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U.S.—SOVIET ARMS TALKS: A PRIMER

INTRODUCTION

Washington and Moscow have just begun the fifth round of the current series of Geneva talks on controlling nuclear weapons. No progress was made in the round that ended in March.¹ Both sides remain far apart conceptually on how to reduce strategic forces despite little apparent difference about the magnitude of the cuts. This series of talks began in March 1985 and their pace quickened as last November's summit approached. In October, Moscow proposed cutting strategic nuclear forces by 50 percent in return for a U.S. agreement to halt the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).² Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev repeated this offer in his three-stage plan for global nuclear disarmament made public this January.³ The U.S. tabled its proposal in November and February.⁴

1. William Drozdiak, "Shultz, Soviet Premier Cite Lack of Progress Since Geneva," The Washington Post, March 16, 1986, pp. A1, A30.

2. Michael Dobbs, "Gorbachev Publicly Presents Missile Reduction Proposal," The Washington Post, October 4, 1985, pp. A1, A20; Paul H. Nitze, "The Soviet Arms Control Counterproposal," Current Policy, No. 758.

3. Don Oberdorfer and Walter Pincus, "Moscow Proposes a Timetable for Nuclear Arms Ban," The Washington Post, January 16, 1986, pp. A1, A29.

4. Lou Cannon, "Reagan Announces Arms Plan...," The Washington Post, November 1, 1985, p. A1; Bernhard Weinraub, "Reagan Offers Moscow a Plan to Cut Missiles," The New York Times, February 24, 1986; Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Plan Would Abolish Intermediate-Range Arms," The Washington Post, February 24, 1986, p. A1.

The proposals now on the table in Geneva deal with strategic and intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) as well as space-based missile defenses. On the latter, the positions seem irreconcilable given the fact that Moscow's key objective is to halt SDI and that its offer to cut strategic forces by 50 percent is being used as bait to gain U.S. compliance. Aside from being unacceptable on these grounds, its force reduction proposal shelters areas of Soviet advantage while placing the U.S. at a lopsided strategic disadvantage. It exacerbates U.S. first-strike vulnerability, undercuts extended deterrence, and emaciates the least vulnerable leg of the strategic triad, the missile-carrying submarine force.⁵ Above all, key provisions of the Soviet proposal are inherently unverifiable. Unless Moscow shows interest in an equitable and stable force balance, which is the basic objective of the U.S. proposal, little tangible progress can be expected.

The U.S. should not feel compelled to advance another proposal at this time. Instead, it should stand firm until Moscow:

- o alters its unacceptable definition of strategic nuclear systems, which constrains all U.S. nuclear systems but limits only long-range Soviet systems;
- o accepts cuts of its heavy SS-18 and SS-19 land-based missiles;
- o drops the linkage between offensive weapons cuts and halting SDI;
- o accepts verification procedures adequate to ensure compliance with a future agreement; and
- o complies fully with existing arms accords.

Unless these minimum requirements are met by Moscow, a new U.S. proposal will be bound to compromise the U.S. position and result in an arms agreement that does not enhance U.S. and allied security.

SOVIET ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES

The Soviet offer to cut total nuclear weapons by 50 percent seems tailored to accomplish at least four distinct, yet complementary, objectives:

5. Barry Schneider and Michael Ennis, "Strategy, Policy, and the U.S. Arms Reduction Proposal," Armed Forces Journal International, January 1986, pp. 63-64.

1) To force the U.S. to abandon the SDI program in exchange for offensive force reductions.

2) To prevent the modernization of U.S. strategic forces, protect Soviet advantages in crucial categories of strategic forces, including its own right to field new nuclear systems.

3) To drive a wedge between the U.S. and its allies by stimulating NATO anxieties over the impact of SDI on European security and the prospects for arms control and encouraging the West Europeans to press Washington for concessions on SDI.

4) To undermine the U.S. guarantee of nuclear deterrence of attacks on NATO by forcing Washington to choose between deploying its nuclear weapons in Europe or in the U.S.

THE SOVIET ARMS PACKAGE

The current package of Soviet proposals was unveiled last October and expanded in January.⁶ The package's key elements are:

A. Reductions and Bans

1) A ban on all research and development of strategic defense weapons as a precondition to offensive arms cuts.

2) The inclusion as "strategic systems" of all nuclear systems capable of striking the territory of the other side in calculating the permitted number of offensive weapon systems. This means that the intermediate-range U.S. Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles would be counted in the U.S. total as would U.S. carrier-based aircraft such as the A-7s or F-14s normally deployed in the European theater and capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Yet over 2,000 similar Soviet aircraft and more than 300 Backfire bombers would not be counted toward the permitted total, presumably because they cannot reach the U.S. from their present bases, though they easily can strike Europe's NATO nations.

3) A 50 percent cut in long-range nuclear systems as defined by Moscow, resulting in a combined total of 1,680 for the U.S. and 1,250 for the Soviet Union.

6. Background Briefing by Senior Administration Official, White House, Office of the Press Secretary, October 8, 1985; Paul Nitze, op. cit., pp 1-2.

4) A maximum ceiling of 6,000 of what Moscow terms "nuclear charges,"⁷ of which no more than 60 percent, or 3,600 weapons, may be carried on either land-, sea-, or air-based delivery systems. Gravity bombs and short-range attack missiles carried by U.S. bombers would be counted toward the overall limit.

5) Reduction of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INFs) to levels consistent with the principles of "equality and equal security." This would allow the U.S. to keep 100 ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) in Europe during the first stage of Gorbachev's three stages of reductions, while Moscow would reduce its SS-20 force to the combined total of French and British systems.

6) A ban on all delivery systems that have not been flight-tested by the treaty's signing date.

7) A ban on all long-range cruise missiles defined as unmanned drones with ranges over 600km (about 360 miles).

8) Reciprocal cuts in offensive delivery systems conditional upon agreement-in-principle to halt work on "space strike" weapons.

B. Moratoria

1) On development, testing, and deployment of "space strike arms" and small new nuclear weapons and a "freeze" on development of nuclear arms currently in production.

2) On deployment of additional U.S. and Soviet medium-range missiles in Europe.

3) On deployment of nuclear weapons in third countries.

U.S. REACTION AND COUNTERPROPOSALS

The Soviet package seemed attractive at first. The White House detected a number of positive elements. Among them: 1) Moscow had accepted the Reagan principle of deep reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both powers. 2) Moscow set an overall and equal ceiling on nuclear warheads that capped expansion of Soviet land-based systems

7. In its proposal, Moscow introduced this term rather than using the term warhead. It is much broader and thus applies to nuclear-armed aircraft of intermediate-range deployed within striking distance of the Soviet Union.

and thus, at least indirectly, limited throw-weight. 3) Moscow conceded, for the first time, the U.S. right to deploy intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe. 4) Moscow effectively dropped the linkage between agreements on strategic force reductions and on nuclear weapons in Europe by proposing separate talks between Moscow and France and the United Kingdom.

In response to Moscow's October package, Washington in November proposed:

1) Cutting offensive arsenals by 50 percent. By using a definition of a strategic delivery system that differed from Moscow's, the U.S. proposal would allow a total of 4,500 missile warheads with up to 3,000 permitted on land-based intercontinental missiles, in contrast to the 3,600 warhead limit in Moscow's proposal.

2) A ceiling of 350 strategic bombers and 1,500 air-launched cruise missiles to be deployed initially on 75 B-52 bombers, allowing each side between 1,600 and 1,800 strategic delivery systems, including about 1,450 strategic missiles. No similar ceiling is contained in Moscow's proposal.

3) A freeze on INF deployment in Europe with eventual cuts of systems in the field establishing a common ceiling of 140 launchers permitted each side, including 38 Pershing-IIs and 102 ground-launched cruise missile launchers with four missiles each. This would precede their elimination pursuant to the February 1986 proposal, whereas Moscow's proposal would eliminate all Pershing IIs and leave only 100 GLCMs, presumably on 25 launchers.

4) Soviet throw-weight reductions to about 3 million kilograms, or roughly one-half of the present total and slightly more than can now be carried by U.S. missiles. The Soviet proposal imposes no throw-weight limits.

5) Prohibiting the modernization of existing heavy ICBMs or the construction of new ones. The Soviet proposal bans only new heavy missiles

6) A ban on mobile ICBMs including Soviet SS-24s and SS-25s and the proposed U.S. Midgetman single warhead missile that is scheduled for deployment in 1992.

EVALUATING THE TWO PROPOSALS

Arms control proposals must reconcile the goals of weapons reduction with the military requirements dictated by political objectives and commitments, military doctrines, and geostrategic conditions. Overall levels of nuclear arms are less critical to a

stable strategic relationship than the quality and configuration of these forces. Force reductions for the sole purpose of cutting nuclear arsenals may actually raise rather than lessen the danger of nuclear war.

To enhance deterrence and to further U.S. security needs, an arms control agreement must meet at least the following criteria:

1) IT MUST NOT PRECLUDE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC DEFENSE TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN REINFORCE DETERRENCE AND LESSEN RELIANCE ON OFFENSIVE RETALIATORY THREATS.

Soviet Proposal

Moscow seeks a complete ban on all research, development, testing, and deployment of so-called space-strike weapons. In effect, this bans all strategic defense related systems. But Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) can contribute to strategic stability in ways that offensive weapons cannot because even limited strategic defenses can deprive an opponent of the ability to execute a disarming first strike. Deep cuts in offensive nuclear weapons add to stability, moreover, only if accompanied by anti-missile defenses. Otherwise, such reductions could increase incentives to strike first. In the absence of missile defenses, lower force levels encourage cheating and thus require verification standards that may be unattainable.

U.S. Proposal

The U.S. offer does not constrain strategic defense research beyond the restrictions imposed already by the 1972 ABM Treaty on testing and deployment of missile defense systems. Strategic defense furthers the goals of arms control by providing incentives for weapons cuts and ensuring a margin of safety in verification.

2) IT MUST ENHANCE STRATEGIC STABILITY BY DECREASING SOVIET FIRST-STRIKE CAPABILITIES; IT MUST NOT PREVENT EXISTING ARSENALS FROM BEING MODERNIZED IN WAYS THAT BOLSTER STRATEGIC STABILITY; AND IT MUST BAR THE INTRODUCTION OF DESTABILIZING NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS.

Soviet Proposal

Moscow's package fails to reduce the tremendous Soviet advantage in missile throw-weight, or payload capability for warheads, thus preserving the Soviet ability to launch a "first strike" that would devastate the U.S. retaliatory capability. Throw-weight thus is a key issue, as it has been for a decade and a half of arms control talks. The Soviet Union currently enjoys a 3 to 1 lead in nuclear throw-weight, fielding 11.9 million pounds compared to 4.4 million

pounds for the U.S. This enables the Soviets to place several thousand more nuclear warheads on existing missiles than can the U.S. without significantly reducing yield or accuracy.

By contrast, the U.S. essentially has exhausted its ability to add warheads to its missiles. The U.S. Minuteman III long-range missile, for instance, originally was tested with seven warheads, but the Pentagon decided to fit it with only three warheads. The extra warheads, concluded the Pentagon, would have required that each warhead yield be reduced too much. Excess Soviet throw-weight also allows Moscow to stuff devices on its heavy missiles that would help warheads penetrate missile defenses.

The Soviet package even could increase Moscow's throw-weight lead. To retain some of its intermediate-range nuclear missiles (INFs) in Europe, the U.S. will have to cut strategic systems with much larger throw-weight than fielded by INFs. If the U.S. decided to retain intermediate-range systems at current levels, it would have to cut its land- and sea-based strategic missiles more than Moscow would.

The Soviet throw-weight advantages allowed in Moscow's package could destabilize seriously the strategic balance, for they could enhance Moscow's ability to destroy U.S. missiles based in concrete-hardened silos on land. Soviet forces currently can aim six warheads (technically known as reentry vehicles) against each of the 1,030 land-based missiles in the U.S. This 6-to-1 ratio could double even if Moscow reduced its land-based missile force to 3,600 warheads. This is because the U.S. might be required by the terms of the Soviet proposal to cut its ICBMs to as few as 300 missiles, if it elects to keep its INFs deployed in and close to Europe and its strategic bomber force at current levels.

Even if the U.S. retained its entire force of 450 Minutemen-III ICBMs, each still could be attacked by six Soviet warheads. Experts calculate that, on average, only two warheads are needed to destroy a missile inside a hardened silo. Thus to knock out all of the U.S. Minutemen IIIs in a surprise attack, Moscow would have to expend only 900 warheads, or only 25 percent of its land-based warheads. It then would have more in reserve than it would under present U.S.-Soviet strategic balance.

The Soviet proposal would prevent the U.S. from modernizing its arsenal. Banned would be the weapons systems recommended by the President's Commission on Strategic Forces (the Scowcroft Commission) in April 1983. The Soviet package bars development of untested weapons. Thus while this would permit deployment of the MX missile and the B-1 bomber, it would prohibit fielding of the D-5 sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) to replace the current C-4 missile and the mobile Midgetman single warhead ICBM that is designed to restore the survivability of the land-based strategic deterrent. The U.S.

Advanced Technology Bomber, or Stealth bomber, that is largely invisible to Soviet radar would have to be cancelled. In conjunction with the proposed ban on long-range cruise missiles, cancellation of the Stealth would cripple the U.S. bomber force, reducing it to extremely expensive carriers of "iron bombs" and short-range attack missiles. Exempt from the ban, of course, are those Soviet systems that already have been tested, such as the mobile 10 warhead SS-24, the single warhead SS-25, the sea-launched SSN-23, and the Blackjack strategic bomber.

U.S. Proposal

The ceiling of 4,500 missile warheads and subceiling of 3,000 warheads on land-based missiles requires Moscow to cut more than half of its warheads deployed on its monster-size SS-18 and SS-19 ICBMs. The U.S. proposal also prohibits fielding new versions of such "heavy" ICBMs, while the proposed halving of Soviet throw-weight will move Soviet force modernization toward "lighter" missile systems that cannot destroy hardened targets in the U.S. Finally, the U.S.-proposed subceiling of 3,000 on land-based warheads encourages a gradual shift toward sea-based nuclear missiles that, despite their growing ability to destroy hardened targets, still remain primarily retaliatory, second-strike assets.

The U.S. proposal would permit modernization of strategic forces and would allow the U.S. force to counter Moscow's decade-long extensive qualitative force improvements. More important, modernization could contribute to strategic stability by allowing both sides to tailor their strategic forces to the new arms ceilings. The resulting force structure would be for retaliatory strikes, thus removing destabilizing fears of a first-strike attack.⁸

3) IT MUST RESULT IN AN EQUITABLE FORCE BALANCE THAT GIVES NEITHER SIDE SIGNIFICANT MILITARY ADVANTAGES.

Soviet Proposal

Moscow's arms package gives Soviet forces a significant advantage. The U.S. would be left with a predominantly aircraft and submarine-based strategic deterrent (concentrated on a small number of

8. Force modernization is not bad per se, as critics charge routinely. For instance, since the 1960s the U.S. has reduced throw-weight of nuclear systems by nearly 75 percent and cut forces deployed by about 30 percent in the process of fielding more advanced and safer nuclear systems.

submarines), whereas the Soviets would be able to retain and modernize their inventory of large land-based missiles.⁹ The U.S. retaliatory force is thus highly vulnerable to Soviet destruction in a surprise attack. Such vulnerability decreases substantially in times of crisis because submarines will leave port, yet the Soviet proposal still enhances the coercive value of Moscow's strategic nuclear deterrent.

The Moscow package gives Soviet forces an advantage in a number of ways. For one thing, it includes all U.S. weapons systems that can reach Soviet targets but excludes many comparable delivery systems on the Soviet side. For another, most U.S. warhead reductions would have to be made in the sea-based nuclear deterrent, which currently consists of approximately 5,500 nuclear warheads deployed aboard 37 ballistic submarines (SSBNs) carrying 600 nuclear missiles. The U.S. would have to withdraw about 2,000 of these warheads to get down to the maximum of 3,600 warheads or 60 percent of the permitted ceiling.

To be sure, the Soviet proposal for a 50 percent cut in delivery systems would leave the U.S. with 1,680 systems compared to only 1,250 for Moscow.¹⁰ But this advantage for the U.S. is as real as a Potemkin Village. Excluded from the Moscow proposal are about 2,000 Soviet medium-range missiles and aircraft that could attack NATO's European members. Excluded too are the fleet of more than 300 Backfire bombers that Moscow still insists unconvincingly are not strategic weapons. In terms of raw numbers alone, therefore, the Moscow proposal would give the Soviet arsenal a sizable advantage over the U.S.

Even worse, the Soviets would retain all 308 of their SS-18 missiles and a large number of their SS-19 force, the backbone of their first-strike capability. The U.S. strategic deterrent, by contrast, would contain fewer quick-reaction forces and more warheads delivered by relatively slow airplanes and cruise missiles.

The ban on long-range cruise missiles (CMs), defined as those with ranges in excess of 600 km would force the U.S. to dismantle CMs carrying B-52 bombers and to terminate advanced CM development for the B-1 bomber. This will affect the future capability of the U.S. bomber

9. This results from Soviet failure to draw a distinction between "fast-flying" missiles and "slow-flying" aircraft and cruise missiles (CMs). The latter are inherently less threatening and, therefore, are preferable in terms of crisis stability. Without this distinction and corresponding subceilings on these qualitatively different systems, it is difficult to establish a stable free mix on both sides.

10. Moscow counts 3,364 "relevant" nuclear systems on the U.S. side but only 2,504 "strategic" systems for itself. The U.S. total is comprised of 2,215 ICBMs, SLBMs and bombers, 560 carrier-based aircraft, 380 medium-range dual-capable aircraft stationed in Europe and 209 medium-range nuclear missiles.

force to strike Soviet targets. Without an advanced version, the U.S. cruise missiles will become increasingly vulnerable to the Soviets' defense force of more than 12,000 surface-to-air missiles and more than 2,500 interceptor aircraft, the newest models equipped with look-down/shoot-down radar.

The ban on long-range CMs also would prohibit deployment already begun by the U.S. Navy of sea-launched CMs on battleships and Los Angeles class attack submarines. The ban additionally would proscribe deployment of ground-launched CMs in Europe. It was U.S. determination to proceed with cruise missile deployment, in fact, that prompted even the Carter Administration to insist that SALT II's moratorium on long-range CM deployment be only temporary. This moratorium has expired.

The Soviet ban on long-range CMs would not affect Moscow's arsenal of shorter-range CMs. The Soviet package thus would penalize the U.S., given the fact that most Soviet targets are far inland, but leave Moscow free to target major U.S. cities with shorter medium-range CMs based on the many Soviet submarines that routinely cruise off the U.S. coasts.

U.S. Proposal

The U.S. offer distinguishes between qualitatively different weapons systems by establishing separate ceilings for missile warheads, strategic bombers, and air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM) carriers. It thereby establishes equal or comparable capabilities for both sides while permitting sufficient flexibility in configuring national forces to take into account differing requirements and traditional preferences for specific delivery systems.

4) IT MUST RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENT GEOSTRATEGIC CONDITIONS THAT CREATE DIFFERENT FORCE REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH SIDE. IT MUST PERMIT THE U.S., FOR EXAMPLE, TO MAINTAIN CAPABILITIES FOR FLEXIBLE RESPONSE, THE THREAT OF WHICH PROTECTS ALLIES FROM SOVIET INTIMIDATION AND AGGRESSION.

Soviet Proposal

Moscow's package overlooks the unique burden the U.S. carries in protecting allies thousands of miles from American shores. The package therefore denies Washington the flexibility it needs to fulfill these commitments. Example: The blanket 50 percent reduction that Moscow seeks would force the U.S. to choose between cutting "strategic" missile systems and "tactical" nuclear systems based in Europe and those based in the Pacific. This is because Moscow defines a strategic system as any that can strike the other side. Almost all U.S. nuclear systems in Western Europe, of course, can hit the USSR and thus are covered by Moscow's definition. This means that, if the

U.S. wanted to maintain its 1,149 intermediate-range systems abroad, it would be able to retain only 531 intercontinental systems divided among ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers. Moscow, by contrast, would be allowed 1,250 strategic systems, for it would not have to make any deductions for intermediate missiles since none of them could strike the U.S.--although they could hit Western Europe. With only 531 strategic systems, the U.S. would not be able to protect its global geostrategic interests. The U.S. thus would cease to be a global power because it would lack the military means to back up a global foreign policy.

Conversely, if the U.S. opted for equality with Soviet intercontinental strategic forces, it would have to reduce dramatically its forward-based intermediate-range forces systems to 430 or about 40 percent of their present level. This would leave the U.S. with only about 20 percent of Soviet intermediate-range forces, eroding U.S. ability to deter aggression against allies and friends. Moreover, U.S. ability to bolster allied conventional defenses would also suffer. For instance, most U.S. aircraft can carry both conventional and nuclear ordnance and, accordingly, would have to be withdrawn from abroad. The Soviet proposal thus would force Washington to choose between strategic parity with Moscow and the forces needed for the security of the U.S. allies.

U.S. Proposal

The U.S. proposal reflects the consistent U.S. argument that a system's "range" should determine whether it is subject to treaty limitations. This criterion is enshrined in past agreements. In accordance with this, the U.S. proposes to cut all strategic systems by 50 percent and to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles altogether. The U.S. proposal has triggered some objections in NATO, as eliminating the entire category of intermediate-range nuclear weapons would mean the removal from Europe of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles that were deployed to reassure the allies of U.S. nuclear commitment and to enhance deterrence of Soviet aggression.¹¹ This could be seen as a decoupling of European and U.S. defenses. It is for this reason that Washington, in its February

11. James M. Markham, "West Europe Cool to Removal of U.S. Medium-Range Missiles," The New York Times, February 25, 1986, p. A3; German Press Review, No. 8, February 28, 1986.

response to the Soviet proposal, linked nuclear and conventional force reductions in Europe.¹²

5) ARMS LIMITATIONS MUST BE VERIFIABLE TO REASSURE THE PARTIES THAT THE AGREEMENTS REMAIN IN FORCE AND, AT LEAST THEORETICALLY, TO PROVIDE SOME WARNING IF TREATY VIOLATIONS BEGIN TO ENDANGER NATIONAL SECURITY.¹³

Soviet Proposal

Verifying the Moscow package is very problematic. The ban on long-range cruise missiles with a range of more than 600 km, for example, is almost impossible to verify because these small drones can be easily concealed and can be deployed on and launched from a variety of platforms. Their range also is not readily apparent from their shape and mode of deployment, while nuclear-armed long-range cruise missiles are essentially indistinguishable from those with conventional warheads.

The proposed ban on force modernization is also exceedingly difficult to verify, as indicated by the SALT II experience. SALT II, among other things, limited the number of new missiles either side could deploy, but these restrictions have been violated by Moscow. The most certain method of verification would be a ban on all test firing of all ballistic missiles. But this is very impractical, for without periodic testing, confidence in the reliability of existing systems erodes.

As for the Soviet's vast arsenal of SS-20 intermediate-range missiles and Backfire bombers, upgrading them to intercontinental range would escape verification. Soviet mobile SS-24 and SS-25 ballistic missiles, meanwhile, are virtually impossible to verify without on-site inspection of production facilities.

12. Speaking at the East German Communist Party Congress in April, Mikhail Gorbachev announced a sweeping plan for conventional arms reductions in Europe. Its details have not been spelled out and it remains to be seen whether the proposal is a direct response to the linkage established by President Reagan to allay allied concerns about the "decoupling" effects of INF removal from Europe. Jackson Diehl, "Gorbachev Stresses Issue of Area Disarmament"; Jim Hoagland, "Gorbachev Targets NATO Unity," The Washington Post, April 22, 1986, pp. A17, 18.

13. Verification standards for a treaty using nuclear warheads as "units of account" are exceedingly difficult to meet. Clearly, the present counting rules for determining the force-loadings of multiple warhead missiles are inadequate. For instance, although the SS-18 missile is counted as carrying 10 warheads because it has never been test-fired with more warheads, Moscow has reportedly rotated the warheads among the 14 "warhead-bays" on its "bus" from which they are released on their independent trajectories.

U.S. Proposal

To facilitate the verification process, the U.S. long has distinguished between strategic-range and nuclear systems of lesser range. Shorter-range missiles, normally small and mobile, can be concealed easily. Thus the U.S. proposes to eliminate all intermediate-range missiles and to verify short-range missiles by on-site inspection in combination with so-called national technical means. To verify strategic missiles, the U.S. proposes similar procedures and a ban on all mobile land-based missiles. Such a ban also will prevent circumvention of the limits on strategic systems similar to Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles in the 1970s.

Using "warheads" rather than launchers as strategic units of account, as both the U.S. and the Soviets have proposed, poses serious problems for verification. The counting rules to determine the numbers of warheads per missile are easily circumvented as the Soviets have demonstrated in the case of the SS-18. Preferable is a combination of launchers and missile throw-weight. The latter could be limited by constraints on force modernization modelled on the formula for determining a "new" missile entailed in the modified SALT II Treaty.

6) AN ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT MUST NOT IMPOSE MORATORIA ON FORCE MODERNIZATION OR STRATEGIC DEFENSE.

Soviet Proposal

Moratoria have long been a staple of Soviet arms control proposals, reflecting Soviet emphasis on arms control to diminish Western military readiness and public support for defense spending. The Soviet package thus proposes moratoria on the development, testing, and deployment of new nuclear systems and strategic defenses, halting current force modernization programs (including U.S. deployment of intermediate-range systems in Europe), and terminating U.S. cooperation with the United Kingdom on Trident II.

U.S. Proposal

The U.S. proposal accepts a moratorium on intermediate-range missile deployment in Europe, provided Moscow agrees to cut its SS-20 missile force to equal levels or to abandon this entire class of nuclear systems in conjunction with strict limits on nuclear missiles of shorter range. All other Soviet-sponsored moratoria are rejected because of their detrimental impact on U.S. attempts to restore the strategic balance with Moscow and their crippling effects on strategic defense.

CONCLUSION

Both U.S. and Soviet proposals would limit the growth of superpower nuclear capabilities and reduce existing nuclear arsenals. The effect of Moscow's proposal would be to preserve the most significant areas of Soviet superiority, diminish strategic stability, and undermine nuclear deterrence. Most important, the Soviet proposal would give Moscow qualitative advantages and call into question U.S. ability to maintain "extended deterrence" as the basis of U.S. alliances.

Verification standards on any treaty dealing with nuclear warheads as units of account are exceedingly difficult to meet. The current counting rules for determining multiple warhead missiles fail to give the assurance of full compliance. But confidence in effective verification is imperative, especially at lower levels of nuclear armaments where the relative benefits of cheating will have serious military repercussions for nuclear deterrence and actual warfighting.

The substantive provisions of the Soviet proposal are seriously flawed. They represent the very antithesis of arms control based on the concepts of balance, equity, and stability. As such, it is out of the question for the U.S. to consider exchanging the Reagan Strategic Defense Initiative for promised Soviet force reductions.

The U.S. proposal has far-reaching implications for the U.S. force modernization program. It could halt deployment of the new sea-launched D-5 missile, air-launched cruise missile modernization, and the move toward the Midgetman or other mobile missiles. But the U.S. proposal also could lead to roughly equal levels of U.S.-Soviet throw-weight and number of warheads. This virtually would eliminate Soviet first-strike capabilities against the U.S. land-based deterrent.

There is a wide conceptual gap separating the U.S. and Soviet proposals. Both aim at drastic offensive force reductions but for totally different ends. Moscow seeks to halt the U.S. SDI program by tying deep cuts in offensive nuclear arsenals to crippling restrictions on missile defense programs. Moreover, Moscow's proposal establishes its outright strategic supremacy over the U.S., thus revealing Soviet disinterest in a stable and equitable force balance with the U.S. By contrast, this is the goal of the U.S. proposal and, indeed, should be the true purpose of arms control.

Moscow has unmasked its real objectives in arms control. Any new U.S. offer would be out of place at this time and would lay the foundations of a bad agreement. If Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is indeed as serious about cutting nuclear forces as he tries to make the world believe, then he will jettison this unacceptable offer and substitute a replacement that can serve as a basis for real

negotiations. Until that happens, the U.S. should stand firm, regardless of summit pressures and popular desire for imaginary progress at Geneva.¹⁴

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14. Edward L. Rowny, "On Arms Control, Gorbachev Knows Where He's Going," The Washington Post, May 8, 1986, p. A24. Soviet chief negotiator Victor Karpov has called upon the U.S. to put forward an imaginative new proposal, suggesting that Moscow is not willing to recast its own proposal.