

Statement on the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

June 25, 1982

This afternoon we held the latest in a series of National Security Council meetings focused on arms control. At the conclusion of the meeting I gave final approval to the instructions the American negotiating team will carry to Geneva, where negotiations will begin next Tuesday, June 29, on Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START).

Our team will be headed by Ambassador Edward L. Rowny, an outstanding soldier-diplomat, who has participated actively in developing the far-reaching START proposals we have made, and in which the entire world is placing so much hope.

An historic opportunity exists to reverse the massive buildup of nuclear arsenals that occurred during the last decade. We must do all we possibly can to achieve substantial reductions in the numbers and the destructive potential of the nuclear forces. As our proposals emphasize, we must seek especially to reduce the most destabilizing elements of the strategic arsenals. We must ensure reductions that are verifiable, that go to equal levels, and that enhance stability and deterrence and thereby reduce the risk of nuclear war.

I do not underestimate the formidable nature of this task. But I believe it is in the interest of the peoples of the United States, the Soviet Union, and the entire world to engage fully in this effort. I have the highest confidence that Ed Rowny and his team will work faithfully and tirelessly toward this goal.

Note: Earlier in the day, the President met in the Oval Office with Ambassador Rowny prior to his departure for Geneva, Switzerland.

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