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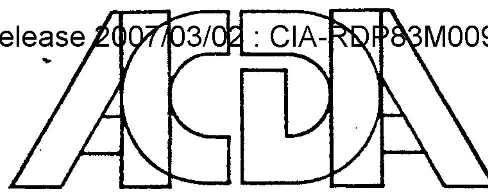

ARMS CONTROL BULLETIN

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United States Objectives in Arms Control Negotiations with The Soviet Union

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United States Objectives in Arms Control Negotiations
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Appearing before this learned and august body is always a challenge. In my case this time, it is a particular challenge. At least half of you know more about arms control than I do. Many of you have wound stripes earned in famous battles of the past. I thought that the only way a novice like me could make the occasion worth your while would be to model my talk on "The Education of Henry Adams," and tell you how my mind has been working as I have grappled with the problems of SALT, START, TNF, and all that during the tempestuous months since I was asked to become Director of ACDA. Perhaps it is excessive to describe what has been going on within me as "the working of my mind." The nuclear weapon is an emotionally disturbing subject suffused with mystery. It rightly inspires terror and awe. Logical coherence is not the dominating feature of the controversy about its role in our affairs.

I.

The first question I had to face when the job was offered was whether I believed that Soviet-American arms control agreements -- and especially agreements about the control of nuclear weapons -- are really a Good Thing.

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Would we be better off to rely on security treaties and military strength alone to protect our interests and keep the peace until the Soviet Union finally mellowed under the profound and benign influence of Russian high culture -- an outcome George Kennan once said is inevitable in the long run?

I know only too well that there is a naive and exaggerated public faith in the efficacy of arms control agreements as amulets of peace -- a public faith which politicians have exploited in the past and will undoubtedly exploit again in the future. Peace is a complicated idea, the supreme achievement of statesmanship. It is a state of society characterized not only by the absence of violence, but by general respect for the necessary and agreed rules of social cooperation -- in short, a social condition defined both by order and by law. There is no such thing as peace without tears. Both in domestic and in international society, peace is secured not by treaties, constitutions, and laws alone, but by courts, policemen, and prisons -- and by occasional harsh actions to vindicate the formal law, like the suppression of domestic riot or what was called the police action in Korea thirty years ago. Important arms control agreements -- the Versailles Treaty and the Washington Naval Agreement, for example -- did not prevent World

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War II. And the SALT I agreements and the process of negotiating SALT II did not prevent the worst decade of the Cold War or the extraordinary buildup of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

Nonetheless, I decided to accept the job. Euphoric enthusiasm for arms control is indeed a dangerous drug, an escape from reality. But in the foreboding context of Soviet-American relations, the arguments for a major arms control effort outweigh the arguments against. The Soviet American relationship is now so tense that if we are to be true to ourselves we must seize every opportunity to negotiate for peace, however adverse the odds may be. Under present circumstances, arms control ought to be a useful catalyst for a movement towards peace, if we discipline ourselves to view arms control as an integral part of our foreign and defense policy but not a magical substitute for it. The Soviet rush for power has accelerated rapidly during the last ten years, fuelled by a fantastic long-term program of arms accumulation. It has naturally aroused resistance among those who wish to remain free. The result is a world crisis for which the only rational and humane solution is Soviet-American cooperation to establish peace. The rational place

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for such cooperation to begin is in the field of arms control, arms reduction, and disarmament.

The second set of questions I had to face concerned the significance of the nuclear weapon.

The discovery of nuclear power and the invention of the nuclear weapon were Promethean events, and we have only begun to perceive their implications. Nuclear weapons, alas, do not exist in a world apart, completely cut off from day-to-day diplomacy and conflict. The nuclear arms experts play complicated games, but those games are not like bridge, go, or chess. The invisible emanations of the nuclear weapon have already transformed the art of war, and therefore completely altered the magnetic field of world politics. For ordinary purposes, international society is decidedly pluralistic. But on the ultimate issues of security and defense, it has never been more bipolar.

From the beginning of the nuclear age, the United States has been possessed by the conviction that the nuclear weapon must be abolished, or at least brought under tight and effective control. By a curious historical accident, we were the first country to make and use nuclear weapons. The moral concern which is one of the

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finest strands in our being led us to wonder -- as we wonder still -- whether the use of the bomb by President Truman was justified, and to view any possible further use of nuclear weapons with revulsion.

In 1948, driven by these insights and self-doubts, we proposed the Baruch Plan, which would have placed what was then an American monopoly into the custody of a United Nations agency. The rejection of the Baruch Plan by the Soviet Union was surely one of the decisive turning points of modern history. The American effort to put the nuclear genie back into the bottle continued despite that rebuff, and continues today. A number of useful treaties at the edges of the problem have been achieved -- the Test Ban Treaty, for example, and the treaties banning weapons of mass destruction in outer space and Antarctica. But the important Non-Proliferation Treaty is in danger because the recent decline of world public order has stimulated tendencies making for the spread of nuclear weapons in many parts of the world. And we have so far failed to achieve agreements with the Soviet Union which could arrest and then reverse the ominous expansion of nuclear arsenals.

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Throughout this period -- that is, from the time of our offer of the Baruch Plan to the collapse of SALT II in 1979 --the United States based its arms control initiatives on the assumption that the Soviet Union and the United States took the same view of the function of nuclear weapons in war and politics and therefore had the same goal in arms control negotiations, namely to prevent any use of nuclear weapons or threat to use them for purposes of aggression. The reexamination of this major premise was the third step in my education as an arms control official.

Our conclusion is that it is no longer possible to entertain the hypothesis that the Soviet Union and the United States share the same philosophy of arms control.

This now seems to be a self-evident proposition. But like many self-evident propositions, it has important consequences. It is, I believe and hope, a liberating axiom, which is helping us to clarify our objectives in the negotiations, and should therefore greatly improve our chances for reaching a fair and balanced agreement with the Soviet Union, in the equal interest of both sides. We have based our approach to the nuclear arms control negotiations now before us -- those concerned with the reduction

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of intermediate range and intercontinental nuclear weapons -- on the premise that the United States and the Soviet Union have fundamentally different objectives and policies with regard to the military balance and nuclear weapons, and therefore different objectives in arms control negotiations.

II.

Since the beginning of the nuclear age, the objectives of our nuclear forces have been deterrence, a capability to retaliate, and stability. Our nuclear arsenal is an integral part of an array of political, economic, and military programs through which the United States, its allies, and other friendly nations are seeking to assure their common defense and to advance the welfare of their peoples. To this end, the United States and its allies and friends have pursued a reasonably concerted and coherent foreign policy for the last thirty-four years, despite fluctuations in its effectiveness since 1947. The goal of that policy, behind the shield of the Truman Doctrine, the doctrine of containment, has been and is to restore an open, stable, and progressive world public order in which change is achieved only by peaceful means, and there is general and reciprocal respect for the

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rules of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the international use of force. This is the only possible foreign policy which could protect the interests of the United States and many other nations on our contracting, interdependent, and dangerous planet. It has therefore survived through good years and bad for the best of reasons: it corresponds to the nature of things.

In that enterprise, American nuclear weapons have two deterrent roles of critical importance. One is to make certain that neither the Soviet Union nor any other country use or brandish nuclear weapons in world politics for aggressive purposes. The second is that the United States be capable of responding with nuclear weapons if its vital interests are imperilled by attack from nuclear or conventional forces. To achieve these ends, the United States must at all times maintain a clear and visible nuclear second strike capability, so that the United States, its allies, and its other vital interests can be protected against attack or the threat of attack by whatever means may be required across the full spectrum of possible threats.

This is and must remain the minimal goal of our nuclear arsenal as the ultimate guarantee of our diplomacy. The United States will not be separated from its allies

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or other countries whose defense is necessary in order to prevent an overwhelming concentration of power in the hands of the Soviet Union -- i.e., Soviet "hegemony," to borrow the word the Chinese like to use. It follows that the minimal goal of our representatives in negotiating arms control agreements is and must remain the protection of that military capability.

The McNamara Doctrine -- the doctrine that the people and the cities of each side should be hostages guaranteeing mutual deterrence and the non-use of nuclear weapons -- was the most conspicuous symbol of the basic American policy of nuclear stalemate and the predicate for our proposals of arms control agreements based on the principles of parity and mutual deterrence. The contention that the use of nuclear weapons would be unthinkable if each side refrained from active or passive defenses against nuclear attack was generally accepted in the United States. To assure that goal was a major objective of the ABM Treaty and still dominates American thought and policy on the subject, despite inevitable qualifications imposed upon us by the structure of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

For a long time, we attributed this view to the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union has never accepted the gospel of Mutual Assured Destruction. The Soviet

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Union pursues an active policy of civil defense and defense against intrusions into Soviet air space. And both the size and the composition of the Soviet nuclear weapon force, to say nothing of its accuracy and destructive power, bespeak altogether different strategic ideas and objectives.

The emphasis in Soviet nuclear force planning is not only on retaliatory weapons but on superiority, on strategic counterforce capability, and on damage prevention or limitation. A clear example of this principle is the persistent deployment of heavy and accurate ICBMs, capable of destroying most of our ICBMs (and bombers on the ground, and submarines in port) in a first strike, with enough left over to constitute a formidable deterrent to American retaliation. The Soviet Union is or will soon be capable of accomplishing that goal with something like a third of its heavy ICBM force, leaving the rest of its arsenal to counter any American response.

Ten years ago American experts and officials assured our people that the Soviet Union was seeking nuclear parity, recognition as a great power, and a place in the political sun. But the Soviet Union has gone right on building up its nuclear arsenal at the rate of some eight percent a year in real terms, although all students of the subject agree it has long since passed the point of nuclear parity.

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It is apparent that the objective of the Soviet Union in its formidable program of nuclear weapon development is altogether different from the strategic doctrine of the United States. The United States nuclear arsenal is the fulcrum of a deterrent system for defending a peaceful and stable world political order, consisting of states; the Soviet arsenal is the ultimate engine of a comprehensive attack on that order, utilizing revolutionary movements, terrorism, and conventional forces backed by nuclear power to attain its goals. The purpose of Soviet nuclear weapons is therefore intimidation and coercion -- and, if necessary, the capability to initiate and win a nuclear war. This is clear in what Soviet writers on strategy say. It is even more obvious in what the Soviet Union has done and is doing. The purpose and result of Soviet actions is not only to equal but to surpass the United States in the categories of nuclear power most relevant to their purposes. Achieving such a position, they believe, would permit them to expand their domain almost at will, using conventional or proxy forces or covert methods of subversion under the protective cover of what they consider to be superiority in nuclear arms. Soviet writers and

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speakers freely proclaim their view that what they call "the correlation of military forces" will determine the future course of world politics.

It cannot be said too often that the greatest risk we face is not nuclear war but political coercion based on the credible threat of nuclear war implicit in overwhelming Soviet nuclear and conventional force superiority. This threat and the fear which it engenders are the true source of the agitation in Europe today about modernizing our theatre nuclear forces.

The Soviet policy of indefinite expansion and the military forces and doctrines on which it is based are reflected in Soviet arms control policies. The interests of the United States and the Soviet Union in non-proliferation are parallel, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty was not unusually difficult to negotiate. But this has not been the case in the SALT process. In SALT I, the Soviet objective was an ABM Treaty to deny the United States the military advantage of its lead in ABM research and development; the United States objective was to set agreed and stabilizing limits on the growth and improvement of both the Soviet and the American strategic arsenals, so that each side could maintain a deterrent position, assuring the non-use of nuclear weapons.

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The SALT I agreements failed to accomplish the United States objective, but were accepted with hope as a first step towards that goal. In 1972, we were greatly concerned over the possibility of an uncontrolled Soviet nuclear arms build-up, and formally announced that if the SALT process failed within five years to produce a more thorough agreement equitably limiting strategic offensive arms, "the supreme interests of the United States" could be jeopardized, establishing grounds for withdrawal from the SALT I agreements. Congress later confirmed this position.

The SALT process produced what we most feared in 1972. The American interest in ABM development was effectively retarded by a number of factors, including the ABM treaty. And the terms, the loopholes, and the ambiguities of the 1972 Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms permitted the Soviet Union to forge ahead in its strategic arms build-up while the United States rested on its oars. The strategic stability the United States sought through SALT I proved to be a chimera. The Soviet Union took full advantage of a combination of political and military circumstances which favored its plans for expansion: the uncertainties of the American mood in the aftermath of Vietnam; the approach

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of strategic nuclear balance and corresponding changes in the balance of conventional and theatre nuclear forces; and above all the American attitudes which flowed from our assumption that the Soviet Union was interested only in parity, mutual deterrence, and peace. Thus during the last decade the Soviet Union accelerated its campaigns of of expansion based on the use of conventional force, terrorism, and subversion in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean. It goes without saying that the indefinite continuance of such efforts, one after the other, is explosively dangerous. When it passes a certain psychological boundary, expansion by conventional means can trigger the panic which leads to war as readily as the threat to use nuclear weapons.

These trends were accentuated during the long period while the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated the SALT II Treaty, and the United States then debated the merits of the Treaty, and failed to ratify it. While I have no desire to rake over the entrails of old debates, we must learn from the mistakes of the past, or we shall surely repeat them. As one of my colleagues has remarked, SALT II solved the problems of the late 1960s, but failed to take into account the situation we face today. One of

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its most fundamental defects is that it would have frozen the United States into a position of nuclear inferiority and thus denied credibility to the nuclear umbrella which has protected Western Europe, Japan, and other vital interests of the United States since 1945.

This experience defines the problem we face today, both in rearmament and in arms control. Between 1972 and 1981, the Soviet Union introduced many new strategic weapons systems as well as additional systems which are generally considered theatre systems, including, in 1977, the formidable SS-20. During the same period, the United States introduced only one new strategic system, the Trident, in 1980. The Soviet strategic and intermediate range nuclear forces were increased and improved at a formidable rate, while the American forces remained nearly stable. As a result, in the most significant measures of power, the American lead in nuclear weapons has melted away. We have entered a decade of uncertainty, to say the least, before we can be confident that our deterrent second-strike capacity is fully and visibly restored.

The election last November was in part a referendum on our foreign and defense policies, including arms control. There is a solid public consensus for rebuilding our defenses, a healthy skepticism about what the Soviets are up

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to, and a new realism about what can be achieved in arms control negotiations. There should therefore be sustained public support for arms control agreements which permit both the Soviet Union and the United States to enjoy the security of equal deterrence at much lower levels of force, but deny to either side the possibility of using nuclear weapons as a tool for nuclear blackmail in the interest of aggression. We will not accept agreements which fail to meet this standard.

III.

Let me turn now to the application of this standard to some of the more concrete problems we face in the two principal negotiations which are now approaching, the negotiations about Long Range Theatre Nuclear Weapons, which open in Geneva on November 30, 1981, and the SALT, or, as we prefer to say, the START negotiations on intercontinental weapons, for which we expect to be ready early in 1982.

First, I should say a word on the relationship between the two sets of negotiations.

It is important to recall the background of the Theatre Nuclear Force talks.

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For more than thirty years now, the security of Western Europe, like the security of Japan and certain other vital American security interests, has been assured ultimately by the United States strategic arsenal -- the intercontinental weapons located within the United States, on the high seas, or elsewhere. At all times during this period, the Soviet Union has had superior conventional forces on the central front in Europe; in recent years it has had superior conventional forces on the flanks of Europe as well. But until recently those superior Soviet forces have been balanced by the strategic superiority of the United States and by the Soviet conviction that the United States would protect its vital security interest in the independence of Western Europe by the use of nuclear weapons if necessary.

As a result of the Soviet build-up of intercontinental, intermediate, and middle-range nuclear weapons, however, doubt has arisen in the West as to whether the American nuclear guaranty is still firm -- and that doubt has been stated publicly by distinguished Western personalities. We can assume that the leaders of the Soviet Union have asked themselves the same question. Some four or five years ago, therefore, West European leaders became particularly concerned about the development of Soviet

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intermediate range nuclear weapons -- the so-called grey area weapons --which were not on the SALT agenda. Could those weapons coerce Europe into neutrality or worse while the United States was paralyzed by the size and power of the Soviet intercontinental arsenal? These nightmare fears led European spokesmen to suggest that the United States take appropriate action to deter the use of Soviet Euro-missiles. The result of the European proposal was the NATO decision of 1979 that the United States station intermediate range, ground based missiles in Europe and at the same time negotiate with the Soviet Union about removing the threat to Europe implicit in the existence of the Soviet missiles.

The reasoning behind the NATO decision paralleled the argument which has persuaded the United States to keep large American conventional forces in or near Europe. There has been periodic political agitation in the United States for a reduction of our conventional forces in Europe, and for exclusive reliance on the intercontinental nuclear weapons to protect Europe against Soviet pressures. But proposals of this kind have been firmly and repeatedly rejected. The United States wishes not only to make the nuclear guaranty clear and credible, but to be in a position to respond

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appropriately to threats across the entire spectrum of threat or attack. To remove American forces from Europe would escalate every conflict instantly to the nuclear level. With American long range theatre nuclear weapons deployed on European soil, there would be less doubt about the credibility of the American nuclear guaranty to Europe both in Europe and in the Soviet Union. As a result, the risk of war by miscalculation would be reduced, and the nuclear threshold correspondingly raised.

The United States fully understands the concern which led our European allies to call attention to the special dangers inherent in the Soviet arsenal of Euromissiles, and above all to the danger of "decoupling" Europe from the United States. And it fully agrees with the double track decision of the North Atlantic Council -- to deploy Long Range Theatre Nuclear Weapons on European soil and at the same time to pursue arms control negotiations about the theatre nuclear balance with the Soviet Union.

The problem of Long Range Theatre Nuclear Forces must be examined in the SALT context, as the North Atlantic Council declared, because the line between Theatre Nuclear Forces and intercontinental forces is not clear cut. Intercontinental weapons can also be

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aimed at theatre targets. And some weapons normally classified as theatre weapons can be used under certain circumstances on intercontinental missions. While much can be accomplished by successful TNF talks, both in reducing weapons and contributing to crisis stability, the ultimate security of the NATO allies will necessarily continue to rest on the reliability of the United States strategic guaranty.

IV.

Secondly, I should comment on the basic problem of the unit of measurement in future nuclear arms agreements. The goal of such agreements, most Americans agree, is "equality" or "parity" or "equal deterrence" or some such phrase. "Equality" in what? What is the relevant standard of "equality"?

The 1972 Interim Agreement and SALT II used "deployed launchers" as the unit of account. We knew then that the number of "deployed launchers" was not an accurate measure of the destructive power of nuclear weapons. But in the early 70s, at any rate, the shortcomings of the unit of measurement did not do much harm. The deterrent power of the United States was not in doubt. And "deployed launchers" were comparatively easy to measure by national technical means.

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It is difficult to see how the problem of measurement can be solve satisfactorily by relying on "deployed launchers" as the only unit of account. The balance has become too close. Soviet systems have become more complex and more diversified. Factors which were safely ignored in earlier years have now become more significant. I cannot tell you now what measure or measures will finally be chosen for the purpose, save to point out that the problem now is altogether different from the problem we faced in 1971 and 1972.

Third, the probable demise of "deployed launchers" as the unit of account and the size and sophistication of the Soviet nuclear armory highlight the increased importance of verification. Verification has been a more and more troublesome aspect of arms control in recent years, both in the area of nuclear weapons and elsewhere: -- in the field of chemical and biological weapons, for example, and the limitation on nuclear testing. During the last ten years we have had many shocks and surprises in attempting to follow and anticipate the growth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, and to monitor Soviet compliance with existing arms control agreements. Officials deeply sympathetic to the cause

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of arms control have come away from their tours of duty in Washington troubled about the effectiveness of verification and of our procedures for ensuring the enforcement of arms control treaties and disturbed about the implications of their experience. Their concern is easy to understand.

We have concluded, therefore, -- and this is perhaps a fourth aspect to my education -- that we are at, or near the limit of what can be accomplished in this area by national technical means alone. We have informed the Soviet Union that we believe cooperative measures to supplement national technical means will be necessary both in START and in TNF, and invited the Soviet Government to discuss the matter with us in any way it prefers -- through diplomatic channels, through meetings of experts, or through the actual TNF and START negotiations themselves. Thus far, we have had no response to our invitation, which is the first substantive step in the new round of arms control talks between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the same talk, we told the Soviet Union that there will have to be a radical improvement in their willingness to provide data. The day when arms control negotiations are conducted on the basis of data supplied by the United States is over. In short, we have made it clear that

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in our view cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States is the only way out of the dilemma which the events of the last decade have brought to a point of climax. It is time in our view to end the old cat-and-mouse game which has resulted in nothing but grief for both sides and to initiate procedures of sustained cooperation which could lead to better things.

Fourth, it might be useful at this early stage to call attention to an issue which is bound to be of special importance in the negotiations -- crisis stability. As we all know, the Soviet Union has chosen to put most of its nuclear power into ICBMs, including some extremely large ones. Because of their number and power, the Soviet ICBMs constitute a threat to the stability of deterrence. Potentially at least they are the most vulnerable and the most threatening of weapons. A large part of our effort to persuade the Soviet Union to accept mutual deterrence as the only possible objective for the new round of TNF and START talks will necessarily focus on this problem. It is in our interest, in the interest of the Soviet Union, and in everybody else's interest, too, that we achieve provisions in the TNF and START agreements -- and in our defense

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plans -- which enhance confidence in the survivability of second strike forces, and therefore reduce pressures to adopt first strike or launch-on-warning policies. It would be helpful, consonant with that principle, to achieve reductions in the Soviet heavy ICBMs which constitute a special threat to the survivability of our land-based ICBMs and other strategic forces, and in the Soviet mobile SS-20s and other Euromissiles which constitute a complementary threat to targets in Europe, Japan, China, and the Middle East.

V.

The Reagan Administration is approaching the problem of arms control as a vital factor in an overall foreign policy of preventing war by restoring order. The United States has set no preconditions for the beginning of the talks. We have been waiting only until we have solved the intellectual problems of reappraisal and careful preparation after our disappointing experience with SALT I and SALT II, and we have been working on those problems with great urgency. We are not waiting until we have rearmed, in order to negotiate from "a position of strength." The will and the capacity of the United States and its Allies are enough, we believe, to attract the earnest attention of the Soviet Union. Nor have we asked the

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Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan, or require North Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia, before we negotiate. Some forms of political linkage between the course of events and arms control negotiations are inevitable, as was the case in 1968 when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia just before President Johnson was scheduled to go to Moscow for SALT talks. The linkage President Reagan seeks is of a different order. The goal of nuclear stalemate may be all we can achieve through negotiations -- an agreement which permits us to maintain our policy of deterrence, retaliation, and crisis stability so far as the use of nuclear weapons is concerned. That, surely, is our minimum goal in negotiation. But it is not a very appetizing goal, if the Soviet Union continues to treat nuclear agreements as a license for aggression in some of the most sensitive regions of the globe by conventional means, terrorism and subversion. Indeed, the United States is convinced that the Soviet program of expansion has gone too far, and has begun to present possibilities whose outcome can no longer be predicted or controlled. President Reagan has therefore instructed us to approach arms control as part of a much larger effort through which we and the Soviet Union might jointly stabilize

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our relations and contribute to the restoration of world public order. The linkage we seek between Soviet behavior and arms control is not merely a transitory or an isolated Soviet action, the sight of a dove on the troubled waters or the visits of Russian ballet companies to American cities, but Soviet cooperation in enforcing the rules of the Charter of the United Nations with regard to the international use of force. The process of seeking arms control agreements could and should play a positive part in that effort. As Secretary of State Haig said recently:

> "What do we want of the Soviet Union? We want greater Soviet restraint on the use of force. We want greater Soviet respect for the independence of others. And, we want the Soviets to abide by their reciprocal obligations, such as those undertaken in the Helsinki Accords. These are no more than we demand of any state, and these are no less than required by the U.N. Charter and international law. The rules of the Charter governing the international use of force will lose all of their influence on the behavior of nations if the Soviet Union continues its aggressive course."

On my recent trip to Europe, I was told of an episode which sums up all I have to offer you tonight. In the early years of the nuclear age, Hugh Gaitskell asked R. H. Tawney, the great social philosopher and patron saint of the Labor Party, to write him a memorandum about what British policy towards nuclear weapons

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should be. Tawney's paper said four things: First, the secret was out of the laboratory, and could never be returned. Any industrial country would have the technology to make the weapons. Secondly, it followed that Great Britain, France, and the United States could not give up nuclear weapons. Third, nuclear war was unthinkably destructive, and the West must find ways to protect its freedom and security and at the same time prevent nuclear war. Finally, Tawney drew from these three propositions a conclusion he regarded as inescapable, that the goal of policy must be not simply the avoidance of nuclear war, but the elimination of all international war.

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