

Nuclear Arms Control and the NATO Alliance

June 21, 1984



United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Following is an address by Ambassador Edward L. Rowny, chief negotiator for the U.S. delegation to the strategic arms reduction talks, before the Royal United Services Institute, London, June 21, 1984.

More than 6 months have passed since the Soviets walked out of the INF [intermediate-range nuclear forces] talks in Geneva and refused to set a resumption date for START, the strategic arms reduction talks. These Soviet actions are as regrettable as they are unnecessary. They do, however, give us the opportunity to reflect upon the events of the past several years. Accordingly, let me review developments to date in START, discuss the impact which recent events have had on the NATO alliance, and, finally, give you my thoughts on where we should go from here.

Let me begin with a preview of these issues. The major thought I would like to leave with you is that throughout START the United States has negotiated seriously and flexibly. The Reagan Administration remains committed to the notion that the best way to increase strategic stability is through substantial reductions in nuclear arms. Next, we made a number of modifications to the original U.S. position in an effort to take account of reasonable Soviet concerns. Despite these efforts, a wide gulf continues to separate the U.S. and Soviet positions in START. Nevertheless, more progress was achieved in the course of the talks than is generally recognized.

When the Soviets return to the negotiating table, it should be possible to build on that progress. I am convinced that their own self-interest will eventually impel the Soviets to return to the table. When they do, the best way to build on the progress already made is through the concept of trade-offs between areas of U.S. and Soviet advantage, which President Reagan enunciated as his plan for achieving an agreement in the interest of both nations.

In walking out of the negotiations on intermediate-range forces, the Soviets are clearly testing Western resolve. The Western democracies have met that test. The best way to encourage the Soviets to return to the table is to continue current programs designed to ensure our common defense, while simultaneously reiterating our readiness to resume negotiations toward balanced and verifiable agreements. One-sided cuts in our defense programs or failure to uphold alliance commitments would only reward the Soviets for their intransigence and make a return to the negotiating table less likely.

Achieving a high degree of Western unity, however, has not been without its price. In recent months, voices have been heard on both sides of the Atlantic which challenge some of the fundamentals of NATO defense policy. Most Americans and Europeans recognize that the deployment of U.S. intermediate-range missiles in Europe and the modernization of U.S. strategic deterrent forces constitutes a necessary and measured response to the massive

and continuing buildup of Soviet forces threatening Western Europe and the United States. At the same time, an understandable concern about the consequences of a strategy which relies for its ultimate sanction on the possible use of nuclear weapons has led many to ask if there is not some better alternative.

We cannot ignore these questions. It is patently obvious that we cannot "disinvent" nuclear weapons. For the foreseeable future, they will remain a crucial element of the deterrent forces necessary to preserve our liberties. We need, however, to look for ways to assure deterrence through reduced reliance on weapons of mass destruction. We must reduce the risk that nuclear war would occur for, as President Reagan has said, "A nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought." Strategic arms control agreements which are soundly conceived and firmly supported by our democratic societies can improve the stability of the nuclear balance between the superpowers. Stability can also be enhanced by upgrading NATO's conventional forces in Europe. Raising the nuclear threshold in Europe, in concert with increased strategic nuclear stability, reduces Soviet incentives to stimulate or exploit crises and, therefore, reduces the risk of nuclear war.

Developments in START

Let me briefly discuss the developments to date in START. On May 9, 1982, President Reagan outlined the basic elements of the U.S. START proposal in a speech at Eureka College. The President sought to break the mold of past negotiations which concentrated on limiting strategic offensive arms at high levels. He sought to improve strategic stability through substantial reductions in the more destabilizing strategic offensive arms. Specifically, he proposed to reduce the number of ballistic missile warheads on each side to 5,000, approximately a one-third reduction from existing U.S. and Soviet levels. He also proposed to reduce deployed ballistic missiles to no more than 850. This amounted to a 50% reduction from the prevailing U.S. level of such missiles, a level that was already considerably lower than the Soviet level.

To achieve the basic objective of increased stability, President Reagan sought to focus reductions on the most threatening strategic weapons—ballistic missiles and, particularly, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). These are the most dangerous systems because large numbers of powerful and highly accurate warheads can be de-

ployed on them and because their fixed basing mode makes them vulnerable to attack. Our proposals also asked each nation to reduce its heavy bombers to lower equal levels.

The Soviets, for their part, proposed to limit the numbers of ballistic missiles and heavy bombers to a combined total of 1,800. It was encouraging that the Soviets joined us in departing from SALT II [strategic arms limitation talks] by proposing to limit not only launchers but their weapons. In most other respects, however, the Soviet proposal closely paralleled the SALT II Treaty.

Nevertheless, by the spring of 1983, it was clear that the U.S. and the Soviet positions were still far apart. After an exhaustive reevaluation, President Reagan decided to make a number of changes in the U.S. position. These modifications were undertaken to meet the major concerns the Soviets had expressed with our original proposal, specifically:

- We offered to raise the proposed limit of 850 deployed ballistic missiles.
- We offered to drop the constraints we had proposed on the number of heavy and medium-sized ICBMs. We also said we would no longer insist on strict equality in U.S. and Soviet throwweight, provided the agreement substantially reduced the current 3 to 1 Soviet advantage in this area.
- We offered to limit air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) from the outset of an agreement and proposed limitations on numbers of heavy bombers and ALCMs to levels well below those of SALT II.
- In making these modifications, we reaffirmed the importance of reductions to 5,000 ballistic missile warheads.

On July 7, 1983, the United States tabled a draft START treaty which reflected these changes. In response, the Soviets modified some of the more extreme elements of their initial position. They stated their willingness to limit ALCMs numerically instead of banning them and revised their one-sided proposals on U.S. sea-based systems, which would have banned the U.S. D-5 missiles and limited us to 4-6 Trident submarines.

As a result of these developments, when the fourth round of START ended last summer, we left Geneva with the expectation that we might be on the verge of a breakthrough. Both sides appeared to have begun the natural process of modifying their original in-going positions in order to come closer to a mutually acceptable accord.

Prospects for progress in START were further enhanced in October 1983 when President Reagan decided to incorporate the mutual guaranteed build-down into the U.S. START approach. Build-down, which is important not only in its own right but because it also has wide bipartisan backing in the U.S. Congress, is intended to encourage the modernization of strategic forces in a manner which leads toward stability. President Reagan also took the highly significant step of proposing that the United States and the Soviet Union explore the concept of trade-offs between areas of U.S. and Soviet advantage.

Unfortunately, when round V of START resumed in October 1983, the Soviets reacted negatively to the new U.S. proposals. They dismissed build-down and refused seriously to consider trade-offs. It was evident from the beginning of the round that the Soviets were concentrating their efforts on preventing U.S. deployments of missiles in Europe. Reflecting their displeasure that NATO had proceeded with INF deployments, the Soviets walked out of the INF talks and refused to agree to our proposal to resume START negotiations in February 1984.

As I mentioned earlier, considerable progress was made during the first year of the START negotiations, even though it was obviously less than we would have liked. For their part, the Soviets proposed lower limits on the numbers of missiles and bombers than they were willing to consider in SALT and acknowledged that, in any future agreement, it is not sufficient to limit only ballistic missile launchers. Some modest progress was also made on verification; the Soviets indicated a willingness to consider cooperative measures to supplement national technical means of verification.

Nevertheless, a wide gulf still separates the United States and the Soviet Union in several fundamental areas. The first major area of disagreement concerns the level of reductions. The United States has proposed the most substantial reductions since the beginning of U.S.-Soviet strategic arms negotiations. Even though the Soviets have proposed 25% reductions in the number of delivery vehicles, under their proposal the Soviets could actually deploy about 45% more missile warheads than they now have. Their proposal thus gives the appearance, but not the reality, of reducing offensive arms.

The second major area of disagreement concerns the treatment of heavy bombers and the nuclear weapons they carry. The United States proposed that

heavy bombers and ALCMs, while limited to new lower levels, be treated separately and not lumped together in a combined aggregate limit of all weapons. We made this proposal because heavy bombers and their weapons are less destabilizing than ballistic missiles. The Soviets, however, have proposed a combined ceiling on ballistic missile warheads and all bomber weapons, including ALCMs, shorter range air-launched missiles, and bombs. In effect, the Soviet proposal would equate the large, highly accurate, and fast-flying warheads carried on their SS-18 ICBM with the much smaller warheads on a slower flying cruise missile. This proposal is unacceptable because it fails to distinguish between ballistic missiles—whose large size, multiple warheads, great accuracy, and short time of flight give them the capability to be used in a first strike—and cruise missiles—whose slow speed of flight makes them clearly retaliatory weapons.

Moreover, the Soviet proposal completely ignores the fact that the retaliatory U.S. bomber force must be capable of penetrating massive Soviet air defenses which are unconstrained by any agreement. It is clear that the Soviets seek, through their proposal, a large superiority in the number of ballistic missile warheads.

We recognize that the kind of changes we seek in Soviet and U.S. strategic forces cannot be accomplished quickly. Nor do we seek mirror image force structures with the U.S.S.R. We do, however, insist that any agreement substantially reduce the number of ballistic missile warheads and redress a serious disparity in missile throw-weight.

Fundamentally, the disagreement over these issues revolves around the question of whether a future agreement will allow the Soviets to maintain their 3 to 1 advantage in ballistic missile capability of strategic weapons. The best measurement of such capability is throw-weight, which constitutes the total weight of warheads a missile is capable of delivering to a target together with its associated targeting devices. Past agreements allowed the Soviets a superiority in ballistic missile throw-weight on grounds that their technology lagged behind ours. Whatever the merits of that argument then, it has no validity now, since the Soviets have caught up and even surpassed us in many areas of missile technology. The Soviet advantage in throw-weight has allowed them to deploy over 6,000 large and highly accurate warheads on their ICBMs. This gives the Soviets a massive and highly destabilizing advantage in their ability to

attack "hardened targets" quickly. Such hardened targets include missile silos, command posts and the like. This means that the Soviet Union has the only genuine first-strike force in the world today, a situation which will not change when we deploy the MX, since the number we plan to deploy would be objectively insufficient for a first strike on the Soviet Union. The United States, of course, has never had and never will have any intention of using its strategic nuclear weapons in a first strike. Consequently, we must effectively refuse Soviet claims that the MX will even give us the potential of doing so.

The INF Connection

Another major area of disagreement between the United States and the U.S.S.R. concerns the relationship between limits on strategic and intermediate-range systems. The Soviets attempted to link the START and INF negotiations by conditioning the reductions they proposed in START to no deployments of Pershing II intermediate-range ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs). The Soviets claimed that U.S. systems deployed in Europe—which they call "forward-based systems"—have strategic significance because they can strike the U.S.S.R. We pointed out that these U.S. systems did not meet the previously agreed criteria for intercontinental weapons. In SALT II, an ICBM, for example, was defined as a land-based ballistic missile of over 5,500-kilometer range. Moreover, the United States and the Soviet Union were negotiating on Pershing IIs and GLCMs—along with equivalent Soviet missiles—in the INF talks. Absent an INF agreement, however, NATO was determined to deploy U.S. missiles to counter the threat presented by the much larger numbers of Soviet intermediate-range nuclear missiles, a threat which continues to grow as the Soviets deploy even more SS-20s.

At the heart of this Soviet position is a concept they call "equality and equal security." At first glance, this seems to be an unexceptional, if vague, formula. However, as the Soviets envision it, "equality and equal security" appears to be nothing less than an insistence of a Soviet "right" to possess nuclear forces equal to those of all other nuclear powers combined. In other words, it is a prescription for Soviet global hegemony.

I do not want to get into a detailed discussion of the INF negotiations. Let me simply point out that in INF, as in START, the United States negotiated seriously and flexibly, making every effort to take account of legitimate Soviet

concerns. Unfortunately, all our efforts foundered on the inflexible Soviet insistence on retaining a monopoly of longer range INF missiles. In essence, the Soviet position in INF was aimed at undermining NATO's ability to defend itself.

Faced with Soviet unwillingness to consider a balanced INF agreement, NATO had no choice but to proceed with deploying Pershing IIs and GLCMs. We stressed, however, our willingness to continue the negotiations even after deployments began and to remove these missiles if a balanced agreement could be achieved. We also pointed out that, since the initiation of the INF negotiations, the U.S.S.R. had deployed about 100 SS-20s—with some 300 warheads—in addition to the 270 SS-20s already in place when the talks began.

Impact on the NATO Alliance

The Soviets are clearly testing Western resolve. Their hope is that the absence of negotiations will impel the West to make one-sided concessions to draw the Soviets back to the negotiating table. So far, I am happy to state, this Soviet gambit has failed.

Let me stress my strong support for the NATO alliance. I have been involved in NATO affairs for almost 30 years. As special assistant in the mid-1950s to Gen. Lemnitzer, who was then the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, I witnessed the wrenching debate the alliance went through in its initial efforts to devise a common military strategy. The alliance emerged from that debate all the stronger. The nations of the alliance share a common political, economic, and cultural heritage which links our destinies closely together. The ability of free people in Western Europe and the United States to question the policies of their elected governments constitutes the bedrock of our common heritage and represents one of our greatest assets. The alliance could not have survived this long if it could not change in response to changing circumstances. The democratic process followed in NATO represents the best way to allow new ideas to be developed, debated, and, if found desirable, carried out in practice.

If this process is to work, however, it demands an honest examination of our current circumstances, including a willingness to face unpleasant facts. We cannot allow our satisfaction with 35 years of joint effort in successfully deterring aggression to blind us to the new political and military realities NATO faces.

First, the Soviet threat continues to grow. In recent years the Soviets have made major efforts to reduce the qualitative edge in weaponry on which NATO has traditionally relied to offset massive Soviet quantitative advantages. In addition, the growing global reach of Soviet military power has given Moscow the capability to threaten vital alliance interests in areas outside Western Europe, such as the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

Second, NATO's military strategy is being questioned. For the past two decades, NATO policy for deterring attack on Western Europe has rested on its strategy of flexible response. This policy is now being challenged by some who believe that the costs of using nuclear weapons—if it would ever come to that—would be out of all proportion to any conceivable benefit.

The overwhelming majority of Europeans and Americans support a strong NATO. Some Europeans, however, assert that within the alliance framework, European interests would best be served by steering a middle course between the two superpowers. At the same time, some Americans urge the United States to place less emphasis on its Atlantic ties and to direct more attention elsewhere. The former position hints of a return to pre-World War II appeasement; the latter of pre-World War II isolationism. Both are wrong.

The existence of differences between the United States and its European allies is neither new nor particularly surprising. NATO is an alliance of sovereign nations. It is not, after all, the Warsaw Pact. Moreover, in the broad sweep of historical perspective, the existence of an alliance of sovereign nations for over 35 years may well be unprecedented.

Within a number of European nations, the events surrounding deployment of NATO INF missiles stimulated a broader debate on questions of nuclear strategy. In reality, the debate among Europeans over the missiles highlights the importance of this issue to the defense of Europe. By enhancing the credibility of nuclear deterrent, the INF deployment is designed to protect the values of liberty, democracy, and humanity which all Europeans would agree mark the difference between Western Europe and its totalitarian adversary to the East; values which Western Europe has done so much to create and to spread throughout the world.

The political challenge facing the alliance is compounded by changes in European perception of the United

States, due in part to the fact that the leaders who were present at the creation of NATO are passing from the scene. They personally experienced the liberation of Europe at the end of the Second World War and helped plan U.S. assistance to Europe in the early postwar years. The place of the older generation in positions of influence in Western Europe is being taken by what is often called the "successor generation." This later generation entered into active political life during the 1960s; their initial perceptions of the United States were often formed during the difficult years of Vietnam and Watergate.

In the years ahead, we will need to devote more energies to ensuring that our common political heritage and mutual goals are better understood and more solidly supported. This will require more effort on both sides of the Atlantic to understanding the different perspectives which Europeans and Americans bring to the alliance. To take one example drawn from my experience as START negotiator, the alliance has developed a pattern of close and regular briefings and consultations, a process that has been very effective in ensuring that European concerns are factored into our bilateral negotiations.

As we chart the course of the alliance over the coming years, I believe we must keep in mind several basic propositions.

First, the democratic traditions and national independence of the Western community are worth defending. We can take comfort in the fact that there is little disagreement on this point.

Second, the defense of our liberties will require sacrifices. These sacrifices must be borne equally by all members of the community. As President Reagan said recently, the defense of Western Europe is vital to U.S. security, and the United States will continue to do its part in our common defense. At the same time, the United States cannot be expected to attach greater importance to the security of Europe than Europeans do themselves. The nations of Western Europe can, and should, do more to defend themselves.

Third, it is imperative for the alliance to devote more attention to improving its conventional defense capability. The desirability of reducing our reliance on nuclear weapons is one lesson we can learn from the anti-nuclear protestors who filled the streets of Europe last autumn. But if NATO is ever to reduce its dependence on nuclear

weapons, it must have a better capability to deter a Soviet attack on Western Europe through conventional means.

If we fail to improve the serious imbalance between NATO's conventional defensive capability and the conventional capability of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union may be tempted to commit aggression with its conventional forces or to increase its efforts to intimidate the nations of Western Europe. Thus, upgrading NATO's conventional forces is not only urgent, but it is compatible with our arms control proposals.

Fortunately, we are now presented with a window of opportunity for enhancing the alliance's conventional capability by the introduction of new technology. These improvements could enhance the alliance's ability to deter Soviet conventional attack and, by raising the nuclear threshold, would reduce the possibility of a devastating nuclear war.

Without going into detail, let me refer you to the recent "European Security Study" report on strengthening conventional deterrence in Europe. This report highlighted five critical areas for improving defense and deterrence by NATO. These areas are:

- Countering an initial Warsaw Pact attack;
- Eroding Soviet air power;
- Attacking Warsaw Pact follow-on forces;
- Disrupting Warsaw Pact command and control; and
- Improving NATO command and control.

We should welcome, therefore, the decision at the last meeting of NATO defense ministers to consider ways in which emerging technology could be applied. I urge the alliance to proceed in these areas as rapidly as possible. At the same time, we must avoid becoming the captive of past ways of thinking. Thus, developing the ability to successfully attack communications and logistics facilities deep in the enemy's rear would not, as is sometimes charged, represent a change in the defensive orientation of NATO. Rather, it would constitute a recognition that successful defense would be enhanced by an ability to disrupt the second echelon of the enemy offensive before it reaches the battlefield. We should avoid adopting a Maginot Line philosophy; that philosophy did not work in the 1940s, and it could not work in the 1980s or 1990s either. In any case, emerging technologies can be applied to the entire range of military tasks to counter the Soviet threat.

Increased use of advanced technology would allow the NATO alliance to exploit one of our greatest advantages over the Soviet bloc. In exploiting this advantage, however, we must be careful to avoid excessive reliance on "gadgets" and trap ourselves into the mistaken belief that these new weapons could allow us to defend with fewer soldiers. As an infantry officer with service in three wars, I am convinced that nothing will ever eliminate the need for sizable numbers of soldiers on the ground, with their unique capability to seize and hold terrain. However, if our soldiers are given proper recognition of their importance, their effectiveness can be improved with modern technology. They can be given more hope of successfully defending against an attack. In short, our soldiers in NATO are outnumbered and must be assured that they can make up for their smaller numbers with the better weapons which advanced technology of the West can provide.

In this connection, it is important that we give more than lip service to ensuring that all members of the alliance share in the arms procurement process for such advanced technology weapons. Too often our plans for technological improvements have foundered over our inability to resolve this thorny problem. Our current opportunity for improving NATO's conventional capabilities and thereby reducing the risk of nuclear war should not be missed because of our inability to cope with the problem of procurement sharing.

In strengthening NATO's conventional capability we must recognize that as long as nuclear weapons exist, they will be a factor in the defense of the alliance. This means that the United States will, for the foreseeable future, have an important role to play in the defense of Western Europe.

Only the United States has the capability to maintain sufficient nuclear forces to deter the Soviets across the entire range of theater and strategic threats. The fact that U.S. strategic forces will remain NATO's ultimate deterrent means that an American officer should remain at the head of NATO's military command. No doubt, there are many ways in which NATO's political and military structure can be improved to increase European participation. However, appointing a European to the post of SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe] is not one of the ways in which NATO's structure should be changed. It would be a grave mistake to do so.

Lessons Learned From Negotiating With the Soviets

Turning from START and alliance issues, let me discuss some of the lessons I have learned from 10 years of negotiating strategic arms control with the Soviets. The first lesson is that the wide differences in the historical and cultural experiences of the United States and the Soviet Union have a direct impact on our respective approaches to negotiations. Americans tend to be idealistic, activist, and pragmatic in our approach to problemsolving. We are often impatient. If one approach does not work, we try another.

Conditioned by their Russian heritage, however, the Soviets take a longer view. Although they can be flexible on tactics, their long-term objectives seldom vary. Above all, they are remarkably patient.

The Russian language has no native root for the word "compromise"; the word has been derived from other languages. To Soviet negotiators, compromise carries a distinctly pejorative connotation, one more associated with "weakness" or "capitulation" than with the Western connotation of "sensible" or "reasonable."

These differences in Soviet and American negotiating style have both positive and negative features. On the positive side, the American orientation toward problemsolving means that most of the breakthroughs in arms control negotiations have come about as a result of U.S. initiatives. On the other hand, our impatience has, on repeated occasions, allowed the Soviets to outlast us. A common Soviet tactic is to react, not initiate. As long as the United States keeps coming up with new proposals, the Soviets sit back patiently until one appears that they like.

It is particularly important that we remember this Soviet tactic now. In both START and INF, the United States has made a good faith effort to take account of Soviet concerns. We are prepared to continue to negotiate on that basis. But we cannot make unilateral concessions designed solely to lure the Soviets back to the negotiating table.

The second lesson is that even though our two nations differ in ideology, in historical experience, in moral values, and in negotiating style, we share one important common objective: a mutual desire to avoid nuclear war. We must, therefore, continue to negotiate with one another toward this common objective.

As long as the Soviet Union remains determined to expand its power and influence at the expense of legitimate Western interests, the United States and the Soviet Union will be rivals. Arms control will not end that rivalry which stems from the very nature of the Soviet system. Arms control can, however, make the rivalry less dangerous. It can add a measure of predictability to the U.S.-Soviet relationship and place some bounds on the competition.

A corollary to this second lesson is that arms control is an important element of our foreign policy and thus cannot be divorced from the general climate of U.S.-Soviet relations. Arms control cannot by itself turn around a climate of relations which Soviet actions have soured. Nor, in the final analysis, would it be realistic to expect the United States and the Soviet Union to be able to conclude far-reaching arms control agreements at a time when relations are at a low point. At such times, our first priority must be to repair the basic fabric of the relationship, to set the stage for further arms control.

A third lesson is that we must be realistic about the military benefits of strategic arms control. Balanced arms control agreements can improve stability. But arms control agreements can never, by themselves, substitute for the determination of free people to maintain the ability to deter Soviet aggression. Indeed, such determination is a vital prerequisite for any effective arms control agreement with the U.S.S.R. This is a central paradox of arms control negotiations, a paradox not well understood by many Western critics. If we are to negotiate arms control agreements with the U.S.S.R., we must not appear to be overly eager for an arms control agreement. We must be able to convince the Soviets not only that they will be better off with an agreement, but that they will be worse off without one. Put another way, if we want to be in a position to negotiate arms reductions with the Soviets, we first have to convince them that we have the will to match them in the absence of an agreement.

At the same time, we have to recognize that arms control agreements must be based on existing military realities. One of these realities is the difference in the structure of U.S. and Soviet strategic forces. An arms control agreement can be useful in closing off dangerous areas of competition and in encouraging trends which lead toward greater stability of the U.S.-Soviet military relationship. However, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that an arms

control agreement will free us from the responsibility of taking care of our own security. Moreover, arms control agreements by themselves will not necessarily result in major savings in defense spending. Both the United States and the Soviet Union maintain large, complex, and expensive strategic forces. They will undoubtedly continue to do so after any conceivable strategic arms control agreement.

An arms control agreement should improve the stability of the strategic balance in two important ways.

First, it should inhibit the deployment of large numbers of strategic offensive weapons capable of being used in a first strike.

Second, it should encourage the deployment of survivable and retaliatory systems.

Achieving an agreement which improves the stability of the strategic balance calls for the necessity of recognizing that not all reductions have an equally beneficial impact on strategic stability. The SALT II Treaty, painfully negotiated over a period of 7 years, would have required a reduction of about 300 Soviet strategic missiles or bombers. One of its most important shortcomings, however, was that it permitted a massive increase in the numbers of ballistic missile warheads. The Soviets were able to use their throw-weight advantage to deploy such massive numbers of large, highly accurate nuclear warheads that they are in a position to threaten the destruction of a large part of the U.S. ICBM force with only a small portion of their own strategic forces.

It is evident, therefore, that only an agreement which limits in a verifiable manner both the number and the destructive power of ballistic missile warheads can genuinely improve the stability of the strategic balance.

Stability, survivability, and modernization are interrelated, particularly in view of the different way the United States and the U.S.S.R. have chosen to structure their strategic forces. Historically, the Soviet Union has deployed the bulk of its strategic forces in land-based ICBMs. Nevertheless, the Soviets recognize that their ICBMs will become more vulnerable as the United States begins to redress its current asymmetries by deploying modern, more capable systems. The Soviets, therefore, are already planning to deploy a portion of their ICBMs in a mobile basing mode. The United States, even though it has a smaller portion of its total forces in

land-based systems, also recognizes the decreased vulnerability of moving to mobile land-based systems.

Mobile ICBMs demonstrate what may become an increasingly difficult problem for arms control in the coming years: their verifiability. Mobile ICBMs must be effectively verified. Otherwise they could be extremely destabilizing because the opposing side might have no real idea of the magnitude of the threat it faces.

Cruise missiles present a similar dilemma. Because of their long flight time, cruise missiles are inherently retaliatory weapons. Yet cruise missiles, because of their small size and because they can be deployed in a variety of basing modes, are difficult to verify.

The United States has a number of serious concerns about Soviet failure to comply with previous arms control agreements. We will continue to press these concerns with the Soviet Union through diplomatic channels and insist upon explanations, clarifications, and corrective actions. At the same time, the United States is continuing to carry out its own obligations and commitments under relevant agreements.

We should recognize, however, that ensuring compliance with arms control agreements remains a serious problem. Better verification and compliance provisions and better treaty drafting will help, and we are working toward this in ongoing negotiations. It is fundamentally important, however, that the Soviets take a constructive attitude toward compliance.

Future arms control agreements will, accordingly, require more effective verification measures than in past agreements. In particular, a START agreement will require cooperative verification measures, possibly including some form of onsite inspection, to supplement national technical means.

Conclusion

With the talks in limbo for over 6 months, the natural question is where do we go from here? Discussion of this question has to begin with a few basic facts.

First, it was the Soviet Union and not the United States which interrupted the negotiations. The United States is ready to resume the negotiations at any time without preconditions. We have repeatedly made this point to the Soviets, both in public and in private channels.

Second, the United States has good positions on the table in START and INF. We believe an agreement based on our proposals will serve the interest of both nations.

Third, any negotiation is a process of give-and-take. As I noted earlier, we have already modified our initial position to take account of several of the Soviets' major concerns. We have also told the Soviets that, in an effort to reach a mutually acceptable accord, we are ready to explore trade-offs between areas of U.S. and Soviet advantage. Specifically, the United States is prepared to limit its advantage in heavy bomber capabilities in return for equivalent Soviet limits on its advantage in ballistic missile capabilities. We have a number of concrete ideas in mind on how the concept of trade-offs might be applied in START, and we are ready to explore them with the Soviets in some detail once the Soviets decide to resume the negotiations.

But it takes two to negotiate, and, accordingly, the natural next question is what do the Soviets intend to do? As a longtime student of Soviet affairs, I recognize the pitfalls in attempting to predict Soviet actions.

One reason why the Soviets are not negotiating is the uncertain situation in the Soviet hierarchy. In the past year and a half, the Soviets have experienced two changes of leadership. In the not too distant future, they may face yet another leadership turnover.

Chernenko's accession to power represented a victory for the conservative old guard, the small group of men who have stood at the top of the Soviet Government since the Brezhnev era. They show little inclination to undertake the innovative or imaginative measures which would be required to resolve the serious internal problems facing the Soviet Union. In the economy, to take one example, Chernenko appears to be backpedaling from even the relatively modest innovations which Andropov sought to introduce. In the time-honored style of Soviet bureaucrats, Chernenko apparently seeks to resolve Soviet economic problems by tinkering with the administrative apparatus rather than by undertaking the far-reaching structural changes which most observers believe are required.

In foreign policy, likewise, the watchword of the Chernenko regime is continuity. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that this accent on continuity will prevent the Soviets from carrying out an effective foreign policy.

The Soviets recognize that they lost the first round of the INF contest. However, they are far from ready to admit that the game is over. Having failed to block initial deployments, the Soviets hope to force us to pay a high political price for proceeding with further scheduled deployments.

Through their adamant stand against any NATO INF deployments and by appearing to make the withdrawal of these missiles a precondition for the resumption of negotiations, the Soviets have, in effect, painted themselves into a corner. For the present, the Soviets seem disinclined to take any actions to get themselves out of this situation. It would be a mistake for us to make unilateral concessions simply to get the talks resumed. The West should, however, refrain from actions which could make it more difficult for the Soviets to extract themselves from their corner. But as the President has said: "The door is open and every once in a while we're standing in the doorway to see if anyone's coming up the steps."

The Soviets, for the time being, are continuing to use their deployments as well as ours as a basis for creating an atmosphere of crisis around East-West relations. They have blamed the United States for the breakdown of the negotiations and have claimed that NATO INF deployments make war more likely. In fact, the opposite is true. NATO INF deployments, by increasing its ability to deter Soviet attack, actually increase the prospects for lasting peace.

In calling for a rollback in NATO INF deployments, without any reduction in the threat that Soviet SS-20 missiles and other nuclear forces present to Europe, the Soviets are, in effect, denying any legitimacy to the security concerns of Western Europe. The Soviet objective is clear. They are attempting to decouple the United States from the defense of Europe and to pressure the Western alliance in an effort to extract one-sided concessions. At the same time, the Soviets are using the unwarranted argument that the NATO INF deployments are responsible for a change in the strategic situation between the United States and the U.S.S.R.

It is my belief that in these circumstances, NATO must do two things. First, it must continue to exhibit firmness in the face of Soviet pressure tactics. Second, it must seize the opportunity that new weapons technology makes possible to upgrade its conventional military capability in Europe.

We in the United States continue to modernize our strategic forces and will continue to hold out the prospects for negotiations.

I believe that eventually the Soviets will recognize that it is in their interest to return to the negotiating table. What is necessary is a political decision by the Soviets which recognizes that the time for posturing is over and the time for serious negotiations is long overdue. When the Soviets make that decision, they will find us ready. ■

Published by the United States Department of State · Bureau of Public Affairs
Office of Public Communication · Editorial Division · Washington, D.C. · June 1984
Editor: Colleen Sussman · This material is in the public domain and may be reproduced without permission; citation of this source is appreciated.