

U.S. Interim Restraint Policy



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Following is the President's unclassified report to Congress of July 18, 1986.

REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON U.S. INTERIM RESTRAINT POLICY AND REPRESENTATIVE SOVIET AND U.S. DISMANTLEMENT AND STRATEGIC FORCE PROJECTIONS WITH AND WITHOUT SALT I AND II

I. Introduction: U.S. Interim Restraint Policy and U.S. Responses to Soviet Noncompliance

This report is an unclassified version of a report forwarded to the Congress on June 19, 1986, in response to the requirements of the fiscal year 1986 Department of Defense Authorization Act (Title X, Section 1001 (b)) for a report on certain data and assessments related to U.S. and Soviet strategic offensive forces and on possible Soviet political, military, and negotiating responses to changes in the U.S. policy of interim restraint. As requested by this legislation, the report covers a 5-year period. It is provided in conjunction with material including the President's statement of May 27 and a White House fact sheet of the same date on "U.S. Interim Restraint Policy: Responding to Soviet Arms Control Violations."

The U.S. policy of interim restraint as first announced by the President in 1982 has been that, in spite of the flaws inherent in the SALT [strategic arms limitation talks] agreements and in an effort to foster an

atmosphere of mutual restraint conducive to serious negotiations on arms reductions, the United States would *not undercut* the expired SALT I Interim Offensive Agreement of 1972 or the unratified SALT II Treaty of 1979 *so long as* the Soviet Union exercised *equal* restraint.

In three detailed Administration reports to the Congress on Soviet noncompliance, and through diplomatic channels including the U.S.-Soviet Standing Consultative Commission, the President has consistently made clear that this U.S. policy required Soviet reciprocity and that it must not adversely affect our national security interests in the face of the continuing Soviet military buildup and uncorrected Soviet noncompliance.

In accordance with U.S. interim restraint policy and our efforts to build a framework of truly mutual restraint, the United States has not taken any actions that would undercut existing agreements. We have continued scrupulously to live within all arms control agreements, including the SALT I and II strategic arms agreements. Unfortunately, while the United States has been attempting to hold to the structure of SALT through our policy of interim restraint, the Soviet Union has undercut the very foundation of that structure through its continued violations.

In June of 1985, the President went the extra mile. He decided to dismantle a U.S. Poseidon submarine, in order to give the Soviet Union adequate time to correct its noncompliance, reverse its unwarranted military buildup, and seriously pursue equitable and verifiable arms reduction agreements in the Geneva negotiations. Regrettably, the Soviet Union has so far failed to move constructively in these three areas.

In spite of our expressed concerns and our diplomatic efforts for corrective Soviet actions, the Soviet Union has not corrected its noncompliance. Concerning SALT II, the President's most recent report, of December 23, 1985, to the Congress cited as Soviet violations: (1) the development of the SS-25 missile, a prohibited second new type of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM); (2) extensive encryption of telemetry on ICBM missile flight tests, which impedes verification; (3) concealment of the association between the SS-25 missile and its launcher during testing; and (4) exceeding the SALT II numerical cap of 2,504 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVs). In addition, the President's report cited three areas of ambiguous Soviet behavior as involving possible violations or other problems with regard to SALT II: (1) SS-16 ICBM activity, (2) the Backfire bomber's intercontinental operating capability, and (3) the Backfire bomber's production rate. Concerning SALT I, the President's report cited a violation in the Soviet use of former SS-7 ICBM facilities in

support of the deployment and operation of the SS-25 mobile ICBMs. These SALT II and SALT I violations and other ambiguous situations involving these treaties remain matters of serious concern, as does Soviet violation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 and of other major arms control agreements.

The Administration has now concluded a comprehensive review, and extensive consultations with our allies and friends abroad and with Members of the Congress on the continuing Soviet pattern of noncompliance, the Soviet strategic arms buildup, and the lack of progress by the Soviets at the Geneva negotiations. The President announced on May 27 that in the future the United States would base decisions regarding its strategic force structure on the nature and magnitude of the threat posed by Soviet strategic forces, not on standard contained in the flawed SALT structure which has been seriously undermined by Soviet noncompliance.

In his May 27 announcement on U.S. interim restraint policy and on the U.S. response to continued Soviet noncompliance, the President pointed out the inappropriateness of continuing with the SALT II agreement. SALT II codified continuing major arms buildups. It was considered by a broad range of critics, including the Senate Armed Services Committee, to be unequal and unverifiable in important provisions. It was never ratified by the U.S. Senate and was clearly headed for defeat before the President's predecessor asked the Senate not to act on it. *With* SALT II the Soviets have nearly doubled their strategic ballistic missile warheads from about 5,000 to 9,000, and *with* SALT II they could legally undertake a further significant increase. Even if SALT II had been ratified, it would have expired on December 31, 1985.

Finally, continued Soviet violations have seriously undercut the agreement for several years in spite of repeated U.S. requests for corrective Soviet action. (Concerning SALT I, this agreement expired in 1977, and since it was signed in 1972, the Soviet Union has quadrupled the number of its strategic nuclear warheads. As for the United States, even if we did not retire older systems, the United States would, under current plans, remain in technical observance of the SALT I numerical limits until mid-1989.)

The President made clear in his May 27 announcement that the United States would continue to exercise utmost restraint in the future, seeking to meet U.S. strategic needs, given the Soviet buildup, by means that

minimize incentives for continuing Soviet offensive force growth. The President stated that, as we modernize, we will continue to retire older forces as our national security requirements permit and that we do not anticipate any appreciable numerical growth in U.S. strategic forces. He also indicated that, assuming no significant change in the threat we face as we implement the strategic modernization program, the United States will not deploy more strategic nuclear delivery vehicles or more strategic ballistic missile warheads than does the Soviet Union.

The President also noted that, as a result of his decision to dismantle two older Poseidon submarines, the United States will remain technically in observance of the terms of the SALT II Treaty for some months. He continues to hope that the Soviet Union will use this additional time to take the constructive steps necessary to alter the current situation. Should they do so, the President has stated that this would be taken into account.

Needless to say, the most essential near-term response to Soviet noncompliance remains the implementation of our full strategic modernization program, to underwrite deterrence today, and the continued pursuit of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) research program, to see if it is possible to provide a safer and more stable basis for our future security and that of our allies. The strategic modernization program, including the deployment of the second 50 Peacekeeper missiles, is the foundation for all future U.S. offensive force options. It provides a solid basis that can and will be adjusted over time to respond most efficiently to continued Soviet noncompliance. The SDI program represents our best hope for a future in which our security can rest on the increasing contribution of defensive systems that threaten no one.

In his May 27 statement, the President emphasized that no policy of interim restraint is a substitute for an agreement on deep and equitable reductions in offensive nuclear arms, provided that we can be confident of Soviet compliance with it. Achieving such reductions has received, and will continue to receive, his highest priority. We hope the Soviet Union will act to give substance to the agreement reached by the President and General Secretary Gorbachev at the summit meeting last November to achieve early progress in the Geneva negotiations. It was agreed to focus, in particular, on areas where there is common ground, including the principle of 50% reductions, appropriately

applied, in the strategic nuclear arms of both countries, as well as an interim agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces. If the Soviet Union carries out this agreement, we can move now to achieve greater stability and a safer world.

The classified report transmitted to the Congress on June 19 provided a comparison of representative U.S. and Soviet strategic weapons dismantlement that would be required over the next 5 years if both countries were actually to observe all of the quantitative limits of the SALT I and SALT II agreements. It then presented representative projections of the strategic offensive forces of the two sides, assuming that the SALT I and SALT II limits no longer apply. Finally, it provided an assessment of possible Soviet political and negotiating responses, insofar as these are understood and anticipated at present. For security reasons, the present, unclassified version provides the information concerning U.S. and Soviet forces in substantially abbreviated form.

At the outset, it must be noted that there are important uncertainties in the assessments presented herein. With respect to the data on Soviet forces, the projections represent broad trends based on both evidence and assumptions -and are not intended to be precise forecasts. On the basis of U.S. experience, it is unlikely that Soviet strategic forces 5 years from now will be identical (or necessarily even extremely close) to these force projections. Nevertheless, we believe that Soviet strategic forces in the next 3-5 years can be reasonably characterized, based on evidence of ongoing programs that would be difficult to alter radically in this timeframe.

By contrast, the size and complexion of future U.S. strategic forces are relatively easier for the Soviets to determine. We must contend with potential increases in Soviet strategic programs and capabilities. However, the principal source of uncertainty for Soviet planners about the scope and size of future U.S. strategic programs is, in all likelihood, the extent to which future U.S. programs may be *reduced* by congressional or executive branch action.

The data presented here assume *full* implementation of the Administration's strategic modernization program. It is absolutely essential that we maintain full support for these programs. To fail to do so would be the worst response to Soviet noncompliance. It would immediately and seriously undercut our negotiators in Geneva by removing the leverage that they must have to negotiate equitable reductions in both U.S.

and Soviet forces. It would send precisely the wrong signal to the leadership of the Soviet Union about the seriousness of our resolve concerning their noncompliance. And, it would significantly increase the risk to our security for years to come. Therefore, our highest priority must remain the full implementation of these programs.

II. Projected Soviet and U.S. Dismantlements

This section of the report provides representative projections on dismantling that would result if SALT limitations were extended. They should be considered to be approximations and would be subject to alteration by policy decisions or programmatic adjustments by either side. It should be pointed out that, as documented in the President's December 23, 1985, report to the Congress on "Soviet Noncompliance With Arms Control Agreements," the Soviet Union's SALT-accountable strategic nuclear delivery vehicle level is above the SALT II cap of 2,504, in violation of the Soviets' political commitment not to undercut the treaty.

Representative Soviet Dismantlements. The Soviet Union has several programs underway to introduce new strategic delivery systems that would necessitate dismantling of older systems if the Soviets were to restrict their overall force to SALT levels. Under a representative projection of such programs, consistent with SALT limits over the next 5 years the Soviets would deploy significant numbers of new delivery vehicles, including SS-25 and SS-X-24 ICBMs, Typhoon- and Deltatype SSBNs, and Backfire bombers and ALCM [air-launched cruise missile] carriers.

If SALT I and II limits were to be complied with, these actions would necessitate dismantling some older systems in the Soviet inventory, as well as some more modern systems. The older systems include SS-11 and SS-13 ICBMs, SS-N-6 SLBMs [submarinelaunched ballistic missiles] on Y-class SSBNs, and Bison and Bear aircraft. Because the Soviets already are very close to the SALT II sublimit of 820 MIRVed [multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle] ICBM launchers, deployment of the MIRVed SS-X-24 would require dismantling of sting MIRVed ICBMs-most likely SS-17s and possibly some SS-19s-to stay within the

ceiling. Similarly, with the continued deployment of SS-N-20 and SS-N-23 SLBMs, their total of MIRVed missile launchers would exceed the ceiling of 1,200 in a year or two; then they would need to dismantle more MIRVed ICBMs or some SS-N-18 launchers on relatively new D-III-class SSBNs to continue observing the cumulative sublimit of 1,200 MIRVed ICBM and SLBM launchers. They have, for some time, been at the limit of 62 modern SSBNs established by SALT I; thus deployment of new SSBNs would require continued dismantling of older submarines.

The dismantlements that would derive from these actions probably would total over the next 5 years slightly more than 600 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, with some 1,000-1,200 associated ballistic missile warheads. (The SNDV figure also includes heavy bombers judged to have a capacity for some 300 nuclear weapons.) Some dismantling of older systems would occur eventually in any case, with or without SALT limits. These projected dismantling actions do not take into account the Soviet potential for *additional* cheating, while nominally observing SALT numerical limits. This might be intended to avoid compensatory dismantlement of other ICBMs, including MIRVed ICBMs.

Representative U.S. Dismantlements. With respect to U.S. programs and dismantlements, full implementation of the strategic modernization program would require continued dismantlements under SALT of U.S. older strategic program systems, most of which are nearing the end of their useful life based on both military and economic considerations.

III. Projected Soviet and U.S. Strategic Forces

Projected Soviet Forces. In projecting Soviet strategic offensive force deployments, assuming SALT limits no longer apply, the caveats discussed above regarding assumptions and uncertainties underlying such projections are relevant.

To place these figures in historical perspective, since 1972 when SALT I was signed, there has been a fourfold increase in the number of Soviet strategic nuclear warheads (missile warheads and bombs) and nearly a doubling of Soviet ballistic missile throwweight. Indeed, since the signing of SALT II in 1979, the number of Soviet

strategic ballistic missile warheads has nearly doubled from about 5,000 to more than 9,000. This great expansion of Soviet strategic forces has been possible for the most part with SALT. (The agreements limited launchers and only indirectly affected deployed weapons.) As noted, however, the Soviet Union has also violated the arms control limitations imposed by these agreements.

The Soviet Union now has about 10,000 strategic nuclear weapons (missile warheads and bombs). The SALT I and II Treaties, even if fully complied with, would not prevent a very substantial further expansion of Soviet capabilities. Even assuming future Soviet compliance with SALT II-other than the continuation of current Soviet violations-deployed Soviet weapons are projected to increase to over 12,000 in the next 5 years. Moreover, by further violating the agreements, the Soviets could plausibly add in the same time period a relatively modest increase of even more weapons to their forces.

It is difficult to predict precisely what the Soviets might do absent SALT constraints. They would not necessarily expand their forces significantly beyond the increases discussed above, which are very large and would appear, in our judgment, more than enough to meet reasonable military requirements. Thus there might well be little appreciable difference, in terms of total weapons, between the forces that the Soviets might deploy with and without SALT constraints. It is reasonable to expect that in the absence of SALT, the Soviets would not dismantle all their older systems as rapidly as under SALT. Some classes of weapons (e.g., SSBNs) might not be dismantled at all during the next 5 years without SALT constraints. Given the great extent of the Soviet strategic modernization program, however, many of these older systems would have relatively little impact on the overall threat to U.S. security.

The Soviets have the potential to expand their forces somewhat further, should they decide to do so for either military or political reasons. If a deliberate effort were made by the Soviet Union to expand its strategic forces beyond SALT II levels, they might increase their forces somewhat further, to about 15,000 weapons by 1991.

However, the costs associated with such an expansion of capability, on top of an already very aggressive and expensive modernization program, would be a disincentive against any such Soviet effort.

With or without SALT, the Soviets are, in any case, likely to modernize their intercontinental nuclear attack forces further by replacing most of their currently deployed land- and sea-based ballistic missiles and heavy bombers by the mid-1990s. This impressive Soviet modernization program, which will result in significantly improved survivability, flexibility, and hard-target capability, has been in train for a long time.

Projected U.S. Forces. The United States could achieve roughly 14,000 weapons by fiscal year 1991 in a no-SALT environment by introducing the full strategic modernization program without undertaking the dismantlements that would otherwise be required by SALT.

IV. Soviet Political and Negotiating Responses

It is difficult to predict specific moves the Soviets might decide to take politically or in the negotiations to try to increase criticism of, and build pressure against, the President's May 27 decision. They have already leveled a propaganda campaign against the decision. Ironically, in light of ongoing Soviet violations of SALT II, including violation of the strategic nuclear delivery vehicles numerical limit, they have warned that they will go beyond the SALT

limits if the United States does. While they have stated that they would take the "necessary practical" steps, e.g., increasing missiles and warheads, it is not at all clear that they would further expand their forces beyond the increases already planned, as discussed above. However, they are likely to portray *any* expansion, including that already planned, as a response to U.S. actions.

The Soviets may decide to make political or negotiating moves as a matter of tactics that seek to discredit the U.S. decision. However, the May 27 decision is not likely permanently to alter their basic, overall objectives for negotiations or for a summit. These objectives include increasing opposition to the U.S. modernization program, particularly the Strategic Defense Initiative, and weakening the Western alliance.

We hope that the Soviet Union will join us in a framework of truly mutual restraint. For its part, the United States will continue to exercise utmost restraint in the future, seeking to meet U.S. strategic needs, given the Soviet continuing buildup, by means that minimize incentives for continuing Soviet offensive force growth. As we modernize, we will continue to retire older forces as our national security requirements permit. Assuming no significant change in the threat we face as we implement the strategic modernization program, the United States

will not deploy more strategic nuclear delivery vehicles or more strategic ballistic missile warheads than does the Soviet Union.

No policy of interim restraint is a substitute for an agreement on deep and equitable reductions in offensive nuclear arms, provided that we can be confident of Soviet compliance with it. We hope the Soviet Union will act to give substance to the agreement reached by the President and General Secretary Gorbachev at the summit meeting last November to achieve early progress in the Geneva negotiations.

Our objectives in Geneva remain the same as stated at the summit: to seek common ground in negotiating deep, equitable, and verifiable reductions in strategic and intermediate-range offensive nuclear arsenals and to discuss with the Soviet Union how we could enhance deterrence and stability by moving toward a world in which we would no longer rely exclusively on the threat of nuclear retaliation to preserve the peace. We hope the Soviets will negotiate seriously with us toward these important goals. ■

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