increases in weapons, throw weight, and first-strike capability were considered by the US to be destabilizing, reductions in these capabilities were necessary for the agreement to be a success.

Arms race stability was a condition where neither side felt pressured to respond to the other's military programs by investing in weapon developments it would otherwise forego. It assumed that both US and Soviet weapons procurement processes were driven by an action-reaction dynamic, and further, that both sides were determined to maintain fixed and finite "mutual assured destruction" capability for inflicting unacceptable damage upon the other. Both sides would also respond to any effort by the opposition to diminish the potential effectiveness of that capability. Therefore, it assumed that if neither side engaged in those efforts, neither side would feel prompted to accumulate nuclear weapons beyond those required for MAD.⁴⁹

The second major US objective, achieving militarily significant reductions, reflected Reagan's belief that arms control should go beyond mere limitations to achieve meaningful reductions, thus distinguishing his approach from that of his predecessor. Reagan wanted to avoid the trap of conducting arms control for its own sake, which he believed had corrupted the SALT process. The focus on reductions would correct the errors of the past and make a substantive commitment to insure that arms control actually served US national security interests. Reagan wanted his negotiators to use arms control to constrain military capability and potential instead of legitimizing buildups or freezing weapons at levels, he held, that were already too high. Consequently, US negotiators would concentrate on reducing the actual destructive potential of forces, specifically numbers of warheads, launchers, and throw weight. As we have discussed, stability required that these reductions set forth lower numbers of forces at equal levels. Domestically, this approach sought to appeal to popular sentiment to end the arms race as well as deflect criticism from the nuclear freeze movement.⁵⁰

Equality of rights and limits, often referred to as "parity," sought to bring about mutual reductions to equal levels in the most important measures of military capability. This was an important element of the US pursuit for stability. An unequal agreement that established or prolonged an unequal balance could only result in instability. According to the State Department, "equality is an essential condition if arms control agreements are to fulfill the requirements of strengthening stability and maintaining effective deterrence at reduced levels."⁵¹ Parity is considered the only

dependable basis for mutual arms race stability and has been a traditional objective and prerequisite for arms control agreements. But Reagan differed from previous administrations in two ways: First, his team interpreted this objective as applying to equality of limits as well as equality of rights. Equal limits referred to numbers parity and is the conventional meaning of the word. Equal rights meant that neither side would have a unilateral or uncompensated right to one type of system (for instance, heavy ICBMs). Second, the Reagan Administration intended that equality be achieved in overall destructive capability of US and Soviet forces—not just numbers of weapons. This is why throw weight and warhead numbers were so important, since Soviet warheads were about twice as destructive as US warheads.⁵²

This objective of equal rights and limits was of such importance to US thinking that Congress had passed the Jackson-Vanik amendment in 1972. This amendment urged the president to insure that future arms control agreements would not place US strategic forces at a disadvantage to Soviet forces, thus making parity a part of public law (Public Law 92-448). Critics of the final SALT II Treaty cited a Senate Armed Services Committee report that concluded, “The treaty is unequal in favor of the Soviet Union and, thus, is inconsistent with Public Law 98-448.”⁵³ As Dr. Kartchner points out, “parity is the *sine qua non* of strategic arms control.” Conventional wisdom held that the strategic balance could only achieve stability in conditions of strict parity; hence strategic parity became the “holy grail” of strategic stability. The resulting inequalities promoted the incentives for an arms race, as one side tried to counter or neutralize perceived advantages by the other side, to achieve equality. The question is, how does one measure equality?⁵⁴

The Jackson-Vanik amendment attempted to measure equality in terms of destructive capability. Because US strategic doctrine required an “essential equivalence” between US and Soviet strategic force capability, a US arms control objective of equality in destructive might would align arms control policy with US nuclear strategic doctrine, and hence deterrence.

Nonetheless, the United States has traded strict equality of rights for concessions in other areas, as was the case when the US agreed to halve the expected deployment of US ALCMs (a weapon the Soviets saw as destabilizing) in return for Soviet agreement to reduce heavy ICBMs by half (a weapon the US regarded as destabilizing).⁵⁵ As US negotiators to the START process discovered, it is imperative to document what trades and concessions in these areas were related to, because after a time the Soviets would return to the negotiating table requesting to change the deal hoping to dupe new American negotiators who were unaware of the reasons for the

earlier concession. Recognition of this potential trap led Forrest Waller from OSD to write an internal paper entitled “Policy Advisor’s Guide to the START Treaty” in order to protect future negotiators.⁵⁶

ACDA, too, noted from its experience in arms negotiations that accords that lacked adequate provision for verification and compliance became a source of suspicion, tension, and distrust, rather than a source of international stability.⁵⁷ Verification was the fourth major US arms control objective. The Reagan approach to verification provisions was revolutionary, and one of the most important contributions his administration made to the theory and practice of arms control. Verification was a constant theme in his criticism of the final SALT II Treaty as well as in his summit meetings with General Secretary Gorbachev. To Reagan, the use of “national technical means” (NTM) was never enough verification upon which to base US security. Reagan demanded intrusive, on-site verifications that would serve as an incentive for the Soviets to comply with any agreement.

As we saw with SALT II, the accepted attitude towards verification was that each side maintained the “adequacy” of monitoring compliance. It assumed the agreement clearly demarcated what actions complied with the agreement and which ones did not. If a party were accused of non-compliance, it could respond in a timely and militarily effective manner to answer the accusation. This traditional approach assumed that all parties signed the agreement in good faith—never intending to violate the treaty—that made the treaty self-enforcing.⁵⁸ The administration contended that SALT had finally renounced this approach. The Soviets were accused of intentionally wording treaties to be ambiguous in an attempt to deceive US intelligence, and of cheating on occasion, such as the Krasnoyarsk radar site that violated the ABM Treaty.⁵⁹

The Reagan Administration’s approach to verification differed from the traditional approach in several key areas. First of all, rather than make concessions in order to secure verification provisions, which the administration believed was done under the Carter Administration, US negotiators would take the position that verification would benefit all parties to an agreement. Verification, to Reagan, was essential to the viability of the arms control process itself and therefore the US would not concede anything to achieve it. Secondly, in order to detect violations in a timely manner, deter non-compliance, and provide an adequate evidential base upon which to determine the severity of the violations and formulate proportional responses, agreements would have to be “effectively” verifiable. In the words of Ambassador Eugene Rostow: “we shall not confine ourselves to negotiating only about aspects of the problem which

can be detected by national technical means. We shall begin by devising substantive limitations that are strategically significant, and then construct the set of measures necessary to ensure verifiability.” The administration knew that more intrusive means of verification were essential.⁶⁰ Reagan himself had said about SALT, “there is no way without on site inspection ... to verify whether the Soviets are indeed complying with the treaty.”⁶¹

The second aspect of the administration’s new verification policy required greater clarity and precision in the negotiated treaty language and closing loopholes that could later lead to differences of opinion regarding standards of compliance. Ambassador Rostow called for a treaty text that would “limit the likelihood of ambiguous situations developing.”⁶² By the time the START I Treaty was signed by the first Bush Administration, the substance of the treaty text was reasonably unambiguous and error-free, which is a tribute to the attorneys who supported the delegation.⁶³

To promote effective verification procedures, the administration made a distinction of just what comprised compliance. The approach they took distinguished between *monitoring* compliance, or observing treaty-constrained activities, and *verifying* compliance, which was assessing the legalities of those activities.

Monitoring compliance used NTM to gather raw intelligence data from the other party’s military activities, but did not involve any judgment regarding whether those activities fulfilled or transgressed international obligations. NTM included photographic, radar, electronic surveillance, seismic instrumentation, and atmospheric sampling. Under President Reagan’s guidance, the INF and START treaties would require augmentation by various types of on-site inspections, and include cooperative measures such as exchanges of data and open displays of mobile missiles for NTM collection purposes.

Monitoring treaty-constrained activities and assessing the degree of compliance may be thought of as two phases in an effective verification process. The first phase is the technical and analytical process, where data is collected and studied. The second phase, which addresses whether verification is effective, is the process of actually verifying compliance. It involves the political process of passing judgment on the evidence collected in the first phase. It also involves deciding on an appropriate response after considering the importance and severity of any violated provisions, and most importantly the associated risk posed by the violation to the Nation’s security.⁶⁴

In past administrations, “adequate” verification was generally regarded as meaning “a level of verification which would assure with high confidence that compliance could be determined to the extent necessary to safeguard

national security.” It also assumed that noncompliance could be detected in a timely manner so that an appropriate response could follow.⁶⁵ Deterring violations rested upon detecting them and not through evidence to assess compliance.

Under the Reagan Administration, this traditional approach applied only to the first phase (the monitoring phase). Reagan’s team knew that effective verification had to be supplemented by an effective compliance policy. Its standards of effective verification involved precise treaty language, cooperative and intrusive measures to assist monitoring compliance, and the political will to respond to detected violations. This approach to verification was revolutionary in that it framed future arms control agreements to both reduce treaty language ambiguity and enhance the quality of compliance evidence through intrusive, on-site inspections. Thus, for the first time the Soviet bureaucracy had hard incentives to comply with negotiated agreements. The first Bush Administration would endorse and perpetuate these objectives in their START negotiations, providing a solid degree of continuity designed to ensure a timely conclusion to START.⁶⁶

NEGOTIATIONS: US NEGOTIATING STRATEGY

Ideology and pragmatism struggled with each other in the Reagan Administration’s negotiating strategy. Although Reagan fervently desired meaningful negotiations and real arms reductions, he rejected the thesis that arms control negotiations were the most important step towards cooling off the Cold War and thus could not be jeopardized. Soviet aggression, beginning with Afghanistan and continuing through Reagan’s first term, such as the shoot-down of Korean Airlines flight 007 by the Soviet air defense and the murder of Arthur Nicholson, a US Army major, by a Soviet sentry in East Germany, kept pressure on the president to denounce the Soviets and avoid all talks.

Reagan’s condemnation of the Soviets during this period was not mere rhetoric of the president’s personal ideology. It served two specific purposes. First, it was intended to remobilize American public opinion after years of détente. Second, it was meant to send the Soviet leaders a message, especially at such an unstable time when Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko died in rapid succession. Reagan’s blunt declarations signaled that America had the will to resist Soviet expansion and left no doubt that it would respond to new Soviet aggression. Despite his “cowboy” reputation, Reagan’s actions were operationally more cautious and careful. His rhetoric, coupled with military actions against Soviet proxies like Libya and

Grenada, served to avoid confrontation and possible military clashes between the superpowers.

Public pressure for arms control and talks with the Soviets, however, mounted throughout Reagan's first term. Public opinion equated arms control with a sincere search for peace. Even had Reagan placed arms control negotiations at the top of his priorities, however, the rapid deaths of three Soviet leaders made meaningful negotiations virtually impossible.⁶⁷ As former Secretary of State Shultz points out, "the Soviet Union was mired in a protracted and so far inconclusive process of succession in leadership and in the difficulties of a stagnant and foundering economy." He recognized that the role of the Soviet military was prominent, as "Transitional periods in Soviet history had always witnessed an increase in the military's influence" and hence, less interest in arms control negotiations.⁶⁸

The US negotiating strategy would thus proceed cautiously, with negotiators available for talks in Geneva if the Soviets desired to resume them. More importantly, the strategic modernization program would continue while US foreign policy centered on Reagan's Four-Part Agenda. He rejected the Nixon-Kissinger idea of "linkage." Rather, he recognized an intrinsic link among all issues in superpower relations: human rights, regional crises, arms control, and bilateral contacts. The United States would try to act with strength in each area.⁶⁹

Prerequisites for Successful Negotiations

A firm believer in the United States acting from strength, Ambassador Edward Rowny, spent six and one half years at the negotiating table with the Soviets during the SALT II and START talks. The former head of ACDA used his experience to compile what he called "Ten Commandments for Negotiating with the Soviets" for future arms control negotiators. These were:

1. Thou shalt remember above all thine objective
2. Thou shalt be patient
3. Thou shalt keep secrets
4. Thou shalt bear in mind the differences in political structures
5. Thou shalt beware of Greeks bearing gifts
6. Thou shalt remember that in the Soviet view, form is substance

7. Thou shalt not be deceived by the Soviet “fear of being invaded”
8. Thou shalt beware of negotiating in the eleventh hour
9. Thou shalt not be deceived by the Soviets’ words
10. Thou shalt not misinterpret the human element

Each of these commandments was the result of a hard lesson learned by US negotiators throughout the SALT II process, often resulting in a Soviet advantage. Ambassador Rowny was painfully aware that the US imperative in arms control policy was and is to enhance our national security interests.⁷⁰ During the START talks, he admonished US negotiators not to be “soft” on the Soviets.⁷¹

President Reagan, who considered himself a tough and experienced negotiator from his labor union days, also wanted someone who could be tough with the Soviets—and who had experience negotiating with them—in charge of his foreign policy and overseeing the negotiating process.⁷² That job eventually fell upon Secretary of State George P. Shultz, who had cut his teeth in Soviet negotiations during the Nixon Administration when he was Secretary of Labor, and where he earned a reputation for integrity, tenacity, and effectiveness. As Secretary of State, he would be responsible for keeping US foreign policy—as well as US arms control negotiations—aligned with the Four-Part Agenda. Shultz, considered by most accounts a pragmatist, inherited an arms control institution that would peak during this period.⁷³ Shultz was also seen as a political conservative in the usual meaning of the term, staunchly anti-Soviet, and firmly behind the strategic modernization program that was considered an essential precondition of successful diplomacy.⁷⁴

For the negotiating team to succeed in any negotiations with the Soviets, Shultz believed that the United States must accomplish two prerequisites for success: First, the national-level initiatives of the Reagan Administration, and second, a unified composition and position of the US negotiating team itself. Shultz regarded national-level initiatives, such as the strategic modernization program and the INF deployment, as essential for motivating the Soviets to negotiate, because they signaled political will and solid alliance relationships.⁷⁵ Also, the will to use that force, such as in Grenada, did “more than the MX will do to make US power credible and peace secure.”⁷⁶ Shultz believed that improved economic growth, together with a steady and consistent foreign policy, would benefit the US over the long haul, would indicate to our allies and the American people that it was the Reagan Administration and not the Soviets who were interested in serious

arms control discussions, and would undermine Soviet foreign policy and propaganda.⁷⁷

One of the most important and difficult tasks that the leader of the US negotiation team had was developing a unified composition and position of the negotiating team itself. Because the negotiations process was designed to be adversarial, the trick for the negotiator was to flesh out a consistent position—a “unified front”—within his team’s own constituency. What people “usually call ‘the negotiation’ is in a sense the tip of the iceberg.” The real negotiations occur within one’s own constituency, where representatives from different agencies hash out an agenda based upon the president’s guidelines.⁷⁸ The theory behind this process was that each agency would forward different ideas on how to proceed, and the best ideas on a position would emerge. Preparation was about internal issues, with each agency trying to “win” against the others.⁷⁹ Based on his many years as a negotiator, Shultz saw this competitive relationship on tough issues as normal and healthy. Though some aspects of these arguments and leaks to the press were counterproductive, Reagan’s team had identified a process through which people expressed honest and divergent views. Shultz “would worry far more about an administration whose members agreed on every subject.”⁸⁰ Such a process seemed to work best as long as arguments were direct and substantive, as decisions needed to be timely and intelligent. When the arguments turned personal, it could have a debilitating effect on the process.

Presenting a “unified front” was crucial when confronting the Soviets at the negotiating table, as Soviet negotiators were often more experienced than their US counterparts and would exploit any division on the US side. This was considered one of the major problems with the SALT II talks.⁸¹

Once the head of the negotiating team unified his own constituency, the next task was to constantly assess how well his Soviet opponent had done this appraisal within the Soviet constituency. In this way, the US side could exploit any fissures among the Soviet delegation’s position that presented themselves and use those opportunities to further US positions. In addition, by appraising the unity of the Soviet team, the US team leader could evaluate the likelihood that any position the Soviets agreed to would stick.

As the Reagan Administration’s first term came to its end, the strategic modernization program and INF deployments were solidly on track. The US economy was strong. Reagan’s Four-part Agenda provided clear foreign policy guidance, and the Secretary of State was focused both on solidifying his constituency and the direction in which the US negotiating team was to proceed. There was only one obstacle to the Reagan Administration’s goal

of achieving credible strategic arms reductions: Just what were the Soviets up to?

DEVELOPING A US POSITION ON ARMS CONTROL?

As we've noted before, there were plenty of problems on the Soviet side concerning their approach to serious strategic arms negotiations during Reagan's first term. Soviet reluctance was coupled with overtly aggressive conduct upon the world stage. In Reagan's State of the Union address in January, 1983, he reasserted that he was still prepared for a positive relationship with the Soviets, but "the Soviet Union must show by deeds as well as words a sincere commitment to respect the rights and sovereignty of the family of nations."⁸² Soviet deeds were alienating them from the world community at large and had sparked a heated debate within the administration on the wisdom of engaging them in arms control talks.

Such Soviet conduct had inflamed the visceral hatred of communism harbored by many in the administration. Debate ranged from the pragmatic "how should the administration proceed" to the ideological "whether the administration should proceed at all." Negotiations were still seen as dangerous, and the "fatally flawed" SALT II talks remained a sore spot. The "evil empire" appeared inflexible and imperturbable in its brutality. During Reagan's first term, the struggle between ideology and pragmatism within the administration was at its height.⁸³

Inside the administration, divergent views on US-Soviet relations emerged along pragmatist and conservative lines even though the Reagan cabinet consisted of conservatives in the conventional sense of the word. The pragmatists included George Schultz at State, Vice President George Bush, National Security Advisor Bud McFarlane, Chief of Staff James Baker, presidential assistant Michael Deaver, and first lady Nancy Reagan. Those more ideologically conservative included Secretary of Defense (OSD) Caspar "Cap" Weinberger, former National Security Advisor Judge William Clark, CIA Chief William Casey, and UN ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick.

One of the main distinctions between these positions in the arms control arena was that the pragmatists saw the strategic modernization program and Reagan's rhetoric as an opportunity to drive hard bargains with the Soviets at the negotiating table, while the conservatives believed that the Soviets only responded to military power. The pragmatists did not believe the force modernization would last after Reagan and sought to use it to achieve the President's goal of reducing strategic arms between the superpowers, which required negotiations with the Soviets. The conservatives, especially

Secretary of Defense Weinberger, perceived a similarity in aggressive Soviet conduct with that of Nazi Germany before World War II. Hence, the conservatives were preparing to fight World War Three and saw the force modernization as their means to credibly achieve military victory.⁸⁴ Naturally, these views would clash, competing for preeminence in US-Soviet relations.

Shultz saw the arms control process as part of State's jurisdiction within the context of US foreign policy. He believed he had President Reagan's support to pursue contacts with the Soviets within the framework of the Four-Part Agenda. He, like Reagan, wanted to engage the Soviets in discussions, which Shultz believed would best-serve US interests. However, following the President's lead, any discussions must result from a Soviet "deed" that clearly indicated they were moving toward a US position in the Four-Part Agenda. Reagan, and ergo Shultz, would undertake negotiations when "they are called for."⁸⁵ Shultz also believed that a steady, patient, and tough US foreign policy that was consistent and predictable would reassure the American constituency and our allies, while forcing the Soviets to conclude they had no choice but to meet the US on Reagan's terms. By making human rights a central issue in his Four-Part Agenda, Reagan had targeted one of the more vulnerable areas of Soviet policy. The Soviets, who signed the 1975 Helsinki Accords on human rights, were behind the brutal crackdown of the Solidarity movement in Poland, maintained the "gulag" of political prisoners, and were openly committing other human rights violations. Shultz's job was to exploit that vulnerability and use it to drive the hardest bargain he could. He would begin every meeting with the Soviets discussing human rights issues.⁸⁶

Weinberger worried that a successful engagement with the Soviets by the State Department would lead to a premature return to the days of détente. Without the perceived danger of war with the Soviet Union, Congress would be less willing to keep the strategic modernization on track. The Soviets could then achieve a political victory, continue negotiating from a position of strength, and likely be able to defeat any US opposition by force of arms. Weinberger, a student of Winston Churchill, saw parallels between Churchill's unheeded warnings about the Nazi military buildup in the 1930s and his own dire forecasts of Soviet military superiority. In the Pentagon behind Weinberger's desk hung a framed Churchill quotation: "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never; in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in."⁸⁷ This position served him well during Reagan's first term in office. Later on in Reagan's second term, as world events changed and the Soviet Union began to shift its positions due to the success of the Four-Part Agenda, the effectiveness of that position waned

and he became a more marginal figure in the debate over arms control. In October 1987, he would resign as Secretary of Defense.⁸⁸

During Reagan's first term, however, Weinberger kept the Department of Defense on a steady course of preparing for global war with the Soviets. Weinberger saw his responsibility as dispassionately assessing the threat and recommending to the Congress and the President a course of action to counter that threat.⁸⁹ With his ally at CIA, William Casey, Weinberger planned to also confront the Soviets in asymmetric forms of warfare in order to undermine Soviet power. They authored National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 66, which sought to wage protracted economic warfare, psychological warfare, and sabotage of Western goods headed for the USSR, with the intent of crippling the Soviet economy.⁹⁰ Weinberger saw these measures as substantive ones, which would force the Soviets to change their positions, whereas to engage in arms control talks was in his mind the more risky course. OSD wanted to reduce Soviet nuclear capability and change the nuclear balance to favor the United States.⁹¹

Considering the different viewpoints at Defense and State, one should certainly not be surprised that there would be a conflict in their respective approaches to relations with the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, much was leaked to the press, which portrayed the administration as in a state of disarray for its deep internal divisions and debates. The press had described the conflict between State and Defense in terms of "a battle between the two Richards:" Richard Perle, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security, and Richard Burt at State, who was Director of the Bureau for Political-Military Affairs.⁹² Both assistants were deeply involved in the arms control process. Despite colliding on arms control issues, they achieved substantive movement early on with the INF talks.

It should not be surprising that these differences rippled down to the working groups who were "in the trenches," hammering out the US position on arms control for the negotiating team. One can sum up the divergent positions that permeated the team, as "one group believed they were saving the world, and the other believed they were saving the country."⁹³ At its worst, the action officers often reflected the personalities of their superiors in the meetings, which resulted in extreme passions, laborious negotiations, and great delay in the arms control process. Four-letter words were exchanged, friendships were ruined, and grudges were held.⁹⁴ Under these circumstances came the leaks to the press and disruption of the process. At best, the team sculpted a firm US negotiating position and successfully fronted the Soviets. Their timing and content, according to Shultz, was "just about right." The US position was gradually solidifying.⁹⁵

Agencies and Positions

At the highest level in the arms control policy process was the National Security Council, but the National Security Advisor position changed so often during the Reagan Administration that it lacked the clout or staying power that Shultz and Weinberger had.⁹⁶ While Bud McFarlane was the National Security Advisor, he favored private channels with the Soviets. Such contacts usually proved unsuccessful and clashed with Shultz's efforts to conduct arms control discussions as part of the broader US foreign policy run by State. McFarlane also lobbied for an arms control "czar" to oversee all strategic talks. Eventually, the idea was adopted, with Max Kampelman filling that role under the auspices of the Nuclear and Space Talks (NST), which set forth an agenda to cover strategic nuclear arms, intermediate-range forces, and defense and space.⁹⁷

Another policymaker in the discussion of whether or not the administration should proceed with negotiations, ACDA, was designed to represent the arms control viewpoint in discussions. However, Reagan conservatives ran it during this period and it leaned along those conservative lines. Its level of influence in the arms control process was often a reflection of the stature of the head of the agency. At the working group level, ACDA had within it staff capabilities and corporate knowledge that were very useful to everyone concerned with arms control.⁹⁸

Although the CIA was not a policymaker on arms control policy issues, Weinberger could rely on their assessments of Soviet military strength to support his objectives and position. CIA was ideologically aligned with OSD.

Within the Department of Defense, the Joint Staff, supported by the Services, also had a role to play in arms control negotiations. Although not a policymaker, the Joint Staff had at its disposal experts in the various weapon systems the negotiators would be dealing with. Surprisingly, the Joint Staff would sometimes take a position contrary to that of OSD during the Reagan Administration. The Joint Staff was not ideologically motivated. They understood what they wanted to preserve and were not necessarily interested in using arms control to weaken the Soviet Union. They wanted to make sure that the arms control agreements did not likewise injure US strategic forces.⁹⁹ This internal division sometimes hurt the OSD position.

One problem area between the Joint Staff and OSD regarded program cuts. Sometimes the Services would go overboard protecting pet programs after OSD had targeted them for cuts. Members of the Joint Staff would rally support from program allies in Congress in an effort to "backdoor" the

OSD, putting OSD in a position of constant negotiations with the Services.¹⁰⁰

RESOLVING THE DIVISION

One of the first overtures from the Soviet Union that suggested talks could proceed occurred in 1983. A group of Soviet Pentecostal Christians had entered the US embassy in Moscow and refused to leave. They were seeking religious freedom and the right to emigrate from the USSR and were allowed to live in the embassy basement. On President Reagan's initiative, the State Department worked a deal with the Soviets: they would release the Pentecostals and President Reagan would not turn the issue into a propaganda event.

The Pentecostals were freed and Reagan kept his word. This issue was, in a sense, the first successful negotiation with the Soviets in the Reagan Administration. He had demonstrated to the Soviets that here was a president that could be trusted in negotiations.¹⁰¹ Secretary Shultz credits this trust as essential to establish with "the people you're going to negotiate with."¹⁰² Slight progress was at last being made in US-Soviet relations along the guidance of the Four-Part Agenda.

Progress was being made within the administration's own constituency. National Security Advisor Bud McFarlane, Secretary of State Shultz, Secretary of Defense Weinberger, and CIA Director William Casey had begun the initial "Family Group" luncheons in order to try to arrive at a common position on foreign policy issues. Although the atmosphere was somewhat confrontational, these weekly luncheons were a team-building attempt at the cabinet level in which big issues, such as arms control with the Soviets, could be discussed freely.¹⁰³

The makeup of the US negotiating team was changing, however. The president had agreed to an idea that the US would go to Geneva with a large delegation representing all the different points of view. Although the actual team to sit at the table would be small, they would be supported by a large delegation with broad expertise that would be available to address any issue on the spot. Besides being an opportunity to pull people together, it also would mean speeding up the negotiations process on the US side, and would potentially keep the Soviets off balance and responding to U.S initiatives. Periodically, results and issues would be brought to President Reagan and his top advisors. Every member of the delegation would be included in the process of arriving at a position, solidifying ownership in the negotiating process. Shultz believed, based on his previous negotiating experiences in the world of labor-management talks, that once the US team arrived at a

position, everyone would have been involved and therefore would more likely support it.¹⁰⁴ Each session involved a close “wringing out,” but Shultz cited such involvement, as well as selecting good people, as crucial to a successful negotiations.¹⁰⁵

Once the delegation arrived in Geneva, all bickering was over. In an effort to eliminate leaks to the press or parties trying to negotiate through the press, a blackout was imposed on the delegation forbidding anyone from talking to members of the media. To do so meant expulsion from the team.¹⁰⁶

Makeup of the Delegation

For high-level talks with the Soviets, a senior US official, someone of the status of Ambassador Paul Nitze or Ed Rowny, would lead the team. Once the NST discussions began, the arms control “czar,” Max Kampelman, would head the US delegation. On other occasions, such as summits, Secretary of State Shultz would lead the delegation. In Geneva, for instance, National Security Advisor Bud McFarlane and Ambassadors Paul Nitze and Art Hartman accompanied Shultz at the table. Jack Matlock, Ambassador to the USSR, would be there to take notes. Fluent in Russian language and culture, Matlock was equally expert in US-Soviet relations.¹⁰⁷

A senior official, usually from the State Department, such as Richard Burt or Roz Ridgeway, chaired the working group that supported the team of negotiators. The State Department was in charge of the policy process and they had a “long arm” on the actual negotiations process. In a typical meeting on policy matters, there would be several other State Department representatives, from either the office of Strategic Nuclear Policy or the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. A representative from the State Department’s General Council would also usually be there, as would someone from the regional bureau that dealt with Soviet matters. One advocate, such as Richard Perle, usually represented OSD. ACDA, the Joint Staff, and the intelligence community also had one representative. Beneath this tier of delegates would be experts from the various agencies who could quickly address the details on key issues.¹⁰⁸

The makeup of the Soviet delegation had traditionally been under the leadership of the Foreign Ministry, which would reflect the position of the General Secretary and the Politburo at the negotiating table. During Reagan’s first term that was Andrei Gromyko. With the success of the large US negotiating team, the Soviet delegation likewise changed about the time of the Geneva summit to more closely mirror the makeup of the US delegation. General Secretary Gorbachev created a special Politburo

commission with the task of coordinating the decision-making process. The head of the commission, Lev Zaikov, was a Secretary of the Central Committee on the Politburo. His delegation consisted of members of the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Defense, scientific institutes, Gosplan, the military-industrial committee of the Council of Ministers, and experts in various technical fields, similar to the US delegation. During high-level discussions, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze would head the delegation and speak directly with Shultz.¹⁰⁹ With the changes in Soviet leadership and the depth of experience of the early Soviet negotiating delegation, the difficulty for the US team was twofold: keeping the Soviet delegation at the table and moving the Soviets toward the Reagan position.

DEALING WITH THE SOVIETS

With the release of the Soviet Pentecostals, the Reagan Administration saw a glimmer of hope that the Soviets could move forward on a point of the Four-Part Agenda. Yet the reality was that the Soviets still approached the US negotiators as they had during the Carter Administration and expected to get their way. As the deployment date for the Pershing II and GLCM INF missiles to NATO neared, Soviet propaganda increased, hoping to fan the flames of the peace movement and force a political delay. The Soviets saw this deployment as the most severe threat to their strategic stability to date.¹¹⁰ They threatened to pull out of all talks then underway if the deployment continued on schedule and hyped the imminence of nuclear war. From their perspective, this same tactic had worked with the neutron bomb during the Carter Administration. Should it work again, it would weaken Reagan's bid for re-election in 1984 and could potentially mean the end of the strategic modernization program.¹¹¹

Fortunately for President Reagan, world public opinion was changing. His "zero option" of INF in Europe was seen by the world, and especially NATO and Japan, as moving forward on the issue of arms control, and hence the cause of peace. The Soviet position was seen for what it was, obstructionist. The shoot-down of KAL-007 was fresh in the minds of many, further isolating the Soviets. One democrat wrote Senator Howard Baker that he was furious because Ronald Reagan had been right about the Russians all along!¹¹² The Soviets pulled out of all talks, but as the deployment of the INF missiles continued. Reagan had found an issue that credibly restored US negotiating capitol. If the Soviets wanted our missiles out of Europe—and they did—they would have to come back to the table and talk about it. The US now had another ace in the deck.

But Reagan wasn't satisfied with that. His announcement in the spring of 1983 that the US was going forward with SDI further pressured the Soviets. Now the Soviets were faced with an arms race on earth and in space. The Soviets were also looking over their shoulder at Japan's economic power and the dawn of the information age. Their economy was already in trouble. Based on their own SDI research, the Soviets feared that SDI signaled a US technological leap. SDI had the potential to give the US overwhelming first strike capability. The Soviets also saw in it blackmail potential. Strategic modernization continued under Weinberger's guiding hand. How could the Soviet Union compete?¹¹³

Not only was the Reagan Administration going forward on SDI, it was attempting to change the paradigm. NSDD 153 was issued making SDI central to US strategy.¹¹⁴ Fred Ikle told Congress "the Strategic Defense Initiative is not an optional program at the margin of our defense effort. It is central."¹¹⁵ This change to US strategy, coming on the heels of the deployment of INF missiles to Europe, had suddenly given the Soviets a strong incentive to talk with the Americans. More importantly, it gave the Soviets motivation to approach the American position. SDI gave American diplomacy a new potency.¹¹⁶ Stubbornly, the Soviets clung to the position that what was needed was brand new negotiations before they could return to the table.

President Reagan's offer to the Soviets in his 24 September 1984 address to the United Nations General Assembly, where he proposed umbrella talks that would include INF, START, Space and SDI, seemed to offer just that. Using a time-honored negotiating technique, especially in the realm of arms control negotiations, Reagan adopted the form but not the substance of the opponent's position. The Soviets wanted new negotiations, so the US adopted "new" negotiations. Max Kampelman was the "new" head of the umbrella talks in his role as arms control "czar." The reality, however, for the American delegation was simply the resumption of the original START and INF talks with the addition of the new Space and SDI talks.¹¹⁷

The Soviets returned to the negotiating table under Gorbachev without the U.S making any concessions. A strong America, bolstered by the strategic modernization program, the INF deployment, and now SDI, had restored negotiating capital in spades. In a Congressional hearing, the director of ACDA, Ken Adelman testified, "SDI helped bring the Soviets back to the negotiating table and has proven to be the engine driving them to make proposals for reductions."¹¹⁸

The new Soviet General Secretary, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, was well aware of the weakness of the Soviet economy and its new

untenable position *vis-à-vis* the United States. He had no choice but to acknowledge what Marxists have traditionally prided themselves in—recognizing objective reality. That reality demanded rapprochement with the United States. Although Gorbachev launched an immediate public-relations campaign to arrest the blackened image of the Soviet Union, knowledgeable observers detected he had a strong desire for an end to the Cold War. Against this background, the Soviets eagerly responded to the US invitation for a superpower summit between Reagan and Gorbachev in Geneva in late 1985.¹¹⁹

Geneva

Gorbachev accepted the invitation to Geneva without “grand expectations.” By his own admission, he merely sought to lay the foundations for serious future dialogue between the leaders of the superpowers.¹²⁰ True to Soviet fashion, Gorbachev initially took a tough approach with Reagan, telling him that the United States should have no illusions about being able to “bankrupt” the USSR, as called for in NSDD-66. Gorbachev firmly added “we can match you, whatever you do.” Yet Max Kampelman could see through the tough talk. In his sessions with his Soviet counterpart, Yuli Kvitsinsky, Kampelman detected an almost plaintive effort by the Soviets to at least appear to make progress, especially over SDI. As recently as October 1985, Kampelman had identified an evident split in the Soviet delegation whose members had begun to criticize each other in private statements to the ambassador. The American delegation’s solidarity was having an effect on the Soviets, who let both Shultz and Kampelman know that they wanted to conclude the summit with an agreed statement—something to show for their efforts.¹²¹

The US position was still solidly anchored in the Four-Part Agenda. Along with Kampelman was Mike Glitman on INF and John Tower on START. Other members of the delegation included Roz Ridgeway from State, in charge of the working group, Richard Perle, Don Regan, Bud McFarlane, Paul Nitze, Art Hartman, Mark Palmer, and Colonel Bob Linhard, USAF. Ridgeway and her charges deftly maneuvered the Soviets. At one point, when her Soviet counterpart Georgi Kornienko tried to use the “old style” Soviet negotiating technique of using negotiations with linkage (contrary to a position Gorbachev had agreed to earlier with Reagan), she snapped her briefing book shut, stated “we aren’t going to negotiate that way,” and walked out of the negotiations. The Soviets, eager for an agreed statement, then requested that negotiations resume, and inched closer toward the American position.¹²²

The shining star of the talks, however, was Ronald Reagan himself. Reagan and his wife, Nancy, acted as gracious hosts to the Soviets and did their best to set a cordial and productive atmosphere for the delegations. Even so, on the second morning of the talks, when General Secretary Gorbachev began to berate the President's SDI program, Reagan exploded into an ardent debate with Gorbachev. Reagan took command of the floor, speaking with genuine passion about his vision of a world without nuclear weapons. The old nuclear abolitionist intensely expressed his abhorrence that the superpowers relied on the ability to "wipe each other out" as the only means of keeping the peace. "We must do better—and we can," Reagan exclaimed. The depth of President Reagan's belief in missile defense was vividly apparent to all present. He was at his best, speaking from the heart with conviction. With the simultaneous translation, Gorbachev could easily connect with Reagan's expressions, body language, and words. Silence filled the room as Reagan concluded his discourse.

After what must have seemed an interminably long time, Gorbachev said, "Mr. President, I don't agree with you, but I can see that you really mean what you say." Reagan had made a firm impression on the General Secretary, who realized that Reagan would not be swayed, intimidated, conned, or negotiated away from his position on a missile defense. Secretary Shultz summed up the event as, "Reagan had personally nailed into place an essential plank in our negotiating platform."¹²³

At the end of the summit, the US had made no concessions. In a sense, the Soviets garnered some success in that they got the agreed statement they were looking for, but in order to get it they moved much closer to the US position on INF and the Four-Part Agenda. The American delegation had gotten the Soviets to agree to the principle of a fifty percent reduction in nuclear arms, "appropriately applied." They also agreed to commit, along with the United States, to early progress at the Nuclear and Space Talks, and to focus on areas where there "is common ground."¹²⁴

Agreements were reached on ensuring air safety in the northern Pacific, on negotiations for the resumption of air services, the opening of consulates in Kiev and New York, people-to-people exchange programs, and cooperation on fusion research. Nuclear and chemical nonproliferation, the conventional arms reductions talks, and agreements to begin confidence-building efforts in Stockholm were all positive. The joint statement issued from Geneva was right out of one of Reagan's early speeches, "The sides...agreed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." The statement also called for progress toward "an interim agreement on medium-range missiles in Europe," as well as a new dialogue process, regular meetings between the foreign ministers, and periodic discussions on

regional issues—a crucial pillar of the Four-Part Agenda. A foundation was laid on the issue of human rights, where the Soviets agreed “on the importance of resolving humanitarian cases in the spirit of cooperation.”¹²⁵

Reagan realized he shared a kind of chemistry with Gorbachev.¹²⁶ Beyond the movement of the Soviets toward the US position, Shultz believed that “the big story was that they had hit it off as human beings,” which meant that future summits were likely.¹²⁷

Although the leaders had established this foundation for a personal relationship, Gorbachev had failed to make progress on his principal goal of halting SDI. Gorbachev knew that he would have to try and reclaim the initiative from the Americans by putting forward sweeping arms control proposals, which included discarding the age-old Soviet insistence of including British and French nuclear weapons in the count of Western missiles. This proposal was politically designed to again try to divide NATO. If Gorbachev could not make progress on SDI, perhaps he could re-attack NATO unity and disrupt INF.¹²⁸ Gorbachev recognized the stature of his American counterpart and realized that Reagan would be a formidable opponent at any future summit. Approaching the historic meeting at Reykjavik, Gorbachev knew that not only was Reagan a man of his word, but that he was also “a man you could do business with.”¹²⁹

Reykjavik

In the aftermath of Geneva, many around the world were looking to the talks at Reykjavik for substantial progress in arms control. There was an optimistic belief that this summit, held 11-12 October 1986, would lead to real strategic arms reductions. Those who were close to the discussions had a much more guarded opinion, as the discussions in-between summits saw quite a few proposals, but only modest progress. Secretary Weinberger thought the US would be severely tested at Reykjavik, as the Soviets had launched a set of preliminary public relations thrusts directed at the Strategic Defense Initiative. The Soviets held out the prospect that they would eliminate all nuclear weapons if Reagan would only give up strategic defense.¹³⁰

Secretary Shultz likewise cautioned that the desire for peace could lead to unwise compromises, as had happened before with the SALT II talks.¹³¹

In an effort to break the “logjam” in thinking about strategic issues in the administration as well as to “call” the Soviets on their offer of eliminating nuclear weapons, Weinberger surprised everyone with a dramatic and radical proposal. He suggested that the United States put forward an offer to eliminate all ballistic missiles. Dr. Fred Ikle, Under

Secretary of Defense, had earlier pointed out the special dangers unique to fast-flying ballistic missiles, such as the inability to be recalled once launched. Weinberger's proposal would eliminate this threat that the US saw as the most destabilizing weapon system. It would also test how serious the Soviets were about eliminating nuclear weapons.¹³² Finally, it would pressure the Soviets' public relations campaign while indicating just how far the Reagan Administration was willing to go.

Gorbachev hoped that Reykjavik would improve the USSR's blackened image in the eyes of the world and would demonstrate his determination to "prevent a new arms race."¹³³ The explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in the Ukraine on 26 April 1986 transformed Europe's remaining uncertainty about Soviet intentions into anger and fear. Gorbachev, the proponent of *glasnost*, or openness, stonewalled information on the catastrophe, much to the aversion of the West.¹³⁴ He badly needed success at Reykjavik to restore his image.

To that end, Gorbachev tried to exploit the Reagan Administration's decision to scrap US adherence to SALT II in May of 1986. Hying the propaganda war, the Soviets announced on 1 June that they would not consider themselves bound by any provision of the treaty once the US exceeded the weapons ceiling limits.¹³⁵ By calling for an elimination of all nuclear weapons, Gorbachev was not just trying to win the propaganda war. Elimination of all nuclear weapons by the superpowers would give the Soviet Union these advantages:

1. The Soviets had overwhelming superiority in conventional forces, which would change the balance of power in Europe
2. Without nuclear weapons, the US would have no valid reason to develop its SDI and would leave the Soviets free to develop its own clandestine space weapons program
3. It could answer the US proposal to eliminate all ballistic missiles and would help restore the image of the Soviet Union¹³⁶

Defeat of SDI was the overarching concern for the Soviets; hence they began trying to link all US actions, such as departure from SALT II, with a concession on SDI. Having failed at Geneva, Gorbachev tried several different approaches in order to derail the program up to and including the summit of Reykjavik.

Based upon their own SDI research, the Soviets knew that at some point the US would have to abrogate the 1972 ABM Treaty in order to achieve a credible research program. If they could keep the US strictly tied to the

treaty, then SDI would eventually die a natural death. A debate was already in progress in the US as to whether or not SDI research was permitted under the provisions of the ABM Treaty. The treaty had traditionally been interpreted in America so as to forbid the development of antimissile systems, especially space-based systems, but would permit laboratory research.¹³⁷ This interpretation of the ABM Treaty came to be referred to as the “narrow interpretation.”

In order to resolve the debate in the US as well as counter the Soviet negotiating position, Secretary of State George Shultz tasked State’s legal adviser, Abraham Sofaer, to study the ABM Treaty text and interpret it from a precise legal perspective. What Sofaer discovered was that the text, as written in “Agreed Statement D,” permitted research, development, and testing of “other physical principles.” Because SDI was based on new ideas (“other physical principles”) not in place in 1972, the broader scope indicated in “Agreed Statement D” would therefore be applicable. This interpretation of the treaty came to be known as the “broad interpretation.”

During the 1972 ABM Treaty negotiations, the Soviets, ever mindful of ways to word treaties so that they could have a legalistic future advantage, purposely worded the ABM Treaty to give them options to develop a new ABM system. “Agreed Statement D” in the treaty was their means to do that. The broad interpretation was the original Soviet interpretation of the ABM Treaty. The American negotiators in 1972, knowing the ABM systems technology of the day, accepted the narrow interpretation position, and indeed it was this interpretation that was briefed to the Senate prior to the treaty ratification. Until SDI came along, the Soviets adhered to the broad and the US the narrow interpretation. When the two heads of state met at Reykjavik, these positions were reversed.¹³⁸

Interpretation of the ABM Treaty was a central issue of contention in talks between the US and the USSR and would remain so beyond the Reykjavik summit. In Reykjavik, the Soviets expectedly held firm to the narrow interpretation. They tried to get an agreement from the US as part of the START talks that the Americans would not withdraw from the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty for a period of first twenty, then fifteen, and finally ten years. This was of such importance to the Soviet position that they were prepared to offer these concessions in return:

1. They would accept fifty percent cuts in heavy ICBMs
2. They removed the demand that INF missiles be defined as strategic systems

3. They would drop the linkage position of British and French nuclear weapons with US INF systems
4. They would accept the “zero option” of SS-20 missiles in Europe; and would reduce SS-20 systems in Asia to one hundred¹³⁹

Having ascertained that the treaty text permitted the broader interpretation, the US aggressively pursued this position. They challenged the Soviet construction of the Krasnoyarsk radar site in clear violation of the ABM Treaty and insisted on its dismantling. At home, support for SDI was growing. The public reaction to Gorbachev’s proposals was “if Gorbachev is so concerned about SDI, then there must be something to it.”¹⁴⁰

President Reagan was so persuaded that the broad interpretation of ABM was the correct interpretation that he would make no concessions on SDI. Instead, he offered to conduct all testing in the presence of Soviet observers and stated that if tests showed that SDI worked, the US would be obligated to share SDI with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, an agreement could be negotiated on the elimination of all ballistic missiles prior to the deployment of SDI.

While this conversation between the heads of state was going on, Richard Perle and Ben Linhard were hard at work on a way to break the impasse. Their proposal would break the ten-year period of compliance with the ABM Treaty that Gorbachev had proposed into two parts. In the first five years, strategic nuclear arsenals would be reduced by half. Both sides would then abide by the treaty for another five years if all ballistic missiles were eliminated during that time. After ten years each side would be free to deploy a strategic defense system. Reagan thought the proposal was “imaginative.” Reagan’s only concern was the practicality of eliminating all ballistic missiles in ten years. Perle assured him that with the advent of “stealth” technology, the US would maintain an effective deterrent force in both bombers and cruise missiles.¹⁴¹

The debate between the heads of state became heated. Reagan stood his ground effectively in the face of fantastic Soviet offers. Reagan was serious and determined. So was Gorbachev. At one point during the debate over the term “strategic” versus “ballistic,” Reagan remarked, “It would be fine with me if we eliminated all nuclear weapons.” Gorbachev retorted, “We can do that. Let’s eliminate them. We can eliminate them.” This famous exchange was reported in the press, and many around the world thought it heralded the end of the Cold War. But Gorbachev added a caveat. He had made many concessions. He only wanted one in return: SDI. Without SDI

as an ongoing propellant, Soviet concessions could wither away over the ten-year non-withdrawal period from the ABM Treaty. The superpowers had reached virtual agreement on INF and had set out the guidelines for START. Reagan knew SDI was his “ace in the hole.” It was non-negotiable.¹⁴²

Such a leap to total nuclear disarmament was of course much too idealistic. Both the Soviet and US Joint Staffs would respond to the “no nukes” exchange with documentation explaining why neither superpower could totally eliminate nuclear weapons.¹⁴³ NATO, staring across the Iron Curtain at scores of Soviet divisions, breathed a collective sigh of relief. Roz Ridgeway commented, “A love affair with the status quo has started. A lot of people are starting to love the bomb.” Reagan had been bold at Reykjavik. The world was not yet ready for such boldness.¹⁴⁴

Although total elimination of nuclear weapons was not achieved, the Reykjavik summit was still a watershed event in the history of negotiations. In the START talks, both sides made extraordinary progress completing details on weapon ceilings, warhead sublimits, and counting rules agreements. Each side agreed to limits of 1600 delivery vehicles and 6000 warheads on all missile systems. The Soviets accepted a fifty-percent reduction in heavy ICBMs. The Soviets no longer insisted British and French INF systems be included as part of the INF discussions. The counting rules on bombers favored the US, and the discussions on SLCMs were postponed.¹⁴⁵

Reagan and Gorbachev had created a format for negotiations about space and defense involving a nonwithdrawal period from the ABM Treaty. It included talks on what could be done at the end of that period and discussion over research, development, and testing allowed under the ABM Treaty. Reykjavik would come to be seen as the definition of the term “summit.” The INF Treaty was virtually complete. Gorbachev had linked its completion to US concessions on SDI, something Reagan refused to accept. That issue awaited resolution in Geneva before the INF Treaty would be signed by both of these leaders at the next summit meeting in Washington.¹⁴⁶

Washington

In the year between the Reykjavik and Washington summits, both heads of state had strong motivation to conclude an arms control agreement by 1987. Gorbachev recognized that if he did not give the whole disarmament process a new lease on life, the Soviets might miss an opportunity to make any headway against SDI. With the 1988 presidential elections

approaching, Reagan's presidency might be unable to conclude any agreements unless the Soviets acted soon.¹⁴⁷ Ambassador Dobrynin told Secretary of State Shultz that the Soviet goal was to sign INF before the end of 1987.¹⁴⁸ Reagan of course, wanted a treaty as a means to solidify his successes vis-à-vis the Soviets, but he was unwilling to back away from the formula that was successfully moving them toward the US position.

In February 1987 Gorbachev took the bold step of unlinking the INF Treaty from SDI and the ABM Treaty. Gorbachev hoped this move would give "positive impetus" to a full range of arms control negotiations. More importantly, the Soviets were concerned that a new US administration might not pursue Reagan's "zero option" proposal, and they would lose the opportunity to get rid of the US Pershing II missiles in Germany. Reagan quickly took up the Soviet offer, insisting that any INF agreement "must be effectively verifiable" as a hedge against Soviet cheating.¹⁴⁹

Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze began a series of meetings to iron out some of the remaining issues on INF. The Soviets had traditionally resisted any attempts at intrusive verification procedures to determine treaty compliance. Now however, Gorbachev changed tactics to try and force US negotiators to contemplate the consequences of the verification policies they had routinely advanced. The Soviets announced that upon completion of INF they would dismantle their short-range SS-12 and SS-23 missiles, counterparts of the West German Pershing I-A missile, putting the ball into the American court. The Soviets also seemed interested in intrusive verification measures. The intrusive verification plan discussed in Moscow in April 1987 would have placed US and Soviet inspectors in each other's factories to count missiles as they came off the production line. Faced with this prospect, the CIA and National Security Agency objected. The US intelligence agencies made it clear to the White House that the Soviets might gather some very valuable technical information from this arrangement.¹⁵⁰ On the issue of verification, the Soviet and US Joint Staffs had much more in common than they had separating them in the talks. Both militaries resisted the idea of having their opponents enter and inspect sensitive security areas. On several occasions, neither staff supported a position agreed to by the negotiators and were relieved when their counterparts rejected it.¹⁵¹

In this case, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of West Germany came to the aid of his American ally, when in August he announced that the Germans would dismantle their Pershing I-A missiles in response to the Soviet move. The Joint Staff and intelligence community alike welcomed this agreement, which came to be known as "double global zero," as factory inspectors would no longer be needed because there would be no new missiles to

count. US negotiators at Geneva now presented a revised verification proposal doing away with factory inspection. Soviet acceptance of the “double global zero” formula led to swift resolution of the remaining issues.¹⁵²

Still, Shultz had the impression after meeting with Gorbachev that “this boxer has been hit.” Gorbachev had been severely criticized in a Central Committee session that had taken place just before Shultz arrived in Moscow. Boris Yeltsin had confronted Gorbachev that reforms were not proceeding quickly enough, and hard-line Communist Ygor Ligachev attacked Gorbachev from the right, claiming reforms were proceeding too quickly. This political infighting, combined with the strains on the Soviet economy, were beginning to take their toll on the once self-sure General Secretary.¹⁵³

In June, President Reagan toured Europe. The highlight of the visit was a stop in West Berlin, where Reagan gave one of his most celebrated presidential speeches. With the Brandenburg Gate as a backdrop, Reagan challenged Gorbachev to “tear down this wall.” His words resonated throughout the world. On 30 October, Shevardnadze arrived in Washington for another meeting with Shultz and announced that Gorbachev would come to Washington for a summit. The Soviets were ready to sign the INF Treaty.¹⁵⁴

At the Washington summit, ceremony and substance were woven together. The main event was the signing of the INF Treaty. The two leaders signed the treaty in the East Room of the White House. Significantly, the Soviets had changed from their immovable position to accepting Reagan’s “zero option” of eliminating the entire class of intermediate-range ballistic missiles. The Soviets would eliminate approximately 1500 deployed warheads, and the US about 350. The treaty also included the most comprehensive verification measures ever agreed to up to that time. Those measures included enhanced national technical means as well as pioneering on-site inspection provisions, such as baseline data inspections, inspections of closed facilities, and short-notice inspections of declared sites. The teams would also observe the elimination of missile systems.¹⁵⁵ Gorbachev saw the INF Treaty as a step out of Cold War and a precursor to success with START.¹⁵⁶

Yet as Reagan declared at the signing ceremony, the real importance of the INF treaty transcended numbers. While only eliminating about four percent of the superpowers’ nuclear arsenals, it was the first superpower treaty of any kind to provide for the destruction of an entire class of nuclear weapons and to provide for on-site monitoring of that destruction. Over a

three-year period, 859 US and 1,836 Soviet nuclear missiles would be eliminated.¹⁵⁷

Although the capstone event of the Washington summit was the signing of the INF Treaty, in the trenches work continued on strategic arms limitations. Eduard Shevardnadze told Shultz; “The INF negotiations are a kind of academy, preparing the two sides for more difficult verification problems in START.”¹⁵⁸ Agreements were reached on guidelines for effective verification of the START Treaty by building upon verification provisions of the INF Treaty. However, each side disagreed on the issue of weapons sublimits. The original numbers from Reykjavik of 1,600 delivery vehicles and 6000 warheads were still accepted, but neither side could agree on the sublimit of the total number of ballistic missile warheads.

In the final meeting of the summit, the new Secretary of Defense, Frank Carlucci, and new National Security Advisor, General Colin Powell, joined Secretary of State Shultz in talks with the Soviets. Marshal Akhromeyev greatly appreciated seeing fellow military men, especially another general, in the talks. For the Soviets too, having the US military represented seemed to indicate a new level of seriousness in the discussions. At one point Carlucci, seeing an opportunity to make progress with the Soviets, whispered to Shultz to suggest 4,900 warheads as the sublimit on ballistic missile warheads. Shultz, who knew Marshal Akhromeyev well by now, recommended to Carlucci “You do it as secretary of defense and look right at Marshal Akhromeyev when you speak.” Akhromeyev quickly agreed to this proposal. The importance of having the right people make proposals in negotiations is often as essential as the proposals themselves.¹⁵⁹

Progress had now been made on START with the agreements on weapons ceilings, warhead sublimits, and guidelines for verification. Disagreement still remained on ABM issues. Both sides concluded the Washington summit by “agreeing to disagree” over ABM. They agreed to observe the ABM Treaty “as signed in 1972.” The Soviets interpreted this agreement as giving them the freedom to develop their own SDI program while restricting the US to the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty. The US, however, would stand firm on its understanding of the broad interpretation.¹⁶⁰ Both sides also agreed to meet in Moscow in 1988.

Judged in political terms, the Washington summit was, as Reagan called it, a “clear success.” Progress had been made on START, the INF Treaty had been signed, and slight movement had been made on ABM issues. But while the summit was hailed as a step toward peace by the world in general and the populations of the US and Soviet Union in particular, many conservatives were concerned that the INF treaty would lead to an imbalance in the East-West balance of power. Many European

conservatives were concerned that the US was distancing itself from Europe.¹⁶¹ Reagan and Shultz tried to reassure allies that with over 4000 tactical nuclear weapons remaining in Europe, US commitments there were still strong and the balance of power still favored NATO.¹⁶² Nonetheless, ratification of the INF Treaty would be a tough battle for the Reagan Administration before its final summit in Moscow.

Moscow

By the spring of 1988, global expectations toward arms control and peace were still climbing. The continuation of executive-level dialogues between the superpowers was certainly encouraging. Global tensions seemed to be easing. There was a sense that the Cold War itself might be coming to an end. The Soviets had moved towards the American position in arms control negotiations.

There were still differences remaining between the superpowers, and it became evident before the Moscow summit that there would be no START treaty for Reagan and Gorbachev to sign. Although Paul Nitze and his Soviet counterparts at Geneva had both put forward a number of innovative proposals, the underlying gap over SDI was too great a chasm to bridge. Reagan realized this early in 1988. He would not use SDI as “a bargaining chip.” He saw the summit in Moscow—the heart of Soviet soil—as a golden opportunity to make a case for democracy and freedom. Although restrained on human rights issues at Geneva, Reagan had marched steadily forward on this issue at each subsequent summit meeting. Therefore, Reagan gave the Soviets advance notice that he intended to make human rights issues the focus of the Moscow summit.¹⁶³

In the same way General Secretary Gorbachev did not expect to sign a strategic arms reduction agreement at the summit meeting. After his April meeting with Secretary Shultz, he was hopeful that the US Senate would ratify the INF Treaty “in compensation” before Reagan’s arrival in the USSR. Gorbachev knew that Reagan’s term was ending and that Moscow would have to deal with a new administration.

In January 1988, the Soviets had tabled a new draft Defense and Space agreement as a protocol to the draft START text. The Soviets mainly wanted some accord on space weapons that would have the legal impact as the START or ABM treaties. This protocol declared that the agreements would “cease to be in force if either party proceeded with practical development and deployment of an ABM system beyond the provisions of the ABM Treaty.” At the Moscow summit, Gorbachev reiterated this

condition, insisting that a START agreement could not be concluded unless the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty was upheld.¹⁶⁴

Despite the low expectations, Gorbachev did expect agreement on a Ballistic Missile Launch Notification (BMLN) accord. Progress had also been made on the conventional forces discussions in Vienna and the Soviets were hoping to continue moving forward in Moscow. The Soviets wanted to again address the issue of SLCMs, but realistically anticipated that most of the work would be done with the new administration.

Although US expectations of the summit were also guarded, the American delegation similarly hoped to make some progress on arms control in Moscow. The delegation expected to sign the BMLN accord and reach agreement on road/rail-mobile ICBMs. Although the talks in Vienna were seen as promising, the Americans were convinced that the Soviets were only willing to continue discussing further cuts as another avenue to stall or derail SDI. The US delegation saw any linkage to SDI as a dangerous hook that should be avoided.

The Moscow summit concluded with the signing of two modest arms control agreements. Each side agreed that mobile ICBMs would be confined to restricted areas with right of dispersal for occasional operations and exercises. They also agreed to notify one another once dispersal began. They also agreed on the BMLN accord, designed to reduce the risk of nuclear war. This agreement required each side to notify the other at least twenty-four hours in advance of all ICBM and SLBM test launches.¹⁶⁵ Neither side pretended that these accords were important.

The Moscow summit symbolized that the superpowers were at last rising from the grips of the Cold War. Speaking at Guildhall in London on 3 June, Reagan hailed it as a turning point in East-West relations that was ushering in “an era of peace and freedom for all.”¹⁶⁶ While both sides still maintained formidable nuclear arsenals, they had turned the corner in superpower relations. Reagan had restored American might and credibility and laid a firm foundation in the arena of arms control for the Bush Administration to build upon. The world had changed considerably from the dark shadows of the early 1980s.

CONCLUSIONS

As President Reagan left office, US-Soviet relations were better than they had been since World War II. This change is all the more remarkable when one contrasts these results with the situation Reagan faced when he took office. The 1970s had been a dismal period for America that had seen defeat in Vietnam and a foreign policy marked by uncertainty and

confusion. Soviet policy was at its zenith during the period, achieving a perceived strategic weapons superiority and an “irreversible” geopolitical advantage through the Brezhnev Doctrine.

By answering the Soviets with the Four-Part Agenda, Reagan laid out a plan to move beyond containment and reverse the “window of vulnerability” that resulted from the policies of the 1970s. His strategic modernization program rejuvenated US strategic capabilities so that the US could confront the Soviet Union from a renewed position of strength. By insisting that NATO adhere to the INF deployment schedule, Reagan helped to solidify the resolve of the Alliance and restored US negotiating capital. For the Soviets, his Strategic Defense Initiative spearheaded the information/technology revolution they feared, and confronted them with a costly arms race at a time when the Soviet economy needed huge capital investments at home. SDI kept the Soviets at the table, willing to make concessions.

Reagan’s priorities and policies did more than simply “bankrupt” the Soviet Union. Fundamentally, they rebuilt American power and created incentives for the Soviets to negotiate on US terms. US strategy dictated that the focal point of arms control policy was to insure US security. Within that context, American arms control negotiators were free to use arms control to complement and not substitute for US strategy. In this way, US arms control policy under Reagan was focused on the three objectives of arms control—preventing war, limiting damages if war occurs, and lowering costs of preparing for war.

By reducing destabilizing systems like ICBMs, which the Soviets had so heavily invested in, the American delegation sought to restore stability and prevent war. Indeed it can be argued that by achieving arms reductions, such as in START and the INF Treaty, Reagan sought to both prevent war and lower the costs of preparing for war. As Reagan envisioned his SDI program, war would be prevented by changing the paradigm from offense to defense.¹⁶⁷ As the limited capabilities of SDI technologies became better known, SDI came to be seen as a means to limit the damages to the US if nuclear war were to occur. By emphasizing precise treaty language and intrusive verification procedures, Reagan had re-written the traditional approach to arms control and gave his successor a solid foundation upon which to complete the START accords.

Many believe that the Cold War ended with the Reagan Administration. But in 1988, the Berlin Wall still divided Europe. The Soviet’s Eastern European block would not collapse until 1989. The disintegration of communism in the USSR would not occur until 1990. It would be left to the

Bush Administration to complete the START Treaty and proclaim “a new world order.”

The Reagan Administration’s approach to arms control was in a sense a litmus test for determining the true value of arms control in relation to first strike stability. Despite the Soviet Union’s best efforts to preserve first strike counterforce dominance, Reagan’s negotiating team stayed focused on his major foreign policy theme of denying the Soviets a first strike capability. The American delegation reflected Reagan’s optimism and confidence that a strong America and her people would ultimately triumph over a corrupt and evil empire. Reagan’s firm belief in negotiating from a position of strength and his refusal to compromise SDI undermined Soviet strategy. Although Reagan may not have ended the Cold War, when he left office the end was in sight.

NOTES

¹ Kiron Skinner, Annelise Anderson, Martin Anderson, *Reagan: In His Own Hand*, (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 64 and 484.

² Hedrick Smith, *The New Russians*, (New York: Random House, 1990), 22-23.

³ John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*, (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1992), 215 and 266.

⁴ John L. Gaddis, *Strategy of Containment*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 320-322. Cited in Spanier, *American Foreign Policy*, 272.

⁵ Skinner, *Reagan*, 83-84.

⁶ Kerry M. Kartchner, *Negotiating START: Strategic Arms Reduction Talks and the Quest for Strategic Stability*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 24, and 65-66. The Soviets maintained that the SS-25 was an improvement of the existing, silo-based, SS-13. However, the SS-25 was not only mobile, but also was larger, carried twice the throw weight, and was more sophisticated. Dr. Kartchner’s work is an excellent source on the START negotiations. My thanks to Dr. Kartchner for his help and insights on this project.

⁷ Caspar W. Weinberger *et al*, *Soviet Military Power, 1985*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1985), Preface and 46.

⁸ Richard Perle, *Congressional Record: Hearings Before the Strategic Defense Initiative Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, 100th Congress*, 4 October 1988, 474.

⁹ Skinner, *Reagan*, 81-82.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹¹ Lt Gen Brent Scowcroft (USAF, retired), telephone interview with the author, 2 July 2001. My grateful thanks to General Scowcroft for his wisdom and insights.

¹² Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 56-57.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴ Caspar W. Weinberger *et al*, *Soviet Military Power, 1986*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1985), 51. The Soviets were also working on Anti-

Satellite (ASAT) technologies and would oppose the US pursuing such a counter program).

¹⁵ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 8-9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 56-57.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-12. Also see *The Military Implications of the Proposed SALT II Treaty*, Report of the Senate Armed Services Committee, 20 December 1979.

¹⁸ Forrest Waller, interview with the author, 15 May 2001.

¹⁹ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 12.

²⁰ George Shultz, telephone interview with the author, 13 June 2001. My sincere thanks to Secretary Shultz for his invaluable assistance and insight.

²¹ US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency report; *The Soviet Propaganda Campaign Against NATO*, October 1983; and *The Soviet Propaganda Campaign Against the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative*, August 1986. Cited in Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 79.

²² Edward M. Kennedy and Mark O. Hatfield, *Freeze! How You Can Help Prevent Nuclear War*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 79. The Kennedy-Hatfield resolution called for an immediate freeze of nuclear weapons, with the goal of an eventual build-down to arrest the arms race. The Jackson-Warner resolution, although similarly calling for a freeze, allowed the US to catch up to the USSR before the freeze would go into effect.

²³ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 63-64.

²⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 586-587.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 23 and 24.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 266.

²⁸ Spanier, *American Foreign Policy*, 278.

²⁹ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 373.

³⁰ Kennedy, *Freeze!*, 144.

³¹ Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security" ("Star Wars") speech, 23 March 1983.

³² Reagan used this text for a radio broadcast entitled "Peace" in April, 1975, citing Laurence W. Beilenson, *Treaty Trap: A History of the Performance of Political Treaties by the United States and European Nations*, (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1969), cited in Skinner, *Reagan*, 8.

³³ William Snyder and James Brown, editors, *Defense Policy in the Reagan Administration*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1988), xvi-xvii.

³⁴ Blair, *The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War*, 6.

³⁵ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks to Members of the National Press Club on Arms Reduction and Nuclear Weapons" speech, 18 November 1981.

³⁶ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 20.

³⁷ Donald Bruce Johnson, comp., *National Party Platforms of 1980*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 211-212. Cited in Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 20.

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- ³⁸ Kennedy, *Freeze!*, 146.
- ³⁹ Shultz, telephone interview with the author.
- ⁴⁰ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 20.
- ⁴¹ Skinner, *Reagan*, 484.
- ⁴² Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 20-21.
- ⁴³ Blair, *The Logic of Accidental Nuclear War*, 6-7.
- ⁴⁴ Perle, *Congressional Record*, 473-474.
- ⁴⁵ Reagan, radio broadcast on SALT II, 28 November 1978, cited in Skinner, *Reagan*, 85.
- ⁴⁶ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 32.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.
- ⁴⁸ Waller, interview with the author.
- ⁴⁹ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 3-4.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 36-37.
- ⁵¹ United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Security and Arms Control: The Search for a More Stable Peace*, (Washington, DC: June 1983), 13. Also cited in Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 37-38.
- ⁵² Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 37-38.
- ⁵³ Spanier, *American Foreign Policy*, 209. See also Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 38.
- ⁵⁴ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 38.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 39.
- ⁵⁶ Waller, interview with the author.
- ⁵⁷ ACDA, *Arms Control: U.S. Objectives, Negotiating Efforts, Problems of Soviet Noncompliance*, 1984.
- ⁵⁸ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 40.
- ⁵⁹ Weinberger, *Soviet Military Power, 1985*, preface and 46. See also "The Soviet Space Challenge," DoD pamphlet, November 1987.
- ⁶⁰ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 41.
- ⁶¹ Reagan's Radio Broadcast, 13 March 1978, cited in Skinner, *Reagan*, 78.
- ⁶² Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 41-42.
- ⁶³ Waller, interview with the author.
- ⁶⁴ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 42-43. See also ACDA, *1986 Annual Report*, 49-50.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-44.
- ⁶⁷ Spanier, *American Foreign Policy*, 266-270.
- ⁶⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 478.
- ⁶⁹ Skinner, *Reagan*, 25.
- ⁷⁰ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, xiii-xiv.
- ⁷¹ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 504.
- ⁷² Shultz, telephone interview with the author.
- ⁷³ Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 306-307.

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- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 306.
- ⁷⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 479-480.
- ⁷⁶ George Will, "The Price of Power," *Newsweek*, 7 November 1983, cited in Shultz, *Turmoil*, 345.
- ⁷⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 479-480.
- ⁷⁸ Shultz, telephone interview with the author.
- ⁷⁹ Waller, interview with the author.
- ⁸⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 377.
- ⁸¹ Skinner, *Reagan*, 78.
- ⁸² Ronald Reagan, "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union" speech, 25 January 1983.
- ⁸³ Spanier, *American Foreign Policy*, 271.
- ⁸⁴ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 306-307.
- ⁸⁵ Shultz, Senate Confirmation Hearings, 13 July 1982, cited in Shultz, *Turmoil*, 18-22.
- ⁸⁶ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 479-480.
- ⁸⁷ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 309-310.
- ⁸⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 144 and 990. Also Waller, interview with the author.
- ⁸⁹ Caspar W. Weinberger, testimony before Senator Donald Riegle, Jr., 3 February 1983, cited in Caspar W. Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon*, (New York: Warner Books, 1990), 75-76.
- ⁹⁰ Christopher Simpson, *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations: The Declassified History of U.S. Political and Military Policy, 1981-1991*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 80.
- ⁹¹ Waller, interview with the author.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Ibid.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 377.
- ¹⁰⁰ Scowcroft, telephone interview.
- ⁹⁷ Shultz, telephone interview.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., also Scowcroft, telephone interview, and Waller, interview with the author.
- ⁹⁹ Waller, interview with the author.
- ¹⁰⁰ Perle, *Congressional Record*, 483.
- ¹⁰¹ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 167-171
- ¹⁰² Shultz, telephone interview.
- ¹⁰³ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 503.
- ¹⁰⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 504-505.
- ¹⁰⁵ Shultz, telephone interview.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 510-514. Matlock played much more of a key role in the Geneva summit than this. He was commissioned to prepare twenty-five papers for the President to get ready for the summit. These papers would explain the Soviet objectives, strategy, and negotiating tactics as well as Russian culture and history.

Matlock was ideally suited for this task. In addition to his knowledge of Russian culture, Matlock understood that Reagan learned by relating information to his own experiences. Thus he was able to engross the President in these materials. Cannon, *President Reagan*, 748-749.

¹⁰⁸ Waller, interview with the author.

¹⁰⁹ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 181, 404-405.

¹¹⁰ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 69.

¹¹¹ Spanier, *American Foreign Policy*, 290-291.

¹¹² Shultz, *Turmoil*, 365-366.

¹¹³ Ken Adelman, "ACDA Report to Congress," *Congressional Record*, 5 August 1986, 19186.

¹¹⁴ Simpson, *National Security Directives*, 469.

¹¹⁵ Fred Ikle, *Congressional Record*, 19174.

¹¹⁶ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 536 and 575.

¹¹⁷ Waller, interview with the author.

¹¹⁸ Adelman, *Congressional Record*, 19186.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 348.

¹²⁰ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 401-405.

¹²¹ Yuli Kvitsinsky had jostled with Paul Nitze during "the walk in the woods" negotiations early in the administration. Kampelman described Kvitsinsky as being "imaginative, a doer; he tries." Shultz, *Turmoil*, 583, 596, and 599-601.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 604-605.

¹²³ Skinner, *Reagan*, x-xi. Also cited in Shultz, *Turmoil*, 602-603.

¹²⁴ Federation of American Scientists website, Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) Chronology, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/start1/chron.htm>. Also cited in Shultz, *Turmoil*, 605-606.

¹²⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 605-606. Also see Cannon, *President Reagan*, 754-755.

¹²⁶ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 755.

¹²⁷ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 602.

¹²⁸ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 755.

¹²⁹ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 405.

¹³⁰ Weinberger, *Fighting For Peace*, 323.

¹³¹ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 753.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 719-720.

¹³³ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 414.

¹³⁴ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 756.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 758-759.

¹³⁶ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 704.

¹³⁷ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 759.

¹³⁸ There are several excellent, detailed explanations of the changing interpretations of the ABM Treaty. For detail of this impact during the Reagan administration, see Shultz, *Turmoil*, 578-80, 591-593, 883-884, and 876. Also cited in Cannon, *President Reagan*, 758-760, and Perle, *Congressional Record*, 464-470. To review the ABM Treaty text, see <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/abmt/text/abm2.htm>.

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- ¹³⁹ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 241-242. Also cited in Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 416-418. On this last concession, Shultz believed that Gorbachev was willing to eliminate all SS-20s, but was testing Reagan to see how the President would respond if he could not completely achieve a “zero option” on this issue. For more on this, see Shultz, *Turmoil*, 776.
- ¹⁴⁰ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 776.
- ¹⁴¹ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 767.
- ¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 762-777.
- ¹⁴³ Waller, interview with the author.
- ¹⁴⁴ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 777.
- ¹⁴⁵ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 241.
- ¹⁴⁶ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 776.
- ¹⁴⁷ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 771-772.
- ¹⁴⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 883.
- ¹⁴⁹ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 771-772.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 772-773.
- ¹⁵¹ Waller, interview with the author.
- ¹⁵² Cannon, *President Reagan*, 772-773.
- ¹⁵³ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 1001-1002.
- ¹⁵⁴ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 773-774.
- ¹⁵⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 1005. See also <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/inf/text/inf.htm>, for a summary of the INF Treaty text.
- ¹⁵⁶ Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, 442-443.
- ¹⁵⁷ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 774-775.
- ¹⁵⁸ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 1005.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1014.
- ¹⁶⁰ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 244-245.
- ¹⁶¹ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 778-779.
- ¹⁶² Shultz, *Turmoil*, 1082.
- ¹⁶³ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 782-783.
- ¹⁶⁴ Kartchner, *Negotiating START*, 245-246.
- ¹⁶⁵ Shultz, *Turmoil*, 1102. Also cited on FAS website, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/start1/chron.htm>.
- ¹⁶⁶ Cannon, *President Reagan*, 790.
- ¹⁶⁷ For an excellent discussion on the subject of nuclear weapons defense, see Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Future*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 44-66.