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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

National Security Planning Group Meeting  
December 5, 1984; 2:00-3:00 p.m., Situation Room

SUBJECT: US-Soviet Arms Control Objectives (S)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

The Vice President's Office

Admiral Daniel J. Murphy

OSD:

Deputy Secretary William Taft

CIA:

Director William J. Casey

U.S. Representative to the UN:

Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick

JCS:

ADM J. D. Watkins

ACDA:

Director Kenneth Adelman

Chairman, U.S. INF Delegation:

Ambassador Paul H. Nitze

Chairman, U.S. START Delegation:

Ambassador Edward Rowny

OMB:

Alton Keel

White House:

Mr. James Baker, III

Mr. Robert C. McFarlane

NSC:

Dr. Ronald F. Lehman, II

Minutes

Mr. McFarlane opened the meeting, indicating that our purpose is to discuss US and Soviet objectives for the arms control process that will begin in January in Geneva. The Senior Arms Control Group has prepared a paper on this subject. Mr. McFarlane indicated that it would be useful to summarize key points of that

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paper. He said that we should first come to understand our long-term objective. We are meeting with the Soviet Union in order to begin the process of reducing nuclear arms and also to begin the process of discussing how we can in the years ahead use strategic defense to make the world safer. He indicated that SDI is most likely to be successful in achieving greater stability if the United States and the Soviet Union conduct a dialogue which would continue through the transition to the use of strategic defenses. He cautioned, however, that during that process we must protect our SDI options and in particular avoid unilateral restraint and moratoria. He reminded everyone that SDI is not only important to our future, but it provides a hedge against a Soviet breakout of the ABM Treaty. He indicated that a major public affairs program on SDI is essential to explain to people that this is a prudent, sensible and moral program. He noted that one of the options before us is to look at smaller steps in the reductions of offensive arms but before we decide what specific approaches we should take, we should have a clear understanding of Soviet objectives. He noted that the Soviets will seek to put the onus on us in order to make the U.S. grant concessions. The Soviets will test us to determine whether or not we will agree to concrete limitations on space weapons and will try to draw out new proposals. They will attempt to protect existing Soviet advantages and superiority while preventing the U.S. from gaining advantages for its technologies. In particular, they will try to stop SDI R&D. Clearly, their top priority will be to seek limitations on SDI through a moratorium on ASAT. They will probably argue that we must agree to limitations on space systems first. They will attempt to avoid compliance issues in this forum and are unlikely to show great flexibility on offensive systems. ~~TS~~

Mr. McFarlane then turned to the overarching US interests in the Geneva talks. Our goal is to get a useful process going and to achieve formal negotiations on offensive systems while we discuss the relationship of defense to offense. We must protect and support our options to shift to greater reliance on defense, and we must seek equal and reduced levels of offensive arms, while protecting options for our modernization program. In summary, our objective is to enhance stability by altering the existing imbalance through our own programs and through arms control. Mr. McFarlane noted that we would deal with issues of format and specific issues of substance in subsequent meetings, including a review of our approaches to START, INF, umbrella talks, and space. ~~TS~~

Director Casey interjected that we should also review certain difficulties associated with verification. He stressed the importance of the discussion of offense and defense, and noted that either we must teach the Russians to like defense, or else we must prepare our publics very carefully. He noted that defense is the only alternative to getting stabilizing reductions. ~~TS~~

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Secretary Shultz indicated that he had come to this meeting more prepared to listen than to speak, but he thought he should raise some important questions. Is our agreement to discuss defense an agreement to negotiate on defense, and isn't it the case that the Soviet Union already likes defense because they have a large air defense network, and it is clear that defense of the homeland is dear to the Soviet Union. They are likely to say that they already know that defense is important. Mr. Shultz added, "I am the person who is going to do the talking, but I don't know what it is that I am supposed to say. We need to find some things that both sides are prepared to talk about." (S)

The President stated his belief that we and the Soviet Union may be coming together more than many people realize. He noted that we have never believed that we would find ourselves at war with Russia except to defend ourselves against attack. We have to look at defensive measures just the way the Soviet Union does; we have to look at civil defense and air defense and ABM. He noted the significance of the Moscow subway to civil defense. The President noted that everything they have says that they are looking at a first-strike because it is they, not we, who have built up both offensive and defensive systems. He noted that we could build on the Soviet preoccupation with protecting the homeland by making clear that we have no intention of starting a nuclear war, that it is our view that they may want to make war on us. We have no objections to their having defenses, but we have to look at defenses for ourselves and we need to look at reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons. He indicated that relative to the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, an initial reduction of 1,000 is meaningless. He noted that both sides have indicated that they would like to get rid of nuclear weapons entirely, but they are afraid of SDI. We must show them how defenses are not threatening. The President noted that the Soviet Union is ahead of us in ASAT capability and indicated that we should first talk about getting rid of these offensive arms like this F-15 ASAT. We must make it clear that we are not seeking advantage, only defense. (S)

Mr. McFarlane stated that stability is the theme that we must develop, and we must make clear that we are looking to defense to counter offensive systems and we must talk with the Soviet Union because it would be helpful to have an agreement on how we can proceed towards this goal on both sides. (S)

Secretary Shultz applauded the President's notion of setting our goal of zero nuclear weapons. He believes that it is important that the President said that, and we must move towards the basis for the elimination of nuclear weapons. He indicated that his instincts tell him that unconstrained offensive systems can overwhelm a defensive system and therefore without constraint on offense, there can be no successful SDI. (S)

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Mr. McFarlane noted that stability is a Western concept and it is imperative that we not forget that we need to deal with the Soviet effort to gain superiority. (S)

The President interjected that it would be silly if we go into these talks without being realistic. He noted the quotation which is attributed to Brezhnev in Prague, namely, that the Soviet Union has gained a great deal from detente and that therefore, in 1985, the Soviet Union should have its way around the world. The President doubted that they had in mind Pearl Harbor but rather expected that they believe that they would be so powerful that they could coerce us into achieving their objectives peacefully. (S)

Admiral Watkins indicated that we must work hard to prepare for strategic defenses. They are an important hedge against verification and compliance difficulties and they provide the basis for greater stability and reductions in arms controls. He indicated that it is the time now to articulate our approach to SDI, and to make a statement that makes clear the role SDI plays in achieving stability. We must make certain that SDI is not made analogous to ASAT. We need to have SDI well underway. There is a solid case for SDI, but we will always have problems in dealing with public opinion on space and ASAT. We must link research on SDI to making nuclear weapons obsolete. (S)

The President again interjected that it was important to link research on SDI to making nuclear weapons obsolete. He noted that we are behind in ASAT, which is the ability to knock down satellites, but we are willing to negotiate the end of ASATs because they are offensive weapons. SDI is a non-nuclear defensive system. The President wondered still whether or not we could give them the technology. (S)

Admiral Watkins cautioned that ASAT, Stealth technology and SDI are all inter-related; that we must move carefully. The 7-15 system is not the answer to the military's prayer, and the MV could be given up, from a military point of view, but it must be remembered that this is closely related to SDI. (S)

The President asked again if we couldn't distinguish between offensive and defensive systems, and perhaps limit ASAT as an offensive system. (S)

Mr. Meese interjected that the technology is the same; a treaty on ASAT testing could kill both ASAT and SDI. (S)

Director Casey noted that we must focus on the difficulties of definition and verification in space arms control. (S)

Secretary Shultz noted that we could try to limit testing to just those existing systems and to try to protect our research and development. (S)

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Admiral Watkins responded that an ASAT moratorium would inevitably create difficulties for SDI. (S)

Deputy Secretary Taft stressed the importance of our making the case for SDI and its role in maintaining the peace, and that we should do nothing in the negotiations which would prejudice the development of SDI. (S)

Director Adelman stated that the elimination of nuclear weapons should not be considered a near-term goal; rather, we should focus on the goal of reducing the number of nuclear weapons. However, an important question is, how ambitious should our arms control objectives be? How deep should the reductions we seek be, and how much verification should we require? On SDI he noted that Congress had cut our program by one-third, down to a level of spending below what had been planned even before the President's speech. Adelman stressed the need to mention the goal of reinforcing deterrence as we know it. (S)

The President noted that SDI gives us a great deal of leverage on the Soviet Union. (S)

Mr. McFarlane indicated that the Russians may bet that the United States cannot sell its SDI program. We need to get support for strategic defenses. (S)

The President responded that we could start by cancelling our subscriptions to the Washington Post. (S)

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