

The President's News Conference (Excerpts on SALT and Soviet Union)

January 29, 1981

Strategic Arms Limitation

Q. Mr. President, you campaigned rather vociferously against the SALT II treaty, saying it was slightly toward the Soviet Union. Yet I noticed your Secretary of State, Mr. Haig, now seems to suggest that for the time being, at least, the United States will abide by the limits of the SALT II treaty and he hopes the Soviet Union will, too. How long do you intend that the United States should abide by the terms of a SALT agreement which you consider inequitable, and what do you consider its greatest inequities to be?

The President. Well, the SALT treaty, first of all, I think, permits a continued buildup on both sides of strategic nuclear weapons but, in the main thing, authorizes an immediate increase in large numbers of Soviet warheads. There is no verification as to the number of warheads on the missile, no method for us to do this.

I don't think that a treaty—SALT means strategic arms limitation—that actually permits a buildup, on both sides, of strategic nuclear weapons can properly be called that. And I have said that when we can—and I am willing for our people to go in to negotiate or, let me say, discussions leading to negotiations—that we should start negotiating on the basis of trying to effect an actual reduction in the numbers of nuclear weapons. That would then be real strategic arms limitation.

And I happen to believe, also, that you can't sit down at a table and just negotiate that unless you take into account, in consideration at that table all the other things that are going on. In other words, I believe in linkage.

Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News].

Goals of the Soviet Union

Q. Mr. President, what do you see as the long-range intentions of the Soviet Union? Do you think, for instance, the Kremlin is bent on world domination that might lead to a continuation of the cold war, or do you think that under other circumstances detente is possible?

The President. Well, so far detente's been a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims. I don't have to think of an answer as to what I think their intentions are; they have repeated it. I know of no leader of the Soviet Union since the revolution, and including the present leadership, that has not more than once repeated in the various Communist congresses they hold their determination that their goal must be the promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state, whichever word you want to use.

Now, as long as they do that and as long as they, at the same time, have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is what will further their cause, meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat, in order to attain that, and that is moral, not immoral, and we operate on a different set of standards, I think when you do business with them, even at a detente, you

keep that in mind.

Note: The President's first news conference began at 4 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. It was broadcast live on radio and television.

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