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**U.S.-SOVIET NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL:  
THE NEXT PHASE**

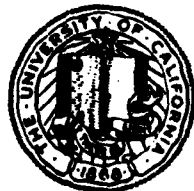
by **Arnold L. Horelick,  
Edward L. Warner III**

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## U.S.-SOVIET NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL: THE NEXT PHASE

Arnold L. Horelick and Edward L. Warner III\*

After a one-year interval during which all U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms control negotiations were closed down, Washington and Moscow agreed in November 1984 to reengage diplomatically in an effort to reach a common understanding on the subject and aims of "new negotiations" on the whole range of questions concerning nuclear and space weapons. This agreement led to the Geneva meetings between Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko early in January 1985 when a framework was adopted for the three-part formal negotiations which began in the same city on March 12. While the negotiations are called "new," to cover the Soviet Union's retreat from its previously proclaimed conditions for resuming the strategic and intermediate-range nuclear arms talks (START and INF), the old issues and disagreements, which stalemated the previous negotiations, remain as before, now further compounded by the addition of highly contentious new space arms issues.

This analysis of the nuclear arms control dimension of U.S.-Soviet relations in the new phase, which the superpowers now appear to be entering begins with a review of the developments and forces which led to the present impasse, proceeds to a discussion of the nuclear arms control agenda now before the leaderships of the two states and the altered strategic environment in which it must be addressed, and concludes with a consideration of prospects for future agreement.

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## I. ORIGINS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

While the immediate precipitant of the year-long hiatus in U.S.-Soviet negotiations was the Soviet walkout from the INF and START talks late in 1983, the negotiations had reached an impasse long before and the origins of that impasse go back to the second half of the last decade, the waning years of the U.S.-Soviet detente, bracketed at the beginning by successful completion of the SALT I Treaties, and at the end by the aborting of SALT II.

The Soviet abandonment of INF and START was triggered by the initiation of U.S. deployment of ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCM) and Pershing II ballistic missiles in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, respectively, in November 1983. The hammer, however, had been cocked earlier by the Soviet decision, probably cast in concrete in the early fall of 1982 after the fizzling of Paul Nitze's "walk in the woods" initiative, not to sanction by agreement the deployment of a single U.S. GLCM or Pershing II. Only a formula for fixing the size of a reduced Soviet SS-20 force in exchange for a similar cap on French and British nuclear arsenals was apparently deemed acceptable in Moscow. Failing agreement on these terms, the Soviet leaders had chosen to bank on the anticipated collapse of NATO political consensus or on civil disruption in Europe so great as to stop deployment or to make it the occasion for a possibly decisive alliance-splitting crisis. The juxtaposition of this intransigent Soviet stand and Washington's widely advertised conviction that Moscow would start negotiations "seriously" only after the first U.S. missiles arrived, ensured the failure of the negotiations.

In turn, the collapse of INF foredoomed the parallel talks on intercontinental strategic systems. Moscow had repeatedly insisted that the deployment of U.S. Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe would not only destroy the basis for INF negotiations, but would also constitute a circumvention of the SALT II agreement which both sides had agreed not to undercut. More importantly, Soviet determination to stimulate an atmosphere of alarm, if not a war scare, in retaliation for the U.S. missile deployments, required suspension of the START talks along with the INF walkout.

From the Soviet viewpoint, U.S. proposals in the START negotiations had, in any case, offered faint promise of producing an acceptable agreement and there was nothing to lose from breaking them off. Some 18 months of negotiations had failed to produce even a mutually acceptable negotiating framework to replace the one so painstakingly negotiated by Moscow with three previous U.S. Administrations, but unceremoniously scrapped by the Reagan Administration in May 1982. The new U.S. proposal, prepared with less than deliberate speed in Washington, would have required the Soviet Union radically to restructure its strategic forces and to retire over half of its newly acquired fourth generation MIRVed ICBMs. In return, the United States promised, at most, to scale back somewhat a few planned U.S. programs.

Moscow had no incentive even to consider such a new framework. The Soviets countered with a modified version of the original SALT II treaty, one which featured substantially deeper reductions in the Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicle aggregate and in the various sub-limits, but also greater restrictions on the sea-based systems that are of primary interest to the United States. By the time the Reagan Administration began, in response to Congressional pressure, to modify its initial START position in the early Fall of 1983, the Soviets were no longer paying attention. START had become a sideshow, its fate linked to developments in the then-primary arena of political struggle, INF.

The maximalist positions adopted by the parties in both negotiations reflected sharply divergent strategic interests that would have been extremely difficult to reconcile even in the best political circumstances. But in the prevailing political environment, a reconciliation seemed impossible and was not seriously attempted. The climate of the U.S.-Soviet relationship had been increasingly troubled since the mid-1970s, long before the breakdown of the arms control talks. Prospects for improvement signaled by the signing of the SALT II treaty in June 1979 were decisively dashed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of the year, which caused the final slide of the relationship into the trough of the 1980s. In the ensuing post-detente environment, neither superpower has regarded the other as a sufficiently



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dedicated or reliable negotiating partner with whom to strike a bargain.

After their up and down relationship with President Carter, the initial Soviet reaction to the election of Ronald Reagan had been much less alarmist and pessimistic than might have been expected, given the harsh anti-Soviet thrust of his election campaign. In part, this was because the Soviets had despaired of dealing with what they had come to regard as a schizophrenic Carter Administration, so internally divided on policy toward the Soviet Union that its ability to deliver on negotiated agreements was paralyzed along with its capability to restrain assertive Soviet behavior. Some in Moscow evidently had the Nixon model in mind for Reagan--a conservative Republican president with impeccable anti-Communist credentials, less vulnerable to attacks from the right, likely to be more interested than Democrats in trade and profitable commercial relations, a president with whom it might be possible again to have a "business-like" relationship.

Toward the end of Reagan's first year, however, when the expected "adaptation to reality" of the new president had still not materialized, the Soviet leaders evidently concluded that the new administration was so implacably hostile that it would not by choice deal with the Soviet Union on terms acceptable to Moscow. Revised Soviet expectations about Reagan were summed up well in a statement by veteran Americanologist Georgi Arbatov that has been frequently repeated or paraphrased over the years: the Reagan Administration "will be good only to the extent that it is not allowed to be bad, and safe only to the extent that it is not allowed to be dangerous."<sup>1</sup> Having concluded that the Reagan Administration, left to its own devices, would be prepared to offer up little of interest in the arms control negotiations, Soviet diplomacy concentrated on other audiences. Moscow's diplomatic and negotiating positions were directed at those forces among America's European allies, in the U.S. Congress, and among the U.S. public thought to be potentially capable of constraining the administration's freedom of action and of channeling its policies in directions less obnoxious to the USSR or possibly even acceptable to it.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, July 26, 1982.

By the end of 1983, this policy of banking on an indirect approach to constrain the Reagan Administration had failed in its principal European objective, preventing the deployment of U.S. intermediate-range missiles. Moreover, it was without good prospects in the United States. This was due chiefly to the administration's success in managing congressional critics of Reagan defense programs and arms control proposals, and to the failure of the Democrats to mount an effective opposition to administration defense and foreign policies.

On the U.S. side, attitudes prevailing initially in the new Reagan Administration were decidedly unpropitious for successful diplomatic engagement with the Soviet Union. Senior officials of the new administration in charge of national security matters assumed power believing that the military balances between the U.S. and USSR had deteriorated to the point where the U.S. bargaining position, in regional issues as well as in arms control, had been gravely weakened. Serious negotiations had to await major improvements in the U.S. military position vis-a-vis the USSR.

For some in the administration this evidently meant restoration of strategic superiority, a goal so remote or unmeasurable that it might defer negotiations indefinitely. There was, moreover, a strong conviction in some administration circles that the arms control process *per se* was politically incompatible with the primary goal of rearmament. Some argued that arms control, by holding out the false promise of security through cooperation, was equivalent to moral disarmament and would sap the resolve of the Congress and the public to make the sacrifices required to sustain the needed military buildup.

By the Fall of 1981, however, it had become clear to Washington that the maintenance of allied and domestic support for high priority defense programs required the United States to reopen the arms control negotiations track in parallel with improving U.S. defense capabilities. Thus, the administration was obliged, earlier than it probably intended, to initiate both intermediate nuclear forces (INF) and Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START).

Given the assumptions that each side brought to the table about the other's purposes and political strategy, neither superpower considered the other to be the primary audience for the negotiating stances they developed in both INF and START. For the Soviet Union, an appropriate arms control policy was one primarily intended to weaken Western bases of support for the Reagan Administration's security policies without reducing accumulated Soviet military advantages or constraining future prospects.

For the United States, conversely, the appropriate arms control posture was one calling for maximum reductions in perceived Soviet advantages while avoiding curbs on promising U.S. programs. This posture had also to preserve the support of the NATO allies for U.S. INF deployments and to maintain domestic support for unilateral initiatives, particularly military ones, to counter the Soviet threat. The fact that the other superpower happened to be on the receiving end of the arms control proposals that emerged from such calculations was almost coincidental. As it turned out, in the INF negotiations that dominated the arms control scene, the U.S. side judged, better than the Soviet, the arms control diplomacy required for Western European audiences and played its hand more skillfully.

The breakdown of the Geneva talks in November 1983 created a Catch-22 situation for Moscow. The Soviets had intended to use the INF talks to prevent the deployment of U.S. missiles in Europe. Having failed in this goal, Moscow had no incentive to resume negotiations which might appear to validate repeated U.S. public declarations that the USSR would not "seriously" negotiate until after the first U.S. missiles were deployed. Since the initial deployments had not caused the sky to fall as predicted, Moscow's principal remaining leverage was the residual Western nuclear anxiety fed by the absence of arms control negotiations, by retaliatory Soviet missile deployments, and by a further worsening of U.S.-Soviet relations. Moscow was unwilling to forfeit such leverage by resuming negotiations without first extracting concessions from Washington that promised a satisfactory outcome and vindicated the Soviet stance. Thus the Soviet Union demanded that the U.S. withdraw its missiles or agree in advance to do so as a condition

for reopening negotiations. The U.S., on the other hand, refused to make any major concessions or to alter its negotiating stance in advance merely to induce the Soviets to return to the talks. Hence the stalemate.

Moscow's petulant posture served only to deepen the quandary in which Soviet leaders found themselves. Absent actions they were evidently unwilling to risk that might raise a real danger of war, harsh Soviet rhetoric and their additional missile deployments (in Eastern Europe, in the USSR, and on submarines off the coast of the U.S.) failed to generate the pressures needed to halt U.S. deployments. Further, the contrast between repeated assertions of U.S. willingness to resume negotiations unconditionally and the Soviet demand that U.S. missiles had to be withdrawn first as a precondition to such resumption served more to underline Soviet intransigence than to build pressures for U.S. concessions.

Meanwhile, with new negotiations broken off, the arms control regime defined by earlier treaties and agreements was fraying and eroding. In an atmosphere of great uncertainty about the future strategic environment, including uncertainty about the nature of future arms control restraints, if any, evidence mounted of possible violations of existing agreements by the USSR. In addition, both sides were pressing up against the limits imposed by the arms control agreements of the 1970s and both were making extensive preparations for the development, testing, and eventual deployment of a variety of new offensive and defensive systems, which, when completed, would breach provisions of several treaties.

By general agreement, both among those most persuaded that the Soviet Union has systematically and deliberately violated treaty provisions and those generally skeptical about those allegations, the most egregious Soviet behavior is the ongoing construction of a major radar facility near Krasnoyarsk in Siberia that is located 600 kilometers from the northern border, the direction the radar apparently will face. When operational, it would appear to violate Article VI of the ABM Treaty that limits the deployment of missile early warning radars to those oriented outward and located along the peripheries of the two countries. With regard to U.S. practices, Soviet charges of

treaty violations, such as their complaints about U.S. plans to build new Pave Paws radar facilities in Georgia and Texas, have seemed to lack substance. More telling are Soviet allegations that the U.S. is undermining the arms control regime by refusing to ratify treaties already completed and signed and by conspicuously launching a major research and development effort looking toward deployment of a multi-tiered ballistic missile defense system with a major space-based component designed to provide country-wide defense that would directly contravene the ABM Treaty on several counts.

In addition, the SALT II Treaty, which each side has informally agreed not to "undercut" so long as the other exercises similar restraint, expires at the end of 1985. Neither side has committed itself to extending this "no undercut" policy and their incentives to do so, absent the prospect of renewed negotiations, have almost certainly weakened. The Soviets have now completed the modernization of their ICBM force with fourth generation MIRVed SS-17s, -18s, and -19s within the constraints of the MIRVed ICBM sub-limit of the SALT II treaty. They have long since been up against the SALT I ceiling on modern nuclear submarines (SSBNs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and have brought new systems into operation by retiring old *Yankee*-class boats, some of which have been converted into attack subs that may eventually be used to carry sea-launched cruise missiles; but this option may be less attractive to them as the future of the SALT arms control regime grows more dubious. Their fifth generation ICBM programs appear to be moving ahead, including the MX-equivalent MIRVed SS-X-24, and the controversial single reentry vehicle (RV), solid-fueled SS-X-25, which the Soviets insist is merely a modification of the older SS-13 ICBMs rather than a second unauthorized "new type," as official U.S. sources have indicated, and therefore looming as a SALT II violation. Soviet telemetry encryption practices have reportedly progressively ignored SALT II strictures against encryption that would impede verification of restrictions on ICBM modernization and on new types.

Meanwhile the United States, whose own programs have until now not been significantly constrained by observance of treaty provisions, is approaching the point at which it will have to retire still serviceable

Poseidon/C-3 SLBMs on *Lafayette*-class nuclear submarines or MIRVed Minuteman III ICBMs in order to make room for new *Ohio*-class nuclear submarines carrying Trident I/C-4 missiles. In addition, the planned arming of additional B-52s and possibly B-1s as well with air-launched cruise missiles will soon outstrip the permitted "cushion" of 120 such systems and force further reductions in either Poseidon/C-3 SLBMs or Minuteman III ICBMs to stay within the SALT II 1320 sub-ceiling on MIRVed ballistic missiles and bombers equipped with air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM). In March 1984, Secretary of State Shultz left open the possibility that the United States might cease observing provisions of the unratified SALT II Treaty when it expires at the end of 1985.<sup>2</sup> And the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), while not contravening the ABM Treaty prior to reaching the test phase for prohibited components, represents a conditional decision, assuming technical feasibility and fiscal manageability, either eventually to seek permissive amendment of the treaty or to abrogate it. In the face of these multiple pressures on the partially expiring arms control regime created in the last decade, prospects for its survival seem bleak in the absence of a joint decision to extend it in the context of resumed efforts to negotiate a new permanent treaty limiting and significantly reducing strategic offensive arms.

Moreover, both sides stand poised in their own strategic modernization programs to begin, or have already begun, to deploy new systems that are not covered by existing treaty provisions, but that will have major implications for the strategic balance. Significant recent expansions in the nuclear strike forces of the two sides (massive for the Soviets, still small for the U.S.) have already occurred in intermediate-range ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles for which no arms control regime exists. The United States has made initial deployments of long-range sea-launched cruise missiles which are similarly uncovered and the Soviets are almost certain to follow suit shortly, as they have recently claimed.

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<sup>2</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1984, p. 1.

Many of the new strategic systems, in varying states of development, testing, or in the early stages of deployment on both sides, will pose difficult verification challenges. Some may already have gone beyond the point where high confidence verification of a ban or limitations on their deployment is feasible using national technical means, even when supplemented by extensive cooperative measures. Sea-launched cruise missiles are the most striking case in this regard. Arguably, bans on deployment or agreed limits that permit the deployment of low altitude ASATs of the types launched by Soviet SS-9s (already tested) or the U.S. F-15s (on the brink of flight testing against a target in space) may also no longer be verifiable with high confidence within the range of plausible verification measures. Land-mobile ICBM systems, such as the Soviets' new solid-propellant SS-X-25 and perhaps eventually also a railroad mobile version of the SS-X-24, as well as the still only notional U.S. "Midgetman," will also pose significant problems if they are not designed and deployed with a careful eye toward agreed criteria to ensure adequate verification.

## II. CHANGING SUPERPOWER ARMS CONTROL PERSPECTIVES

In examining the likely future of nuclear arms control one must take into account not only the various pressures on the current arms control regime and the troubled state of U.S.-Soviet relations, but also the superpowers' basic perspectives on arms control. Attitudes and perspectives on arms control in both Washington and Moscow have evolved considerably since their confluence in the early 1970s helped produce the SALT I agreements. At the time the United States sought to use arms control agreements as a means to cap the growth of Soviet strategic power and to stabilize a condition of deterrence based on mutual societal vulnerability. The Soviets, on the other hand, saw arms control as a vehicle for formally ratifying their attainment of coequal superpower status and for retarding further increases in U.S. strategic nuclear capabilities and thus protecting their strategic gains of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The United States particularly valued those provisions of the SALT I agreement that constrained further Soviet growth in launchers; the Soviets particularly valued the political

benefits associated with the arms control process itself, including East-West detente and a dampening of U.S. competitiveness.

But by the end of the 1970s, there was widespread disappointment on the U.S. side. Arms control had not stopped the growth of particularly threatening Soviet capabilities embodied in the USSR's large ICBM force with its increasingly accurate multiple warheads carried atop the heavy throwweight SS-18s and SS-19s; nor had it slowed the momentum of the multidimensional Soviet military build-up. Especially in recent years there has been growing pessimism and skepticism in the U.S. arms control and defense policy communities regarding the prospects for and utility of comprehensive arms control agreements of the SALT type. Conservative critics question the usefulness of the entire enterprise. The Soviets, they argue, will never accept meaningful limitations on their strategic potential and will seek to violate agreed limitations that become inconvenient. Moreover, they charge, previous SALT agreements had tolerated and even sanctioned a continuing shift in the strategic balance of power in favor of the Soviet Union and granted Moscow significant advantages due to asymmetries in the domestic and alliance environments of arms control policymaking on the two sides. The very process of arms control negotiation is viewed in some quarters as counterproductive because it is held to undermine public support in the West for the arms programs required to match or surpass Soviet strategic capabilities.

Many traditional supporters of arms control are also disillusioned. Some have declared that the era of comprehensive arms control is over. Agreements of this kind, they argue, take too long to negotiate, are too quickly overtaken by new technologies, and frequently serve to stimulate the procurement of new weapons whose development is justified as bargaining chips in the negotiating process. Some arms control proponents, pessimistic about prospects of achieving new agreements that meaningfully constrain or reduce strategic force postures, have turned their attention to so-called strategic confidence-building measures, such as the creation of special centers designed to help manage intense superpower crises and prevent the initiation of nuclear war by accident or unauthorized actions. Still others continue to believe that the combination of equitable, verifiable force structure agreements that

limit and reduce the strategic attack potentials of the superpowers, and unilateral measures to improve the survivability of the residual arsenals can contribute significantly to maintenance of a stable nuclear balance.

Despite these largely pessimistic cross currents, the necessity of continuing the strategic arms control process seems now to have been accepted by the Reagan Administration, which had entered office with a skeptical view of the whole arms control enterprise. At a minimum, the need to respond to the nuclear anxieties of publics in democratic societies and the need to maintain public support for a strong defense are now widely seen as requiring a credible effort to pursue comprehensive arms control agreements with the USSR.

There is a widespread impression that while American views on the efficacy and desirability of the 1970s-type arms control process and the agreements it yielded have undergone substantial, even radical, change in the past half-decade, Soviet perspectives on arms control remain essentially unchanged. This is surely the impression that Soviet spokesmen, heaping blame on their unreliable, inconsistent U.S. negotiating partners, have sought to convey. But there is reason to question this assumption about the constancy of the Soviet approach in the light of the sharply altered circumstances and prospects of the 1980s and beyond.

The Soviet approach to arms control has evolved through distinct phases in the post-war era in response to dramatic changes in the strategic positions of the United States and the USSR, in military technologies, in the larger global geopolitical contest, and in the domestic and alliance environments of the two superpowers. More recent and ongoing changes in the environment of Soviet strategic policymaking appear to be altering the Soviet perspective on arms control, affecting Moscow's calculations regarding the kinds of results that may be attainable and acceptable in the 1980s and 1990s, and their political and military value.

The Soviet Union has been in the disarmament business since the earliest days of the Soviet Republic when the most far-reaching and clearly "non-negotiable" disarmament proposals were advanced by the Soviet government as instruments of political warfare against militarily

superior opponents. This practice was renewed after the Second World War as a means to combat the U.S. nuclear monopoly. But arms control as a substantive political process in search of practical agreements as opposed to an exclusively propaganda tool became feasible and attractive to Soviet leaders only as the disparity between U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear capabilities diminished in the 1960s.

By the early 1970s arms control recommended itself to the Kremlin as a means of helping to manage the transition from Soviet inferiority to strategic nuclear parity more safely and less provocatively than might have been the case in a totally unregulated strategic environment. Arms control agreements appealed to Soviet leaders as contributing to the dampening of U.S. strategic competitiveness and as a means for gaining formal U.S. acknowledgment of the USSR's newly acquired coequal superpower status, an attainment to which Moscow attributed enormous political value. Arms control, however, was not the means whereby the Soviet Union overcame U.S. strategic superiority. This grew out of the unilateral armament efforts of the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s.

The U.S. failure to make stronger efforts to preserve or extend the life of American strategic superiority stemmed from a complex of interacting factors and circumstances, of which the process of arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union was only one, and hardly the most important. These factors included: initially, an underestimation of the USSR's determination to eliminate U.S. superiority quickly; the inherent difficulty of maintaining a meaningful margin of superiority once the Soviets began to acquire substantial numbers of silo-based ICBMs; the wrenching distraction of the Vietnam war and accompanying constraints on other defense expenditures; a general weakening of pro-defense political forces; and finally, a strategic doctrine that welcomed the advent of parity as a contribution to strategic stability and viewed efforts by either side to achieve or maintain superiority as inherently undesirable.

This was essentially the climate in which the SALT I agreements were negotiated, agreements which became the centerpiece of the U.S.-Soviet detente of the 1970s. For the Soviets, the arms control process which produced these agreements and nourished the atmosphere of

detente, was valued beyond any particular treaty provisions. Certainly they hoped to negotiate provisions that would constrain those U.S. strategic programs of greatest concern to them, but on balance, when the choice came down between constraining the U.S. or protecting existing Soviet forces and ongoing programs, Moscow almost invariably opted for the latter. Even the largest and most important exception--the ABM Treaty--was only a partial exception. While the Soviets consistently opposed the deployment of a country-wide ABM defense, they also generally insisted on retaining the system they already had deployed around Moscow. Apart from ABM, choosing between provisions that constrained the U.S. side and those that protected Soviet programs was not all that difficult for Moscow during SALT I negotiations because the United States had few new strategic programs coming on line in those years. MIRV technology--the most important new development--was, for a variety of reasons, not on the table for bargaining.

Launcher limits established in SALT I and SALT II gave the Soviets sufficient leeway to continue those strategic programs of greatest value to them. This meant that under the SALT I agreements they could proceed with the development, testing, and deployment of the series of fourth generation MIRVed ICBMs and of extended range MIRVed SLBMs. And during a period of mutually agreed general compliance with the unratified SALT II Treaty, they can move ahead with the development and likely deployment of two and possibly three fifth generation ICBM systems, two new SLBMs, a large SSBN, a new strategic bomber, a converted cruise missile carrier aircraft, and a variety of ground-, sea-, and air-launched cruise missiles.

But the circumstances that shaped the Soviet Union's arms control perspectives in the late 1960s and 1970s are now changing, some of them dramatically. As a result, in the wake of the suspension of the INF and START negotiations at the end of 1983, the Soviets have almost certainly been reassessing their arms control positions. They appear to be in a real quandary about how to proceed. The altered circumstances go far beyond the more immediate challenge raised by the deployment of U.S. intermediate range missiles in Europe.

The first major change concerns the link between arms control and detente. In the 1970s, arms control was the centerpiece of the U.S.-Soviet detente relationship and arms control agreements seemed necessary periodically to punctuate the process and to maintain the momentum of superpower cooperation. Detente, in turn, was valued because it tempered U.S. strategic competitiveness, raised the threshold of U.S. tolerance for Soviet assertiveness in the Third World, and provided a more propitious political context for extracting economic benefits from the West. Since 1979, however, when Zbigniew Brzezinski coined the phrase, the prospect has been one of "arms control without detente." This prospect tends to diminish for Moscow the political benefits associated with the arms control process and to place greater importance on the real balance of arms constraints associated with any putative agreement.

The second major change concerns the relationship between arms control and the probability that the U.S. government will prove capable of sustaining domestic support for its strategic weapons programs. As noted above, the Reagan Administration's perception of the relationship between arms control and the U.S. military buildup has changed dramatically since it took office. In 1981 the administration's disinclination to resume nuclear arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union was palpable. Rearm first, negotiate later from a position of strength was the preferred sequence. The Soviet Union meanwhile presented itself as the champion of arms control continuity and of immediate negotiations.

By the Fall of 1983, these positions were exactly reversed. On the U.S. side, it had become clear to the administration that the Western arms buildup could not be sustained without a more credible arms control effort. The results of this altered environment have been evident in a variety of ways, particularly in the process by which the Congress has conditioned its funding support for several defense programs on adjustments in U.S. arms control positions to make them more "negotiable."

By the time the Soviets broke off the INF and START negotiations, Moscow had concluded that an arms control negotiating environment was in fact helpful to the U.S. military buildup. Resuming talks with a U.S. Administration that was unlikely in the end to negotiate acceptable terms would only help secure congressional support of military programs of concern to the USSR. Yet the Soviets also came to recognize that for them to be seen as unremittingly intransigent in the face of ostensibly reasonable U.S. proposals would also be counterproductive for Soviet interests in precisely the same respects.

While the renewed arms control process no longer promises Moscow political benefits comparable to those of the detente era, other changes in the strategic environment make the military prospects for the Soviet Union *without* arms control considerably less promising in the years ahead than they were during the SALT years. The United States was not nearly as strategically laggard in the 1970s as is often claimed. Nevertheless, measured by almost any criteria, trends in size and capability of strategic attack forces--as in virtually all dimensions of military power--have generally favored the Soviet Union for more than a decade.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, however, a series of U.S. strategic modernization programs--the MX, the "Midgetman" small ICBM, the Trident I/C-4 and Trident II/D-5 submarine-launched ballistic missiles carried on the *Ohio*-class submarine, the revived B-1 bomber, the advanced technology (Stealth) bomber, and Pershing II, as well as ground-, sea-, and air-launched cruise missiles begun variously under Ford and Carter, and accelerated, supplemented or restored by Reagan, will be yielding new, highly capable deployed systems. Thus, while Soviet strategic capabilities relative to those of the United States may today be at their highest point, the USSR in the renewed arms control negotiations will confront trends that move in the opposite direction and that could, if not arrested, threaten important Soviet strategic gains.

The Soviets, of course, are also positioned to proceed with a host of new strategic offensive and defensive programs. Nevertheless, their extensively acquired advantages in prompt hard-target counterforce and

long-awaited improvements in homeland strategic air defenses appear destined to disappear as the United States proceeds with its strategic modernization efforts. U.S. fielding of highly accurate ICBMs and SLBMs equipped with multiple warheads will increasingly place at risk the large, silo-based Soviet ICBM force which is the very cornerstone of Soviet strategic nuclear prowess. And the still vague but menacing prospect of superior U.S. technology being harnessed in connection with President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative is bound to increase Soviet unease about the possible shape of the strategic balance in the years ahead.

A pessimistic Soviet assessment of the long term trends in the strategic nuclear balance and a growing awareness of the high economic costs and risks that a more competitive U.S. adversary is likely to impose in an unregulated environment could well make Moscow more amenable than in the past to arms control agreements that required the USSR to accept substantial reductions in high value forces in order to constrain the most threatening U.S. programs.

Ironically a more *positive* Soviet assessment of other aspects of the military balance could reinforce Soviet interest in considering such trade-offs at the strategic level. Advancing technology and tougher U.S. competition make the pursuit of strategic superiority, or of some politically meaningful edge, more difficult and costly for the Soviet Union. The perception that the USSR enjoys such an advantage, however, may now be seen as less vital than in the past for Moscow's grand strategy. The large-scale buildup of Soviet intercontinental nuclear capabilities has been accompanied by an even more costly modernization and expansion of Soviet conventional forces, especially for conducting rapid offensive operations in Europe and the Far East. Since the mid-1970s, the Soviet buildup has also been marked by the acquisition of improved Soviet long-range and battlefield theater nuclear forces for potential employment in both major theaters.

As a consequence of this enhancement of long-standing Soviet conventional superiority and the trumping of U.S. nuclear options in the theater, the political and military burdens that have heretofore been borne by Soviet forces designed for central nuclear war have been eased. To permit superior Soviet forces to prevail militarily in the theater,

or, more to the point, to achieve dominance of the European security arena politically in peacetime, Soviet intercontinental range forces now need only be large and capable enough to neutralize those of the United States.

Repeated Soviet attempts to gain Western adherence to a pledge of no-first-use of nuclear weapons are consistent with this perspective. The self-serving political purposes of the Soviet Union's unilateral pledge not to use nuclear weapons first are obvious; the doctrine of no-first-use may very well also reflect Soviet strategic preferences under the condition of Soviet escalation dominance at all levels below that of general nuclear war. To the extent this may be true, Soviet leaders in the future may be more willing to trade off some existing Soviet strategic nuclear advantages, likely in any case to be eroded in the years ahead, in exchange for constraints on new U.S. programs that would ensure against the rejuvenation and significant expansion of U.S. strategic offensive and defensive capabilities.

### III. AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

1984 was a year not only of stalemate but also of transition. U.S. INF deployments and the breakdown of START and INF talks clearly marked the end of a phase. The fact that NATO proceeded with the initial GLCM and Pershing II deployments was a clear defeat for the Soviets. Yet it was also sobering for the United States and its allies because it was a close call and took a heavy political toll. For both sides there were significant incentives to revive arms control.

By the middle of 1984 there were signs in both countries that the leaderships were beginning to shape their diplomatic strategies more purposefully and deliberately with the other superpower foremost in mind, and not just playing to the grandstands. The Soviet leadership had begun to reconcile itself to the likelihood of Reagan's re-election and the necessity of dealing with his administration for another four years. Moreover, Mondale's pledge to continue a course of substantial real growth in defense spending and his reluctance to attack the president aggressively from the left on U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union probably underlined for Moscow that the USSR was dealing with a secular change in U.S. policy that even the unlikely defeat of Reagan

would not entirely eradicate. Accordingly, while Soviet efforts to embarrass the Reagan Administration by seeking to demonstrate its arms control hypocrisy continued, they were joined by studied Soviet efforts to begin to shape the arms control agenda of the post-election period.

This was the meaning of the June 29, 1984 Soviet proposal to open negotiations on an agreement to "demilitarize space" and the suggestion by Chernenko that such an agreement--intended to spike the administration's Strategic Defense Initiative--might be the *perelom*, the turning point, that could open the way to an improvement in relations, including presumably the resumption of negotiations on strategic and intermediate range offensive systems. This new Soviet emphasis on space weapons as the key arms control issue was accompanied by a gradual downplaying of the obviously unacceptable demand that U.S. intermediate missiles must first be withdrawn from Europe as a precondition for resuming nuclear arms control negotiations. Foreign Minister Gromyko reportedly did not repeat this demand in his September 1984 discussions with President Reagan and Secretary Shultz.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, General Secretary Chernenko failed to mention it in his well publicized comments on arms control in the *Washington Post* in October 1984.<sup>4</sup> And most importantly the Soviets ultimately agreed to a "new" INF negotiation in the context of the three part approach agreed to in the Shultz-Gromyko talks in Geneva on January 7-8, 1985--without any reference whatsoever to the removal of the Pershing IIs and GLCMs already deployed or any halt in continuing NATO INF deployments.

However, if there is to be substantive movement in the new talks, it is probably going to require a substantial degree of U.S. initiative. Although the decisionmaking disabilities of the aging collective Soviet leadership under Chernenko are often exaggerated, it is probably true that the Politburo as presently constituted would have great difficulty initiating a proposal that offered to sacrifice important Soviet assets in hand to avert threats that are still only potential, or that risked even the appearance of substantial Soviet concessions in the face of U.S. strength. Significant improvement in the overall political climate

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<sup>3</sup> *New York Times*, September 30, 1984, Section 4, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Washington Post*, October 17, 1984, p. 1.

of U.S.-Soviet relations will, of course, have to be the result of efforts by both parties, presumably acting in concert. But it will almost certainly be up to the U.S. side to present proposals to the Soviets that compel fresh decisions at the top to break the stalemate.

Even assuming that evolving U.S. and Soviet incentives to pursue arms control have now reached the point where there is sufficient overlap to sustain a determined search for common ground, the obstacles to agreement are still formidable, technically more daunting than they were in 1981. The old issues remain: what to do about Soviet advantages in ballistic missile throwweight; how to handle sea-launched cruise missiles, the Soviet Backfire bomber, and British and French nuclear forces; how to cap the U.S. potential for deploying more missiles on bombers. Also, the old problem of verification has been further exacerbated in recent years by testing or deployment of new weapons for which verifiable limitations will not be extremely difficult to devise (e.g., cruise missiles and mobile ICBMs).

The basic Euromissile issues remain technically unchanged since the breakdown of negotiations. But the major political uncertainty that stalemated the negotiations and dictated the grandstanding tactics of both sides has now been resolved: the NATO allies proved capable in the absence of an arms control agreement and under severe domestic pressure of beginning their planned deployments of new U.S. missiles. If there are sufficiently strong incentives on both sides now to get on with the negotiations, a formula can no doubt be found that holds open the possibility of eventual withdrawal, but permits negotiations meanwhile to go forward.

The most important new development is the emergence of strategic defense as a central issue in the U.S.-Soviet arms dialogue. Strategic defense has been advanced by the Reagan Administration from a remote technical possibility to an active, high-profile technology program with a conditional decision to consider deploying a full-scale ballistic missile defense system; as in the early 1970s, it has been inevitably linked with negotiations on strategic offensive forces, a link formalized in the January 8, 1985 U.S.-Soviet agreement. But the formula in that communique merely provides that nuclear and space arms questions are to be "considered and resolved in their

interrelationship," leaving it to the parties to work out the nature of the interrelationship during the negotiations. The course of the U.S.-Soviet search for new agreements in its initial stage will be dominated by an effort to find an acceptable common approach to defining that relationship.

The issue has become key to a debate in Washington between two distinct alternative strategies not only for arms control but for dealing generally with the Soviet Union during Reagan's second term. Both approaches proceed from the common premise that a favorable shift is occurring in favor of the United States in what the Soviets call the global correlation of forces, but different policy conclusions are drawn from this assessment.

One strategy would call for the United States to take an essentially uncompromising stand on the full range of issues, making at most only marginal, essentially cosmetic adjustments, designed not so much to enhance the negotiability of U.S. positions *per se* as to manage domestic and alliance political concerns. In this view, American negotiating positions developed in 1982-1983 remain basically sound. Key U.S. military programs--ground-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles, ASAT testing, the B-1, the Stealth bomber, the Trident II submarine-launched missiles and, even if precariously, the MX--are all moving forward. Superior U.S. technology in areas such as "stealthy" weapons and in the various elements that might be developed on the way to a space-based ballistic missile defense system offers the prospect of shifting the correlation of military forces in favor of the United States. But this is prospective; in the short run, the momentum of past investments still favors the Soviets.

Time, it is said, will be on Washington's side, and the United States should meanwhile hang tough. The Soviets will eventually have to accede to American terms or, in the absence of an agreement, the United States will steadily gain in the competition while the Soviet system will continue to erode. Meanwhile the U.S. bargaining position will continue to improve. Agreements that pursue lesser goals, adherents of this point of view argue, would not serve U.S. security interests. While seeking generally to protect U.S. strategic programs from arms control constraints, advocates of this viewpoint are most determined to

protect U.S. long-term options for proceeding with the Strategic Defense Initiative by keeping it out of the negotiations.

An alternative strategy holds that the United States should take the lead in exploring ways to move the stalled nuclear arms control process. Partisans of this view generally believe that a sustained state of high tension between the United States and the Soviet Union is potentially dangerous and surely corrosive to the Western alliance if the United States is believed to be at fault. A credible attempt at arms control negotiations is held necessary to sustain public and congressional support for the administration's large-scale armaments program.

Advocates of this view tend also to believe (like those who favor the first strategy) that the correlation of forces is indeed shifting against the Soviet Union, but prefer to negotiate from that improved position now, rather than gamble on the outcome of a totally unregulated arms competition of enormous and possibly not sustainable cost, incalculable risk and indefinite duration. Soviet anxiety about an intensified new round of strategic arms competition is held to provide an opportunity for inducing the USSR to consider trade-offs in strategic weapons negotiations, such as cuts in the Soviet advantage in heavy missiles in return for substantial limits on U.S. bombers and air-launched cruise missiles, a possible compromise in intermediate-range weapons along the lines of the abortive "walk in the woods," and, as far as space weapons are concerned, an agreement of limited duration reaffirming ABM Treaty prohibitions regarding flight testing or deployment of space-based ballistic missile defense systems and possibly an agreement banning or limiting ASAT testing as well.

It is important to note that there are, as yet, no indications that adherents of this viewpoint or others in the Reagan Administration are prepared to constrain substantially research efforts on new ballistic missile defense technology or forego long-term options for space-based missile defense. Some may, however, be favorably inclined toward supporting a long-term exploratory technology program in this area while agreeing not to undertake any flight testing or so-called intermediate deployments of space-based missile defense systems designed to raise Soviet uncertainties about their ability successfully to attack U.S.

offensive capabilities. Conceivably, in this view, the imposition of long-term constraints on America's ballistic missile defense potential might in time become an acceptable option in return for very substantial constraints on Soviet intercontinental attack capabilities.

The leaders in the Kremlin will also have to confront serious choices as they consider their strategic arms control options. As noted earlier, they must first decide what value they place on the pursuit of strategic arms control given the prospect that revitalized arms control talks are unlikely to be accompanied by a return to 1970's-style Soviet-American detente. Moreover, the Soviets are undoubtedly aware that by simply returning to the negotiations they may well increase the chances that that the U.S. Administration will succeed, at least in the short term, in gaining congressional support for major weapons programs that could be actual or potential bargaining chips in the negotiations. And they can have no assurance that the Reagan Administration will, in the last analysis, be prepared to depart substantially from its original negotiating demands which have been wholly unacceptable to Moscow in the past.

In addition, the Soviet leaders are likely to feel that their bargaining position is considerably weaker than it has been over the past decade. Although the actual military balance is, if anything, marginally better for the Soviet Union than it was in 1979 when SALT II was signed, Moscow has reason to view prospective trends in that balance are distinctly unfavorable. The next series of moves in the strategic arms competition will be marked by unprecedented emphasis on high technology in areas that would pit U.S. strength against relative Soviet weakness. The weakened Soviet leadership can hardly relish tacking such a massive, costly, long-term effort on top of the other serious domestic and foreign policy challenges it faces.

Thus the primary Soviet objective is likely to be an effort to blunt the military and political threats posed by these prospective U.S. force developments. At a minimum, the Soviets will want to retain the SALT II constraints on intercontinental attack systems and to reaffirm the ABM Treaty prohibitions on space-based ballistic missile defenses. Their more ambitious agenda almost certainly includes additional insurance against U.S. deployment of the multitiered ballistic missile

defense system envisioned in the SDI through the conclusion of a new treaty banning weapons in space; imposition of a low ceiling on the growth of U.S. bomber and bomber-carried cruise missiles; and a halt, preferably a rollback, of U.S. INF deployments in Western Europe.

Ever since the January 8 agreement on a U.S.-Soviet arms control framework, the Soviets have continued to emphasize their intention to give priority to negotiating an agreement preventing the militarization of space. This, they apparently hope, would allow them to head off the renewed U.S. ballistic missile defense effort, a high priority objective, without forcing the Kremlin to make any concessions with regard to limitations on offensive forces. Yet, many within the Reagan Administration, as indicated earlier, have the very opposite in mind; they seek substantial cuts in Soviet intercontinental and intermediate-range offensive capabilities while avoiding any constraints on the U.S. long-term SDI potential.

Some proponents of the SDI have expressed interest in a jointly managed, long-term transition to a "mutually assured survival" relationship between the superpowers that would involve precisely such a combination of extensive, extremely effective missile and air defenses and substantially reduced strategic attack forces on both sides. This would appear to represent the only arrangement that would permit the strategic defenses to reach significant levels of effectiveness. Yet given the vast uncertainties associated with what will necessarily be exceedingly difficult, long-term efforts to develop such impressive defenses, if they can be developed at all, it is clearly premature to speak of agreeing to such a transition in the near or even mid-term future. By the same token, as others have pointed out, were the superpowers able to negotiate such a stringent and fine-tuned agreement on strategic offense arms, they would presumably have demonstrated sufficient willingness and resolve to conclude an agreement constraining strategic attack forces so far-reaching as to render such strategic defenses superfluous. Whatever these long-term possibilities, at this time the Soviets appear determined to conclude agreements that erect additional obstacles on the path to the development and deployment of those space-based components that would be essential for even a moderately effective ballistic missile defense "shield."

As indicated by the compromise formula adopted in the January 8 communique, neither side will permit the other to have it all its own way. Unless the United States, by deliberate choice or default, adopts the option of "letting the Soviets stew," an effort to break the impasse will require an altered conceptual approach that will have to be more rather than less comprehensive than in the past. The large issues are now even less amenable to partial or piecemeal approaches. In the era of SS-20's, Pershing IIs, and intermediate range ground-launched and sea-launched cruise missiles, continued deferral of limitations on "grey-area weapons" is no longer a realistic option for strategic arms control. Nor are the Soviets likely to treat intermediate-range weapons entirely apart from strategic arms so long as the U.S. Europe-based missile force is other than zero.

Strategic offensive arms control agreements will have to be of longer duration than in SALT I and II, and should be phased, because they will have to absorb the momentum of an early phase during which both sides will be adding new missile systems with multiple warheads to their inventories. The agreements will also have to regulate the transition to final phases in which warhead numbers and the ratio of warheads to launchers are to be substantially reduced. Such long-term offensive agreements involving substantial reductions and de-MIRVing are unlikely to become negotiable in the face of radical uncertainties about the future strategic defense environment. Just as the United States was unwilling in 1970-71 to negotiate permanent ABM limitations without a parallel agreement on offensive systems, in 1985 the Soviet Union is unlikely to be willing to negotiate on offensive systems without nailing down, at least for the life of an agreement on offensive arms, prohibitions on the flight-testing and deployment of space-based defenses; and they will certainly seek a permanent ban on such systems.

Ironically, the best hope for inducing the parties to break the stalemate and move toward stabilizing the strategic arms competition on the basis of a far-reaching arms control regime may reside precisely in the development that also currently poses the greatest threat to the future of arms control: the prospect of revolutionary breakthroughs in ballistic missile defense technologies. The crucial importance for arms

control of a comprehensive nationwide strategic defense, now that it has been dramatically introduced as a serious potential option, does not derive from any particular expectation about its effectiveness. A major strategic defense program undertaken by one side would provoke a variety of responses by the other side because of the enormous strategic consequences of even a moderately effective ballistic missile defense that fell far short of being "leak-proof," and the irreducible uncertainties about the effectiveness that could actually be achieved. Countermeasures would almost certainly include means of disabling key components of the adversary's defense system; measures to overwhelm or evade the defense such as the proliferation of missile warheads and decoys; the design of hardened and rapid burn ballistic missiles and the expansion of bomber and cruise missile attack capabilities; and, of course, a major push to develop and deploy a defensive system of its own.

Only a state supremely confident of its ability to stay ahead indefinitely in a strategic defense arms race might be willing to negotiate a treaty substantially reducing its offensive strategic arms in a highly competitive and totally open-ended strategic defense environment. The Soviet Union will surely decline to do so. It is hard to imagine that the Soviet Union could be induced either at this time or over the next several years to negotiate agreements amending the ABM Treaty appropriately and constraining the size of the offensive forces with which the defense would have to deal in order to facilitate regulated competition in ballistic missile defense in the name of "mutually assured survivability"--a competition that the USSR would neither welcome nor expect to win. It may well prove impossible to achieve this at any time, even if both sides make significant unilateral progress in developing the new defense technologies.

And it is even more fanciful to suppose that Soviet cooperation in such a venture could be purchased by holding out the prospect that the United States would eventually share a highly effective ballistic missile defense technology. Thus, a mutually regulated transition to a defense-dominant or "assured survival" deterrent balance, either now or in the distant future, is a highly implausible scenario on a variety of political and technical grounds. Moreover, the prospect of reversion to

an unregulated strategic defense competition within the 1980s would almost certainly preclude the conclusion of new strategic offensive arms limitation agreements of any kind and lead quickly to the demise of the existing arms control regime.

It was precisely the failure of the existing arms control regime to stabilize the offensive nuclear arms competition satisfactorily along with the inability of the U.S. to relieve anxieties about offensive force survivability through unilateral remedies, that helped to fuel the Reagan Administration's decision to embark on an intense exploration of a strategic defense alternative. Deep U.S. dissatisfaction with modest strategic arms control agreements of the type we have known thus far, together with the Soviet Union's evident aversion to engaging in an unregulated competition in strategic defense, therefore provides both sides with powerful incentives for exploring a third alternative: an arms control regime that would avert the enormous costs, possible great risks, and nerve-racking uncertainties of an arms race in the deployment of strategic defense in return for a long-term and more far-reaching agreement than ever before on strategic offensive weapons, notably including deep reductions or elimination of those systems deemed particularly threatening by both sides.

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