

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

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Bill:

Following our lunch, I am sending along the article I told you about. Page 30 onwards has a full discussion of "arms control without agreements" which I believe should be implemented in the second term.

Best,
Ken

L-266

10/22/84

ARMS CONTROL WITH AND WITHOUT AGREEMENTS

Of them all, the most profound emotion arising from strategic arms control today is disappointment. On this, as on little else in the vast realm of arms control, conservatives and liberals concur -- conservatives for its failing to diminish the evermore-ominous Soviet strategic buildup, liberals for its failing to diminish the evermore wasteful strategic "arms race."¹

Few fields of human endeavor display as great a gap between what is hoped for and what has been realized as strategic arms control. Former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown said it best: "Measured against these glittering possibilities, the achievements of arms negotiations to date have been modest indeed, as are their immediate prospects...In all, not much to show for thirty-five years of negotiations and twenty years of treaties."²

People of all ideological stripes bemoan this state of affairs. They long for a breath of fresh air in this all-too stagnant endeavor. "Arms control theory is now at a dead end," Henry Kissinger recently observed. "The stalemate in negotiations reflects an impasse in thought."³ We should not have an "impasse in thought." With a half generation of experience, we should now have enough data to judge what works and what does not in strategic arms control, and to glean what new approaches might offer. We should, for instance, complement traditional arms control with a new or refurbished approach: arms control without agreements.

Hence, four basic questions: What is the problem? What did we expect? What should we expect? How do we get there?

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I

First, the problem. At a glance, it seems clear: we have ratified no nuclear arms control agreement for more than a decade, and Moscow has furnished scant evidence that we can do so anytime soon.

But is this really the problem? Making it so stresses the existence of an arms agreement rather than its effect, a misplaced emphasis. For the objective lies not in an agreement for its own sake; were it so, an agreement could be readily obtained (most easily by signing up to the Soviet proposal). Any nation can conclude an agreement with another if it yields to terms sufficiently favorable to that other state.

Thus it is that arms control agreements are neither good nor bad in the abstract. Their value depends upon their terms, and even more, on their effects. If an agreement reduces the risks of war, strengthens sound international norms, and contributes to world stability, as has the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, then it is worthy. But if an agreement inflates expectations without much, if any, concrete benefits, as did the interwar arms pacts and especially the Kellogg-Briand Pact, then it is not of much value and can even have adverse effects.

While the logic here is irrefutable, the passion for "an agreement" is barely resistible. American society is result-oriented. To be without any agreement is to invite serious criticism -- witness the cry against Ronald Reagan during the recent campaign as the first President in twenty years not to have concluded an arms accord.

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To achieve an agreement, even one that leaves the strategic plans of both sides relatively unaffected, is to earn acclaim. Such a standard invariably proves counterproductive. As Dean Acheson said, we can never get a good arms control agreement unless we are fully prepared to live without one.

II

So the pertinent question becomes: What are the problems with getting a good agreement? Some are on our side, many on the Soviet side.

Alexis de Tocqueville was on key 150 years ago when writing in Democracy in America that our system "can only with great difficulty regulate the details of an important undertaking, persevere in a fixed design, and work out its executions in spite of serious obstacles. It cannot combine its measures with secrecy or await their consequences with patience."⁴ Persevering "in a fixed design" is a major difference between our democratic, free-enterprise system -- which rewards risk-taking, thrives on innovation, and equates success with action -- and the Soviets' totalitarian, centralized system -- which rewards risk-aversion and thrives on predictable control.

Surely, the Soviets watch the dizzying pace of changes in U.S. arms control proposals -- the 1983 "build-down" concept constituting at least the fourth U.S. strategic arms approach in seven years -- with wonder and with pleasure. While 1983 critics of the Administration derided what they saw as a lack of U.S. flexibility in the START and INF negotiations, the Soviets may have wondered about the half dozen or more significant modifications in our START and INF proposals which we made in fairly rapid order.

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In any case, the Soviets can take pleasure in the expectation that if they stand pat, we will meanwhile negotiate with ourselves and likely change our position as a result.

To lurch from one objective or one fresh new approach to another -- buffeted by the pressures of impatient groups seeking a prompt agreement -- is to be playful with arms control. It is not to be serious about arms control. Indeed, the surest method to assure that we never conclude a significant agreement with the Soviets would be for us to propose whatever new notion moves some American faction -- a nuclear freeze one day, a MIRVed ICBM test ban a second day, build-down, a cruise missile deployment moratorium, or whatever. The Soviets will watch such twists and turns, pocketing benefits to themselves while persevering in their own objectives.

Thus must we curb some of our instinctive impatience. Arms control lends itself to speedy results no moreso than do negotiations on other complicated political or economic matters. The Austrian State Treaty of 1955 took more than ten years of hard negotiations. Impatience there could well have doomed Austria to less than the complete removal of Soviet occupation troops and less than the establishment of a fully democratic, neutral state in the heart of Europe. The Limited Test Ban Treaty (1963) came after eight years of effort, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968) took more than three years, SALT I (1972) two-and-a-half years, and SALT II (1979) almost seven years.

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As endemic as impatience is our inability to keep a secret, for long anyway. Leaks about arms control preparations and negotiations sabotage the chances for success. The likely prospect that any new offering will get leaked spurs any President to announce it himself. Such sadly has become standard fare. While admittedly adding a dramatic flare, this is precisely what arms control does not need. Public fanfare invariably leads to dashed hopes and deepening suspicions that the endeavor is being transformed from one primarily of strategic significance to one primarily of public relations.

The problem here is colossal. A glaring deficiency in our system is the unavoidable urge, nay necessity, to exaggerate in order to make an impact. Flamboyant rhetoric and stark conclusions come where subtlety and ambiguity should be. While common in areas of commerce, poverty programs, foreign aid, and defense (areas in which I have worked in the Federal government) it is most upsettingly pronounced in arms control. Ever since President Kennedy called the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 a key step in "man's effort to escape from the darkening prospects of more destruction," agreements have been adorned with rich superlatives. In the arms control realm, the Hawthorne effect holds in spades, namely that which is observed changes by the very act of its being observed. Here it is not so much the fact of being observed that so alters arms control as it is the overbearing amount of observation it attracts. Should arms control ever approach the public inattentiveness which trade negotiations, civil aviation talks, or international debt negotiations have attained, it would yield richer results. But this, for sure, is not to be.

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Our flamboyance and openness contrast with Soviet stodginess and secrecy. Looking at us, the Soviets face a cacophony of voices, of facts and views, a veritable information-overload. Looking at the Soviets, we face an unsettling paucity of inside knowledge and hard data.

Hence verification becomes a problem primarily for the U.S. The Soviets should know that we comply with agreements. Besides, they can easily substantiate their own intelligence about suspected U.S. violations through our press and Congress. We lack any such helpers inside the Soviet system.

"How much is enough?" must be posed in terms of verification, as in defense spending. That no significant arms control treaty is perfectly verifiable has become better known of late. An acceptable degree of verifiability depends upon the judgment of the President and the Congress, which in turn must take into account (a) the precision of treaty language and the technical capabilities for monitoring treaty compliance with an adversary who may try to cheat clandestinely; (b) the military risks of undetected violations or ones that are detected in a late stage; (c) the adversary's record of past compliance; and (d) the overall benefits that will accrue from the treaty in security or political terms. This standard is as demanding as the judges make it to be, though it should be stringent.

Meanwhile, tough choices must be made between high confidence verifiability and strategic significance. Elements easiest to verify, such as fixed launchers for ICBMs and SLBMs platforms in SALT I and II, are not necessarily the most important or useful

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measures of strategic strength. Indeed, their limitation may even be detrimental to strategic stability: limiting launchers without limiting warheads encourages MIRVing which increases the value of each launcher to an attacker, and in essence, raises pressures to strike first in a crisis. Those elements having the most strategic significance -- such as warheads, throwweight, and non-deployed missiles, all included in our START proposal -- are much harder to verify.

Moreover, new systems coming along, such as cruise missiles and mobile ICBMs, are both more stabilizing and less verifiable. The very traits that make them less vulnerable, and hence which discourage pressures for a first strike, are precisely those which thwart verification.

Even more troublesome is verification's twin, compliance. Verification involves the means to detect an opponent's adherence, and compliance involves the adherence itself, whether detected or not. Both are critical. Arms control is empty without compliance, and compliance is impossible to know in a closed society as the USSR without verification. Distrust of Soviet adherence to agreements runs consistently high among Americans, with polls indicating that some 70 percent of the public believe the Soviets are cheating on existing agreements and would cheat on future agreements.⁵ Similar skepticism runs throughout American history, beginning astonishingly with one of our earliest negotiators. John Jay, negotiating a treaty to end the Revolutionary War, reportedly said "he would not give a farthing for any parchment security whatever. They had never signified anything since the world began, when any prince or state, of either side, found it convenient to break through them."⁶

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Still, the Soviet Union is worse than most any prince or state. In January 1984, responding to a Congressional mandate, President Reagan documented seven cases of Soviet violations and probable violations of arms control undertakings. The most important are the high degree of Soviet encryption (scrambling) of its telemetry (radio signals from missile tests) and the construction of a radar near Krasnoyarsk. These two symbolize ominous developments: encryption of missile telemetry, the increasing concealment and deception of all USSR strategic programs, and the new radar, a possibly significant step toward a nationwide ABM capability. Both indicate brazen Soviet disregard for even bold violations of arms control commitments. For the Soviets certainly knew we would detect such a massive structure as the new radar, several football fields large, whose existence could not reasonably be reconciled with the ABM Treaty. Even more disturbing is that the construction must have been planned in the 1970s -- the very heyday of detente and of high and rising expectations for arms control.

What to do about Soviet violations remains most confounding of all. The usual deliberations in the Standing Consultative Committee (SCC) and higher level diplomatic protests appear necessary but not sufficient. Military countermeasures may be appropriate, but unless begun as a "safeguard," as part of a treaty's ratification, they may be too little, too late.

Formerly what might be labeled the "massive retaliation theory" of verification prevailed, namely that the domestic and international reactions stemming from a Soviet violation would deter or at least end it.

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President Carter went so far during an April 30, 1979 press conference as to forecast the "very severe" consequences that would arise from "any" Soviet violation of SALT II. He sternly stated: "...the Soviets know that if we ever detect any violation of the SALT agreement, that that would be a basis on which to reject the treaty in its entirety; there would be a possible termination of the good relationships between our country and the Soviet Union on which detente is based; and it might very well escalate into a nuclear confrontation." Perhaps President Carter believed what he said, or perhaps it is yet another example of the tendency or even the necessity of overselling an arms control accord to engender support. But in any case, the muffled public and world response to President Reagan's January report belies this "massive retaliation theory" of compliance.

Cancellation of our obligations in treaties that the Soviets violate is one legal recourse, but one politically painful and at times even unwise. It does not seem wise for the U.S. to respond to Soviet, Vietnamese, or Iraqi use of chemical weapons, in stark violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention by our abrogating them. We have no intention of ever initiating the use of chemical weapons, and our abrogation would diminish the accords' salience for the violating state and for scores of other states adhering to them.

Nonetheless, some effective response must be found if Soviet violations are not corrected. Otherwise arms control is doomed. For a treaty prohibition adhered to by open societies and violated by closed societies is no prohibition at all. Rather, it is unintended unilateral disarmament in the guise of bilateral or multilateral arms control.

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Another major problem in strategic arms control, one of the most complicated, stems from the different force structures and approaches of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. The U.S. strategic force and doctrine evolved from the Air Force and its strategic bombing concepts of World War II. We stressed high technology and placed a premium on strategic bombers and later, ballistic missile submarines. From the earliest period in the nuclear era, we emphasized a deterrence doctrine and a retaliatory strategy.

The Soviet strategic force and doctrine arose from its Army, its artillery actually, and stressed size and sheer firepower. In evolving their strategic systems, they compensated for their lack of technological sophistication with a brute-force design, which now furnishes them with tremendous growth potential as they have become more technologically sophisticated. Their strong, almost paranoid urge for greater and greater military power, lack of air and naval traditions, and keen intent upon the strictest command and control restrictions -- all these pushed them into a far greater reliance on air-defense and civil-defense and land-based missiles. Although the Soviet Union is deploying a dynamic triad of its own, the two sides' approaches and forces are not the same in major respects. Thus, even with good faith and Herculean efforts on both sides, it would be difficult to bridge the wide disparities -- to balance systems that are comparable and to make tradeoffs between systems that are not. This difference exacerbates substantial differences between U.S. and Soviet goals in arms control.

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Last is the problem of frequent leadership changes. This debilitates arms control by breaking continuity and the making of the tough decisions essential for a balanced agreement. Usually these changes arise on the American side. In the initial decade and a half of strategic arms discussions, five different U.S. Presidents faced the same General Secretary heading the Soviet Union (Brezhnev). This proved most disruptive since the past three Presidential elections have been marked by challengers opposing the incumbents' arms control approach. And new Administrations inevitably feel an obligation to reinvent the arms control wheel yet again.

Of late has been a role-reversal, with President Reagan facing three different Soviet leaders in his first three years in office (Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko). The disruption here is not so much newcomers opposing their predecessors as it is stagnation in Soviet policy. This is not surprising, since all three Soviet leaders have been afflicted with serious ailments. Besides, in their system a new leader needs considerable time to consolidate his hold (witness Stalin from approximately 1924 to 1934 and Khrushchev from around 1953 to 1957). The President's meetings with Foreign Minister Gromyko this fall will, we hope, lead to a reinvigoration of our dialogue with the Soviets; but we have yet to see whether or when the Soviet leadership will be both willing and able to bargain on tough issues. President Chernenko's remarks of mid-October did not clarify that picture any.

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III

These obstacles we know now, far better than we did at the dawn of strategic arms control. Still, it is worth posing: What did we expect? And, has it come about? In a nutshell, we expected an end, or at least a tempering, of both the strategic buildup and of Soviet aggression around the world. Neither has come about as hoped.

Even though both sides have now signed three strategic arms agreements, both have increased their strategic offensive capabilities, the Soviets far more than we, with the number of U.S. missile warheads doubling and that of the Soviet Union quadrupling. Since the strategic arms talks began in 1969, the Soviets introduced four new classes of land-based missiles, upgrading these seven times, and launched at least five new or improved classes of ballistic missile submarines. They are currently flight testing yet another new type of ICBM, inconsistent with the terms of SALT II. Since the first strategic arms accord was signed, the Soviets have added a staggering 7,900 nuclear warheads; just from the time the second was signed (1979), it has added 3,850. The existence of the massive Soviet strategic buildup has become a matter of fact, not debate. Current controversy instead revolves around its durability and its consequences.

While the Soviet Union marched ahead in its strategic capabilities, the U.S. dawdled. Our defense spending, by the mid-1970's, had for seven years been in real decline. Symbolically, when Ronald Reagan assumed office in 1981, the U.S. had an open production line in only one leg (i.e., sea-based) of the strategic triad, whereas the Soviet Union had open and active production lines in all three.

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Arms control has not been a major, if any, impediment to the Soviet buildup. No one can reasonably argue that the strategic balance is more stable, or more favorable to the U.S., today than it was when the strategic arms talks began. For it palpably is not. Those who most fervently championed SALT I and II for the accords' reputed ability to help stop the strategic arms race are those who now most fervently decry the staggering growth in strategic weapons within the terms of those very treaties. We may have created our own illusions -- and the folly here has been bipartisan -- but the Soviets never misled us in this regard. Given a choice between constraining U.S. strategic forces or protecting their own strategic buildup, they have consistently chosen the latter. They continue to do so in their proposals offered in START.

Secondly, we expected arms control negotiations to at least temper Soviet misbehavior in regional crises. Again, the outcome has been different. Between 1970 and 1976 -- the time of arms control "breakthroughs" and intensive U.S.-Soviet dialogue, including five summits -- the Soviets (a) furnished considerable arms and ammunition to back North Vietnam's war against South Vietnam, which subverted those peace talks; (b) threatened to intervene militarily in the Yom Kippur War which caused the U.S. to go on strategic alert, despite a recently signed U.S.-Soviet agreement to warn each other about just such instances; and (c) expanded involvement in sundry African countries by dispatching significant arms, Cuban soldiers, and Soviet officers.

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During these very years, five countries became Marxist -- South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mozambique and Angola -- nearly all with substantial help from the Soviet Union. Two more -- Ethiopia and Afghanistan -- went Communist during 1977 and 1978, again with considerable Soviet assistance. And these were the same two years in which the SALT II negotiations intensified, Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks continued, and four new arms control channels were opened up.⁷ In 1979, after Secretary of State Vance met Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin more than twenty times and after the Carter-Brezhnev Summit to sign SALT II, the Soviets still blared false statements designed to further inflame Iranians during the hostage crisis and, even worse, began their own massive invasion of Afghanistan.

In marked contrast, over the past four years, Soviet global behavior has been most inhibited while arms control and high-level diplomatic negotiations have unfortunately been most stalemated. Of the three major wars in this era -- those in Lebanon, the Falklands, and Iran/Iraq -- none was at its core an East-West conflict. Since leaving the arms negotiations in late 1983, Soviet words have become harsher but their actions have remained tepid.

Given such a clear historical record, should we give up the goal for arms control negotiations of at least tempering Soviet expansionism in regional crises? The answer, in a word, is yes.

To assign arms talks responsibility for eliminating or even diminishing geostrategic competition is to burden them with much more than they can conceivably carry. To laden arms control with such unrealistic expectations is inevitably to break it.

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Arms control best be considered one singular element in a full panoply of political, economic, and defense efforts. But, frankly, such modesty is frequently lost, since arms control has been thrust forward as the barometer by which superpower relations (indeed, global tranquility) is gauged.

IV

What should we expect from arms control?

We should expect an arms control accord in fact to increase strategic stability and thereby reduce the risks of war (for my money, the most vital goal of all), to reduce nuclear weapons to equal and substantially lower levels, and to be effectively verifiable. These goals, while simple to state, are of course exceedingly difficult to attain.

Critics of the Reagan Administration who argue that we are much too ambitious correctly grasp the difficulties of our achieving with the Soviets deep reductions, particularly in the most destabilizing weapons. These critics advocate more modest goals, with more significant limits on arms coming somewhere down the road. Such was the promissory nature of SALT I and II advanced, not so much for what they delivered themselves, as for what they promised future agreements would deliver.

If we should eventually have to settle for something less than the level of deep reductions we now propose, it should only be after a most valiant try and only with extreme reluctance. But this does not mean that we should ask for less. Unless we seek arms control

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with a real military bite -- an agreement that reduces destabilizing weapons and increases strategic stability -- we relinquish any chance of ever achieving them. Moreover, proposing yet another arms control approach that does not even attempt to slow down, much less halt, strategic competition may so undercut public support as to bankrupt the entire process.⁸

Herein lies the core set of questions: Whether the Soviet Union will ever accept an arms control regime that significantly reduces its strategic forces; whether our strategic concepts will ever become so compatible as to agree on how to distinguish stabilizing from destabilizing weapons; and whether the Soviets will ever accept true equality between strategic forces, or continue to mask their demand for strategic superiority in the guise of "equal security". We do not know.

But we do know that we cannot find out unless we try. If, after enough time and with enough incentives, the answers to these core questions are "no," then we will have learned something rather important: that arms control cannot be justified on military/security grounds. If the answer turns out to be "yes," we will have taken, together with the Soviets, a big step forward in making the world a much better place.

We will not have the answer unless we negotiate with most modest publicity and most vigorous diligence, all the while providing for an adequate defense. Doing so is much trickier than it sounds. For the arms control process has become handicapped by constant carping from both ends of the political spectrum.

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To many conservatives, the very act of arms negotiations inescapably saps the will of the West and inevitably erodes support for essential defense programs. This tenet predates the onset of strategic talks. Secretary of Defense Forrestal in July 1947 stated "even the talk of disarmament is highly dangerous because of the American tendency always to take for granted that other nations have the same objectives as ourselves. I am most apprehensive of our people's mistaking the discussion of disarmament for the fact."⁹

While that point may have been valid then and later, especially in the 1970s, it is less so now. Americans have come to realize that talking does not make it so, that no amount of arms talks can substitute for defense programs. Only an effective treaty that is concluded and adhered to can help our security. The converse of the Forrestal fear may be truer today, namely that a President unfortunately must depend upon ongoing arms control talks to build the necessary Congressional support for controversial defense programs.

To many liberals, defense programs are frequently seen to be so provocative to the Soviets as to squander chances for successful arms control. Time after time the cry goes forth for us unilaterally to halt tests or deployments of systems -- be they the B-1, the MX, sea-launched cruise missiles, the Pershing II, or anti-satellite interceptors -- quite irrespective of what the Soviets do, so as to "give arms control a chance."

Sadly, this is not the way the world works. No labor union would ever scrap its strike fund, pledge never to have its workers walk off the job, and then one-by-one relinquish demands to management in order to set a climate conducive to successful negotiations.

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The Soviets are no different in this respect from other tough negotiators, and tougher than most. If they can realize their goals without giving up anything in return, they will. If we hand them strategic superiority by neglecting to modernize our forces, we cannot hope to attain strategic stability or parity through arms control. But if we pursue programs that redress the imbalances that have arisen from the unparalleled Soviet military buildup, the Soviets will have a strong incentive to negotiate genuine arms reductions.

V

Last consideration: How do we get there? How do we move toward our goals, particularly furthering strategic stability?

Given the staggering obstacles set forth above, the temptation is strong in some quarters to step aside from nuclear arms control, at least until more favorable conditions materialize. The Soviets have of late sought to do something on this order, for their own reasons. But there is no walking away from the nuclear dilemma. Nor should there be. People in the U.S. and around the world expect Washington and Moscow to address and redress the nuclear buildup.

The Soviets seek to switch the spotlight from nuclear arms talks to those on "preventing the militarization of space," as they first publicized in June and as President Chernenko hyped again in mid-October. While they no doubt wish to downplay their walkout from the nuclear arms talks, surely their prime purpose here is to help abort research for the President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, or "Star Wars" in the common vernacular).

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The Soviets, posing the topic this way in public, neatly slide over the fact that both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R have long relied upon space for such important military functions as communications, early warning of attack, navigational assistance, and monitoring of the others' forces. Furthermore, space systems are essential for verifying strategic arms accords. The Soviets also slide over their monopoly in an operational, dedicated anti-satellite (ASAT) interceptor, while ours is in the early test phase. Finally, the Soviet formulation lumps together two programs with quite distinct goals: ASAT, a near-term development program for us, designed to destroy orbiting satellites and to redress a specific military imbalance; and SDI, a long-term research program designed to explore the potential for defense against ballistic missiles.

Not surprisingly, the Soviets have chimed into our long-overdue national debate on SDI.¹⁰ Regrettably, though, they have yet to pick up our offer to engage the subject in a more serious vein, between our two governments. The President reiterated this offer in his September speech at the United Nations. This discourse too is long overdue, since the ABM Treaty explicitly recognizes the intrinsic relationship between offensive and defensive strategic forces. A dialogue on this relationship could bring both of us "back to basics" on matters critical to future arms control, in a manner last seriously pursued a decade and a half ago.

The dialogue could be conducted within the "umbrella talks" the President likewise proposed in his UN speech. Besides enabling spin-offs of actual negotiations -- for example, on nuclear arms and on space -- umbrella talks could continue for our joint exploration

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of overall security/arms control matters and for discussions on the host of ongoing multilateral arms talks (MBFR, Committee on Disarmament, and Conference on Disarmament in Europe).

Seen in this light, SDI and the U.S.-Soviet discussions on offense-defense coming in its wake would revive the conceptual approach underlying the ABM Treaty. Research on defensive systems, as embodied in SDI, is not only permitted under the ABM Treaty but was actively advocated by the Nixon Administration when the treaty stood before the Senate. Defense Secretary Laird advocated, that we "vigorously pursue a comprehensive ABM technology program."¹¹

The research itself may eventually furnish possibilities for deterrence to be based more upon defense against missiles that can strike either the U.S. or our Allies, rather than solely upon the threat of annihilation. The results are years off, and naturally we do not know what they will be. Estimates vary wildly. But we do know that SDI's components stand at the very frontier of today's scientific advancements -- in computers and sensor technology, radars, high energy beams, and laser technology. In contrast, components of offensive systems have been exhaustively researched for decades; breakthroughs here are thus far less likely.

We can surmise now that even a less than perfect or less than comprehensive defense could markedly increase the uncertainty to a potential attacker. And this, after all, is the quintessence of deterrence. Should the technology prove successful and affordable, defensive systems would clearly be most effective and stabilizing in a world of markedly reduced offensive forces on both sides.

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We must, meanwhile, scrupulously guard against the vicious circle of defensive efforts spurring the other side to yet more offensive weapons, added in order to saturate the prospective defenses. Again, this could best be done in frank discourse with the Soviets.

While there is much to learn in this endeavor, SDI research is valuable on its own merits and as a prudent hedge against the Soviets' active defense programs and research. For they have not only constructed the permitted defensive system around Moscow but also taken some steps toward fashioning a nationwide ABM capacity. They are, as well, engaged in vigorous research on such SDI areas as lasers and neutral particle beams. Surely, the worst outcome of all would be one in which our hands were somehow tied on defensive systems while the Soviets gained substantial further advantages in this realm. Admittedly, SDI and the offense-defense relationship need the most careful deliberations within our government, with the Allies, and with the Soviets. The first two are underway; the last lamentably not.

We do have a firmer historical and technological base on the offense part of this equation. Indeed, we can learn from experience which previous offensive arms control approaches have been successful and which have not. For one, designing ways to stop modernization of weapons has become more popular even though its record has been consistently unsuccessful. Long a theme in arms control, the ban on modernization has been played out in: the prohibition on flight testing or deploying more than one new type of ICBM, as provided in SALT II; the nuclear freeze movement; and in testing bans and moratoria conceived for ASATs, nuclear explosions, testing or producing MIRVed ICBMs, and so forth.

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This approach has proven rather futile, as could have been anticipated. Types of progress can no more be stemmed in weapons development than is possible in industry, sports, or any other human endeavor. Nor should it be. Through modernization of weapons, we can today keep deterrence strong with one-fourth fewer nuclear weapons than in 1967 and a startling 75 percent less megatonnage than in 1960. Moreover, modernization has of late concentrated on making nuclear weapons smaller, safer, more reliable, and more survivable -- in stark contrast to research in the late 1940s on hydrogen bombs which strived to create evermore enormous blasts.

By and large, the newer strategic systems (SS-25s on the Soviet side, Midgetman on ours, SLCMs on both) increase the survivability of forces and thereby reduce the pressure to "use 'em or lose 'em." The dispersion of firepower makes each a less inviting target, thus less likely to be fired upon or necessary to fire early in a crisis. Marked improvements in command, control, communications, intelligence (C³I) -- the top strategic priority of the Reagan Administration -- make the chances of accidental war yet less likely and the President's grip on our nuclear forces yet more firm. This, too, is all to the good.

Moreover, defining what constitutes modernization for effective arms limitations can be nigh unto impossible. It is no easier to set criteria to determine (as in SALT II) when a missile becomes a "new" one with new components or a renovation than it is for an automobile or a major appliance. By concocting a phalanx of cumbersome definitional difficulties which end with scant utility, provisions to retard or rule out modernization open the door to endless doubts over Soviet compliance (witness the SS-25 as a second "new type" missile in SALT II terms). This only harms U.S.-Soviet relations rather than foster them.

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Another approach which grows in popularity as it declines in utility is that of tying the deployment of individual weapon systems to the vicissitudes of arms negotiations. This approach has grown remarkably popular in Congress, but it sprang forth in NATO's INF dual track decision of 1979, which linked the deployment of missiles in Europe explicitly to negotiations with the Soviet Union. The NATO plan in turn arose, unbelievably today, in part from European fears that the U.S. would give away too much in strategic arms control.

However successful the final result -- and NATO held tough, thwarting the Soviets' number one foreign policy goal of splitting the Alliance by stopping the deployments -- the dual-track formulation itself rendered far more problems than solutions. That formulation practically invited the Soviet Union into NATO's councils, bestowing upon Moscow power over the Alliance's ability to redress an imbalance the Soviets had created in the first place. It also stirred European public opposition to their governments, which the Soviets could and did handily exacerbate. Nonetheless, political parties which favored the NATO decision were favored by voters in the key European countries quite consistently during the four years between the NATO decision and the initial deployments.

Despite NATO's recent tumultuous experience with the dual-track formulation, the concept is being more widely advocated, and even bastardized at that. An extreme extension of this approach was embodied in a House Amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill in May 1984. It provided the Soviet Union an opportunity in effect to kill a strategic system, the MX missile, that four Presidents and a distinguished bipartisan panel (the Scowcroft Commission)

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deemed critical to our national defense. All Moscow would have to do is to send a delegation to Geneva to resume a negotiation which it had no business to interrupt. The MX would then almost certainly be killed, not as part of a trade-off encompassing concessions on their part, but merely by Soviet diplomats showing up where they should have been all the while.

Politics is differentiation, and Congressional politics is marked by a Member differentiating him- or herself from the party or Administration, particularly on such a high-profile matter as arms control. A President must negotiate with Congressional leaders, as well as with the Soviets, on sundry strategic programs. But, as is often quipped, we need to stop spending so much time negotiating with ourselves and start spending more time negotiating with the Soviets.

There has, in fact, developed a need for a given amount of arms negotiations at any one time. This new "zero sum theory of arms control" goes: if negotiations are proceeding with the Soviets (as in 1982 and 1983 on both INF and START), then the need for vigorous negotiations with the Congress recedes; however, if negotiations stall with the Soviets (as in 1984), then they are replaced by more extensive and intensive negotiations with Congressmen and Senators in order to retain controversial weapons systems needed for our security and for incentives in ensuing arms talks.

But there is a price paid for this state of affairs. Presidential control over both arms control and strategic planning slowly, yet detectably, ebbs. Both are thus deprived of needed coherence and continuity, characteristics which are not notable hallmarks of the legislative process.

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No arms control negotiation can be successful without central management; no negotiation of any kind can. Ditto for strategic planning. This has been recognized and practiced. In the postwar era, Congress has never deprived a President of a strategic program he deemed necessary (though it has funded a few which Presidents have considered unnecessary). Hence the MX affair takes on a grander dimension and may set a more ominous precedent. Its outcome could damage in one fell swoop prospects for arms control and strategic coherence. If the President fails to gain Congressional approval of basic strategic programs involved in arms control negotiation, the Soviets are encouraged to be obstinate even longer. Hence the crying need for more bipartisanship in these matters, a subject about which so much has been written and so much more needs to be done.

Congress, of course, has a critical role to play in these matters, and a great service to perform. Members of Congress constitute essential continuity between Administrations. As such, they are the trustees of the long-term national interest; clearly this was the Founding Fathers' intention. But Congress best performs this role not by haggling over minor matters but by taking the wider and longer perspective. In particular, it should scrap the notion of a "dual track" approach altogether. Defense programs, whether the Pershing II or MX or ASAT, should be designed to meet U.S. security needs and should be funded or discarded on that singular basis. Should arms control accords be concluded and implemented that actually alter those security needs, these defense programs (and related ones) can then be altered accordingly.

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Above all else, Congress and the public must grasp how arms control demands patience. President Eisenhower was right when he presumed that "as everybody has always known, any move for disarmament is going to be slow, tortuous, and certainly gradual, even at the best" (January 25, 1956 press conference). No amount of American imploring or unilateral concessions, such as sinking the MX or holding up SLCM deployments, is likely to get the Soviets back to the table and into serious negotiations. That is a decision only Moscow can make, for its own internal and other reasons.

It is well to remember that the Soviets left the arms talks not because of the Reagan Administration's overall handling of the relationship, not because of past rhetoric, and not because of the "deep cuts" we propose on strategic arms. They left, quite simply, because NATO stayed the course set in 1979 to redress the European imbalance arising from the Soviets' extensive SS-20 deployments, averaging one a week. It is hard to imagine any President proceeding differently on INF deployments in response to the Soviet insistence on its "half-zero" option -- hundreds of INF warheads on their side and zero on ours. And it is equally hard to imagine any Senator or Congressman favoring such a lop-sided arrangement as the Soviets proposed.

Congress is to be applauded for its rejection of "bargaining chips" as justifications of weapons systems. Again, each system should rise or fall on its own merits; none should be constructed solely in order to be discarded. They seldom are so discarded. Meanwhile, defense dollars have been wasted and, even more important, precious defense credibility has been squandered.

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VI

How do we get where we want to go?

First and foremost, we can and must be ready for tough bargaining and equally tough trade-offs once the Soviets seriously reengage. Even under the best of circumstances, a relatively comprehensive START agreement will require a lot of hammering out given the two sides' different doctrines, force postures, goals, etc. noted earlier. This preparation has, in fact, been underway in the Reagan Administration for some time. When the President said his team was ready anytime, he meant it substantively, not just logistically.

Such preparations, however critical, constitute the first of several elements that furnish greater hope for progress in strategic arms control beginning in 1985:

- o The absence of such a momentous event as NATO redressing the balance in Europe with the initial Euromissile deployments sets a better stage for success. It was, after all, the Soviet fixation on INF which provided such an ominous setting for arms control these past four years.
- o One can safely presume that no matter how long the stagnation in Moscow persists, the Soviets will at least not change leadership as often as they did over the past four years. Again, this was debilitating since arms control inevitably involves tough trade-offs within each government as well as between them. Seldom over the past years was there much evidence that such was taking place behind those thick Kremlin walls.

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- o The strategic modernization program begun in 1981, with its base of a much stronger U.S. economy, offers the Soviets considerably more incentives to come to terms than previously existed. SDI adds measurably in this regard.

- o Last is the simple fact of continuity of the Reagan Administration, with the expertise it has accumulated and the lessons it has learn about arms control in particular and dealing with the Soviet Union in general.

While we are ready and willing to achieve a broad agreement on nuclear weapons, the suggestion is sometimes made to limit the scope of strategic arms control to a few critical elements, e.g., warheads and launchers on ICBMs and SLBMs, and heavy bombers. Certainly, negotiation prospects can rise as items under negotiation fall -- indeed, this approach has been advanced as something of a "quick fix" -- and some of the toughest verification problems fade away as well.

This notion is novel only in degree, not in kind. For despite the label of "comprehensive" strategic arms accords, past agreements have not even attempted to limit all key measures of strategic power. Such critical measures as accuracy, reliability, and C³I simply cannot be controlled directly. But trimming down the number of elements to be limited still poses two difficulties. Deciding what to include and what to exclude becomes a nexus of disagreement between the two sides, each seeking to limit areas of the other's relative strength. Even more grave a problem is the limited effectiveness of such an accord.

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In arms control -- as in wage-price controls, pollution controls, or any type of controls -- to limit only a few select elements is to let other elements run free. This can thwart, if not nullify, the whole enterprise. As with a balloon, when parts are pressed down, other areas bulge out.

Yet another approach to bring speedier, easier results is to limit an arms control agreement to broad principles rather than specific weapons systems or their characteristics. This approach contains all the strengths and deficiencies of the 1974 Vladivostok understanding. It can be more readily negotiated, with disagreements put aside or elevated to a common level of abstraction. Such accords, however, may be so abstract as to leave the two sides squabbling over just what the principles mean, and how they are to be applied. The U.S. and Soviet Union disagreed after Vladivostok was signed over whether the Backfire bombers and cruise missiles were or were not included. This is most unfortunate as, at the bare minimum, arms control is meant to reduce tensions between the U.S. and U.S.S.R, not to exacerbate them.

Focus on arms control through agreements-in-principle could detract attention and energy from the need for real reductions of real weapons. Moreover, a long line of broad "principles agreements" already exists involving the U.S. and U.S.S.R, including the UN Charter, the 1972 Basic Principles Agreement, the 1973 Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, and the 1975 Helsinki Accords, as well as the Vladivostok Accord. The most charitable thing that can be said about this panoply of signed documents is that strategic stability has not palpably improved because of them.

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George Marshall once said: "Don't ask me to agree in principle; that just means that we haven't agreed yet."

Another and to me the most promising of innovative thoughts is arms control through individual but (where possible) parallel policies: i.e., arms control without agreements (treaties, in particular). In simple terms, each side takes measures which enhance strategic stability and reduce nuclear weapons in consultation -- but not necessarily in a formalized, signed agreement -- with each other. Those measures could be enunciated as national policies and could be confirmed in exchanges, ideally after some understandings or at least discussions with the Soviets. Not all aspects of arms control could or should be so fashioned. But some areas may benefit from less emphasis on the formal process -- whether negotiations are on or off, whether one side puts forward a new proposal or another -- and far more on the results -- whether there is greater stability and fewer nuclear weapons on either or both sides. If the Soviets are willing, we can attain these results together in evolving parallel policies.

Adopting this approach of individual, parallel restraint could help avoid endless problems over what programs to exclude, which to include, and how to verify them. The focus should be on areas or strategic systems of greatest military importance. Arms control without agreements would be easier to discuss with the Soviets and quicker to yield concrete results. Being less formal, such arrangements could be more easily modified if circumstances change than could be legally-binding treaties.

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While appearing novel, this approach of evolving parallel policies is by no means new. Winston Churchill, in a March 1933 speech before Parliament, contrasted what he deemed the glaring deficiencies of formalized disarmament negotiations with the oft-hidden benefits of "private interchanges" in normal diplomatic discourse, such as: " 'If you will not do this, we shall not have to do that,' 'If your program did not start so early, ours would begin even later,' and so on." Churchill believed "a greater advance and progress towards a diminution of expenditure on armaments might have been achieved by these methods than by the conferences and schemes of disarmament which have been put forward at Geneva."¹²

At the dawn of strategic arms talks, others advocated a similar approach.¹³ And, in a way, it has been practiced ever since. Today we have a policy of not undercutting SALT I and SALT II, as long as the Soviets show equal restraint, and a policy of reaffirming adherence to the obligations of the unratified Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty. The Soviets state similar policies. At times, a treaty followed unilateral restraint, as the 1962 unilateral U.S. renunciation of nuclear weapons in space helped lead five years later to the Outer Space Treaty, and as the 1969 unilateral U.S. renunciation of biological and toxin weapons helped lead three years later to the Biological Weapons Convention.

But such practices need not lead to full-blown treaties. The U.S. and U.S.S.R hold discussions on non-proliferation -- regularized to twice yearly during the Reagan Administration -- which are helpful to both sides and to world stability. The two countries talk, not

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about what they might talk about or when or where, but about the real difficulties of preventing problem countries from acquiring the bomb. Receiving less publicity enables them to work more productively, and continually. When the Soviets suspended START, INF, and MBFR at the close of 1983, they informed us that the non-proliferation dialogue would continue on schedule.

Strategic stability can be enhanced by making our forces less inviting to a Soviet first strike and postured to be less threatening in terms of a dangerous first strike potential. We need to communicate with the Soviets -- explicitly through discussion, but if they refuse, then implicitly through example -- on how to lower the incentives to launch nuclear weapons preemptively. We need to talk about how some systems are inherently more destabilizing in this regard, such as ICBMs which provide scant warning time, are highly accurate, concentrated in firepower, and difficult to defend against. Other systems, such as strategic bombers, are inherently more stabilizing because they are slower, can be recalled before they release their nuclear weapons, and are easier to defend against.

Finally, a fruitful dialogue could evolve into U.S.-Soviet discussions -- without expectations of a legal document or even full agreement as a result -- on crisis prevention, crisis management, increasing openness, and sharing more and accurate information. This could be done through discussions between U.S. cabinet officers and Soviet counterparts, or U.S. and Soviet regional experts or, best of all, under the arms control umbrella -- all proposed by the President at the UN last September. One can also envision a similar but wider dialogue between NATO and the Warsaw Pact country members, which might profitably evolve from or even within the MBFR forum.

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The second prime goal, reduction of nuclear weapons, can likewise be pursued by way of individual, or, better yet, reciprocal restraint. As mentioned, the U.S. has unilaterally reduced its own nuclear arsenal quite markedly over the past two decades, and many of these reductions took place before the beginning of the SALT process. At times, the process itself has contributed to keeping obsolete and even dangerous nuclear weapons in the arsenal in order to bolster our negotiating leverage for ongoing or prospective negotiations. NATO likewise unilaterally decided over the past half decade to withdraw 2,400 nuclear weapons from its total arsenal. Both sets of reductions have been quite beneficial; having the effect of raising stability and lowering nuclear reliance, they constitute moves toward arms control without agreements. Neither, one can safely postulate, would have happened had it depended upon an arms control treaty.

While the trend in nuclear weaponry generally is toward smaller and safer devices, the trend in military strategy generally is to move away from such heavy reliance upon nuclear weapons. As mentioned, SDI research, if productive, may eventually favor a non-nuclear defense over a nuclear offense, leading to a stable balance at much lower levels of nuclear weapons. Far closer to being realized are dramatic improvements in conventional weapons which could enable them to help raise the nuclear threshold by (a) reducing the chances of conventional wars, which could then become nuclear, and (b) assuming military roles which, until now, could be accomplished only by nuclear weapons. With more accurate guidance systems and more effective conventional munitions ("smart weapons"), for example,

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conventional arms could be deployed to attack hardened point targets such as bunkers, bridge pylons, and other targets behind enemy lines. New sub-munitions could delay and defeat massed Soviet armor with the effectiveness of nuclear weapons.

We need to swim with this technological tide. President Reagan feels personally committed to working toward radically reducing the numbers and degree of reliance upon nuclear weapons. This goal can best be furthered by planning, along with our NATO Allies, to build up our conventional forces in order to raise overall deterrence and to eliminate the need to consider using nuclear weapons early in response to a massive Soviet conventional attack on Western Europe.

All such steps must be carefully managed. We need to work closely with our Allies and communicate precisely to or, better yet, with the Soviets so that there would be no misunderstanding about our continuing deep commitment to NATO and its doctrine of flexible response. In particular, we in no way wish to make Western Europe "safe" for a conventional attack. Besides, the Alliance has depended upon nuclear deterrence to compensate for the Warsaw Pact's conventional superiority since 1949, and will continue to do so throughout the foreseeable future.

Our nuclear forces must serve the additional role -- beyond deterring a Soviet nuclear attack on the U.S. -- of "extended deterrence," helping to protect our friends and Allies abroad against any type of armed attack from the Soviet bloc. In this endeavor we have reaped sweeping success; Europe is approaching a modern-day record, 43 years, without war. No mean accomplishment.

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Despite possibilities of this approach -- arms control without agreements -- it could encounter stiff resistance here at home. Some conservatives could justifiably fear more unilateral than reciprocal or parallel restraint from this approach. But if that happened and this approach created great pressures for harmful unilateral concessions, then it would and should readily lose support; it would soon be rendered ineffective. Moreover, conservative opponents could claim that the objective of arms control is to control Soviet forces, not ours. But arms control should make each side more stable. It is not a zero-sum game. Both sides can gain by taking the right strategic steps on their own and in collaboration with each other, even while realizing that their strategic doctrines and tasks for strategic forces diverge substantially.

Some liberals may be even more bothered, detecting here a devious way to kill arms control as practiced over the past half generation. As stated, however, this approach would supplement, not supplant the traditional track. Besides, they could see that if successful this manner of proceeding could result in fewer nuclear weapons and greater global stability, issues which should be of deepest concern to them. In addition, this approach could be applicable across many areas of arms control to supplement the traditional track in these areas.

In its greatest asset lies its greatest liability: blandness. Useful measures of restraint, even if reciprocal, constitute scant material for a media event, furnish no soaring political lift.

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Such moves are far more likely to further strategic stability and reduce nuclear weapons than they are to fill peoples' deep longing for an arms control treaty (sometimes used in the media interchangeably with "a peace treaty"). As R. James Woolsey quipped, it is virtually impossible to organize a parade on behalf of proximate justice. Likewise, no parade will ever be organized on behalf of arms control without agreements.

VII

Certainly a primary role filled by the arms control process is to reassure the public that somehow, someday its government is grappling with The Nuclear Issue. Pope John Paul II wrote the United Nations in June 1982 that the world should not be condemned to be "always susceptible to the real danger of explosion." It is painfully depressing to face up to the fact that the world is so poised, and may be condemned to remain so.

Throughout human history, hope has been as powerful and deep an emotion as fear, lust, aggression, and love. Free people have rightly asked their government to contend with the greatest of all human dilemmas involving the most awesome of all human weapons. That government has a solemn obligation to do its very best. Arms control should not be allowed to degenerate. Rather, it should be molded into the most effective instrument we know how to fashion. Then, the sweeping hopes long associated with arms control can be justified.

- 1 The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's November 1979 report on SALT II was quite perceptive in this regard: "...while giving due weight to these modest though useful steps, the Committee is disappointed that more could not be achieved from the arms control point of view. The permitted aggregates are very large...But the most important reason for the Committee's sense of disappointment is the large increase in warheads expected on both sides, despite the modest reduction in the numbers of permitted launchers. Thus, paradoxically, a vast increase in the quantity and destructiveness of each side's strategic power will occur during the period of a treaty that seeks to limit strategic offensive arms.", The SALT II Treaty (Senate Executive Report 96-14, November 19, 1979) pp 316-7.
- 2 Brown, Harold, Thinking about National Security: Defense and Foreign Policy in a Dangerous World, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), p. 185.
- 3 Kissinger, Henry H., "Should We Try to Defend Against Russia's Missiles?", The Washington Post, September 23, 1984, p. C8.
- 4 Tocqueville, Alexis de, Democracy in America, Vol. I (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 235.
- 5 Poll for the Committee on the Present Danger, Conducted by Penn and Schoen, (April, 1984).
- 6 Beilenson, Laurence W., The Treaty Trap, (Washington, DC Public Affairs Press, 1969), p. 18.
- 7 These included negotiations on a comprehensive test ban, Indian Ocean naval demilitarization, banning anti-satellite weapons, and conventional arms transfers.
- 8 Again the Senate Foreign Relations Committee report in November 1979, (p. 317) on SALT II was on key: "...to be worthwhile, and to preserve the base of support in the U.S. for the arms control process, SALT III must achieve much greater progress in reductions and qualitative limits."
- 9 The Forrestal Diaries, edited by Walter Mills, (New York: Viking Press, 1951), pp. 290-1.
- 10 Personally, I found such a debate needed years ago. See "Beyond MAD-ness," Policy Review, No. 17 (Summer 1981), pp. 82-3.
- 11 Testimony by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, June 6, 1972. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Military Implications of the Treaty on the Limitations of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the Interim Agreement on Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, Hearing 92:2, p. 5.
- 12 Churchill, Winston S., While England Slept, (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1938), p. 48. Churchill went so far as to deem the Geneva disarmament process harmful, in the same speech to the Parliament: "The elaborate process of measuring swords around the table at Geneva...stirs all the deepest suspicions and anxieties of the various Powers, and forces all the statesmen to consider many hypothetical contingencies which but for this prolonged process perhaps would not have crossed their minds."
- 13 Schelling, Thomas C. and Morton Halperin, Strategy and Arms Control, (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961), p. 5; for full discussion see Chapter 8, pp. 77-90.