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THE LIMITS OF ARMS CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

The aim of strategic arms negotiations is to diminish the chances of atomic war by reducing significantly Soviet and U.S. nuclear arsenals and establishing a balance at the lower level. For more than a decade, teams from the United States and the USSR have been meeting, ostensibly to cut arms. First they produced SALT I, then SALT II. Though arms control advocates cheered the very fact that superpower arms talks were underway, little arms control has been achieved, despite enormous effort. The main result of the talks has been to assure Moscow's superiority in key and dangerously destabilizing weapons systems.

The Reagan Administration has been trying to change this by insisting that the original goals of arms talks be honored. In May 1982, the Administration launched what it called the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks--or START--calling for substantial dismantling of U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals and the creation of a stable strategic balance. Specifically the Reagan START proposal calls for:

- o Reductions in the number of ballistic missile warheads by about one-third, to a level of 5,000 for each side;
- o Deep cuts in the most destabilizing ballistic missile systems (large multiwarhead ICBMs);
- o Constraints to reduce the capacity of missiles to carry warheads;
- o An equal ceiling, below SALT levels, on heavy bombers; and
- o Limits and constraints on other strategic systems, including cruise missiles that could be carried by bombers.

Moscow's response to this first genuine and sustained effort to slash nuclear arsenals since arms talks began in 1969 has been a deafening "Nyet." The Soviets have rejected U.S. proposals out of hand and have tabled their own plan which freezes the U.S. at nuclear inferiority.

Even though it has been Moscow's intransigence that has been blocking progress at the talks in Geneva, strangely it is the Administration which is being criticized by some Congressmen, the arms control community, and media commentators for not being serious about arms control. The Administration is accused of making "one-sided" proposals which are mainly "propaganda."¹ Arms control enthusiasts argue that Moscow is being asked to dismantle too much of its land-based ICBM force.

Bowing to this pressure, the U.S. revised its START proposal on lines recommended by the Scowcroft Commission, which stressed the importance of the number of warheads rather than the number of missile launchers. But these important revisions do not satisfy the critics. They are "not good enough...[and] only a start,"² insists a New York Times editorial. Many critics urge the Administration to be more "flexible," that is, more accommodating to Moscow's perceived security interests. Congress even has linked continued support of the MX missile program to greater flexibility in the Administration's arms control stance. In effect, this gives Moscow a veto over an important U.S. weapons program. In the meantime, alternative arms control proposals are proliferating wildly.³

As long as arms control backers demand greater U.S. "flexibility" and link U.S. weapons deployments to "progress" at the bargaining table, Moscow will have little incentive to negotiate seriously toward genuine arms control objectives. What is even more disturbing about the public debate, however, is the widespread--and naive, given the historical record--confidence that the arms control process will substantially enhance nuclear stability. The experience of the past decade teaches caution and suggests that, as things are now, the prospect of significant and rapid progress in arms control is poor.

The primary obstacle to arms control progress quite simply is that the Soviet Union rejects nuclear parity as the objective of arms control. It uses the negotiating process to block U.S.

¹ See, for example, the prepared testimony of Gerard C. Smith, Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (1969-1972) before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 22, 1983.

² "A New Start for START," The New York Times, June 10, 1983, p. A26.

³ A partial list includes: a freeze on production, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons, ratification of SALT II, reduction of nuclear arsenals through a "build down" process (dismantling more warheads for every new one introduced), and gradual elimination of multiple warhead land-based missiles.

efforts to achieve a balance. An appreciation of this could result in an American consensus on the arms control process that is rooted in reality. More than anything else, such an understanding could lead to the kind of hard and sustained bargaining that might just result in a genuine arms control treaty.

THE DISAPPOINTING ARMS CONTROL RECORD

U.S. efforts to control nuclear weapons began in 1946 when the Truman Administration proposed dismantling the U.S. nuclear arsenal and placing the globe's atomic resources under the ownership and control of an independent international authority. This was called the Baruch Plan. Moscow rejected the idea. Nevertheless, over the years, the U.S. continued to seek agreements with the Soviet Union to limit nuclear arsenal growth.⁴ Of the eleven nuclear arms control agreements signed between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the most significant are: the 1972 ABM Treaty and Interim Agreement Limiting Strategic Nuclear Offensive Weapons (SALT I); and the 1979 SALT II Treaty and Protocol.⁵ (Although the U.S. has not ratified SALT II, it has agreed to comply with its provisions as long as the Soviet Union does likewise. Moscow too has said it will comply with SALT II.)

Although much praised, SALT's contribution to U.S. security has been minimal. The U.S. entered SALT with the aim of negotiating long-term equitable agreements to reduce substantially the

⁴ In its widest sense, arms control includes any action which reduces the risk of war or limits the destructive power of armed forces. It can be formal or informal; unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral. Arms control may involve reductions in weapons deployments, a halt in testing, production, or deployment of various weapon systems, replacement of one system for another, or even a force buildup to reach a stable balance. Arms control does not always involve limits on weapons or weapons systems. Test bans, agreements establishing communications links or requiring notification of exercises are also kinds of arms control.

⁵ Other arms control agreements such as the 1959 Antarctica Treaty, the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, and the 1971 Seabed Treaty, are of only minor relevance in dealing with the most pressing issues of nuclear weapons deployments. Agreements such as the 1963 Hot Line Agreement and the 1971 Treaty for Reducing the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War, which seek to reduce the likelihood of nuclear war through miscalculation and accident, are of some value but are likewise peripheral to the central arms control objective of greatly reduced equal force levels. A U.S. proposal recently tabled at Geneva calling for the establishment of a joint crisis-management center--an idea suggested by Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Henry Jackson (D-WA)--has been rejected by the Soviet Union.

U.S-SOVIET NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS

<u>Agreement</u>	<u>Limitations</u>
Antarctic Treaty, 1959	Prohibits use of Antarctica for military purposes.
Hot-Line Agreement, 1963	Establishes direct communications link between Washington and Moscow.
Limited Test Ban Treaty, 1963	Prohibits nuclear weapons tests "or any other nuclear explosion" in the atmosphere, in outer space, and underwater.
Outer Space Treaty, 1963	Prohibits stationing of nuclear weapons in space, or in orbit around the earth.
Seabed Treaty, 1971	Prohibits deployment of nuclear weapons on the seabed, ocean floor, or subsoil thereof.
Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War, 1971	Requires immediate notification in case of various incidents, such as detection of unidentified objects by early warning systems. Requires advance notification of extraterritorial missile launches.
ABM Treaty, 1972	(Limits covered in text.)
Interim Agreement Limiting Offensive Nuclear Weapons, 1972 (expired 1977)	(Limits covered in text.)
Agreement of the Prevention of Nuclear War, 1973	Commits both sides to consult with each other in case there is a danger of nuclear confrontation.
<u>Signed but Unratified Agreements</u>	
Threshold Test Ban Treaty, 1974	Prohibits testing of nuclear weapons exceeding 150 kiloton yield.
Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty, 1976	Regulates nuclear explosion outside sites indicated in TTBT and limits them to a maximum of 150 kilotons.
SALT II, 1979	(Limits covered in text.)

Soviet threat to U.S. nuclear forces, enhance strategic stability,⁶ lessen the need for future nuclear deployments, and promote detente. SALT accomplished none of this. Indeed, the buildup of Soviet nuclear capability actually gained momentum during the SALT era. Moscow deployed or developed twenty-one systems: eight to nine ICBMs, four SLBMs, two strategic bombers, two cruise missiles, four classes of missile firing submarines, and an operational anti-satellite system.

Though the U.S. also has been modernizing its strategic forces, it has not pursued this on the scale needed to offset growth in Soviet offensive and defensive forces. The stable nuclear balance of ten years ago has been replaced by a highly uncertain, unstable balance favoring the Soviet Union.

Apologists for SALT protest that it is unreasonable to expect arms control to achieve deep reductions in arsenals or a new era of superpower cooperation. They argue that SALT, and arms control in general, has made "modest but significant" contributions to reducing the risk of nuclear war and enhancing stability.⁷ They say that this has happened in three ways: (1) without SALT the Soviet nuclear threat would be significantly greater than it is under the treaty constraints; (2) SALT has made it easier to predict Soviet weapons developments, thereby limiting worst-case threat assumptions, which allegedly fuel the arms race; (3) the SALT process itself has helped to keep tensions between the superpowers under control.⁸

There is little, however, to support these contentions. The facts argue just the opposite.

⁶ Arms controllers commonly distinguish three kinds of stability: deterrence stability--detering the Soviet Union from political adventures that could lead to war through miscalculation; arms race stability--controlling weapons deployments so that the military relationship is more predictable; crisis stability--maintaining survivable second strike forces so that there is no incentive to strike first in a crisis.

⁷ Staff of the Carnegie Panel on U.S. Security and the Future of Arms Control, Challenges for U.S. National Security: The Soviet Approach to Arms Control, Verification, Problems and Prospects (New York: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1983), p. 95. The same argument is made by The Harvard Nuclear Study Group, Living With Nuclear Weapons (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1983); Strobe Talbott, "Playing For the Future," Time, April 18, 1983, pp. 16-29; and Leslie H. Gelb, "A Practical Way to Arms Control," The New York Times Magazine, June 5, 1983, pp. 33-42.

⁸ The Carter Administration rested its case for SALT II essentially on these more modest claims. See prepared statements by Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense, and Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, in U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, The SALT II Treaty (Part I), July 9, 1979.

Fact One--Soviet Buildup

SALT proponents admit that they "do not know what the Soviets would do in the absence of SALT."⁹ There is no reason to believe that the Kremlin would have upgraded its arsenal without SALT more than it has with SALT. The weapon mix could have been different, of course, but no less threatening to the U.S. and strategic balance. Soviet military planners, as those of other nations, frequently shift resources from one area of weaponry to another to take advantage of advancing technology. In the case of SALT I, for example, the Soviets were limited by a ceiling of 1,618 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers. Instead of building more launchers for single warhead missiles, they invested enormous resources to modernize their missile force with new heavy throwweight ICBMs equipped with independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRVs).¹⁰ Moscow rejected a U.S. proposal for a ban on MIRVed ICBMs. Henry Kissinger, National Security Adviser to President Nixon, assured Congress that SALT I, nevertheless, prohibited the Soviets from expanding their force of "heavy" ICBMs above 308--the number of SS-9s deployed. The Soviets, however, refused to accept the American definition of "heavy," which was relegated to a Unilateral Understanding in the treaty. In 1974-75 the Soviets began deploying a fourth generation of ICBMs--the SS-17, SS-18, and SS-19. The eight to ten warhead SS-18 replaced the single warhead SS-9. The four warhead SS-17 and the six warhead SS-19 replaced the single warhead SS-11. Both the SS-17 and the SS-19 are "heavy" ICBMs according to the U.S. definition and have eight times the throwweight of the SS-11.

As for SALT II, the Senate Armed Services Committee concluded after a thorough, careful review of the agreement that "the SALT II Treaty constraints on the growing Soviet threat are not militarily significant." The Treaty allows the Soviets to deploy all the weapons they need to achieve "general military superiority" by the mid-1980s, concluded the Committee.¹¹

⁹ Prepared statement of Harold Brown, Secretary of Defense, The SALT II Treaty (Part I), p. 117.

¹⁰ As one SALT I negotiator has testified: "What we expected and were most concerned about was the improvement of the existing levels of Soviet launchers in terms of new missiles, accuracy, and multiple reentry vehicles. These are the things that [were] not only allowed but encouraged by [SALT I]." Statement of William R. Van Cleave before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, SALT II Hearings, October 11, 1979, p. 22.

¹¹ In its report, adopted by a vote of 10-0, with 7 voting "present," the Democrat controlled Committee also found fault with the agreement on a number of other grounds. Among its findings: "the treaty is unequal in favor of the Soviet Union and thus inconsistent with Public Law 92-448," which requests the President to seek a follow-on agreement to SALT I that "would not limit the United States to levels of intercontinental strategic forces inferior to the limits provided for the Soviet Union." The Treaty "cannot be said to be 'verifiable' or even 'adequately verifiable.'" The bottom line for the Committee is that SALT II "is not in the national security interests of the United States of America." Report of the Armed Services Committee, United States Senate, The Military Implications of the Proposed SALT II Treaty, December 20, 1979.

Fact Two--Soviet Warhead Expansion

Despite claims by arms control advocates, SALT treaties fail to cap the number of ICBM warheads which the Soviets could use in a first strike against U.S. retaliatory forces. SALT II does not limit Soviet ICBM warhead expansion since it restrains only the number of warheads deployed on missiles housed in those hardened silos counted in the agreement. The Soviets are free to construct unlimited quantities of missiles and warheads. As missile experts know, silos are not needed to launch missiles.¹²

Fact Three--Soviet Modernization

Despite claims by advocates, SALT II fails to slow nuclear force modernization even though it permits flight testing and deployment of only one new ICBM. SALT II language limiting ICBM modernization is so vague and the provision on verification so compromised that the "one new ICBM" limitation is, as the Senate Armed Services Committee points out, "meaningless--and unverifiable."¹³ The recent controversy over Soviet testing of what appears to be two new ICBMs--the PL-4 and the PL-5¹⁴--supports the Committee's prediction that the "one new ICBM" provision "will prove ineffective" in preventing the Soviets from deploying a new generation of ICBMs.

Fact Four--Soviet Surprise Attack Advantage

The 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, limiting the U.S. and USSR each to one site containing 100 missiles and launchers, is also of questionable value for U.S. security. U.S. support of the treaty was officially linked by Congress and the Nixon Administration to an expected follow-on agreement, which was to prevent the Soviets from deploying an offensive force capable of threatening America's ability to retaliate after suffering surprise attack.¹⁵ Yet the Soviets have never agreed to any U.S.

¹² U.S. Minuteman ICBMs have been successfully launched from crude "canisters" on open pads using controls mounted in the rear of a jeep. According to Amrom Katz, former Head of the Verification and Analysis Bureau of ACDA, it is possible for the Soviets to stockpile ICBMs, which could be rapidly deployed in a crisis on soft pads or deployed in hidden silos under various cover. The Soviets would have sound strategic reasons for deploying such a hidden missile force. Amrom Katz, Verification and SALT: The State of the Art and the Art of the State (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1979).

¹³ The Military Implications of the Proposed SALT II Treaty, p. 13.

¹⁴ Michael R. Gordon, "Have They or Haven't They Violated SALT II?" National Journal, May 7, 1983, pp. 954-955.

¹⁵ The ABM Treaty was sold to Congress on the understanding that, as Unilateral Statement A states: "If an agreement providing for more complete strategic offensive arms limitations were not achieved within five years, U.S. supreme interests could be jeopardized. Should that occur, it would constitute a basis for withdrawal from the ABM Treaty."

proposal which would have achieved this. To make matters worse, in the "spirit" of arms control, the U.S. in 1976 deactivated its one functioning ABM site and drastically curtailed funding for research and development of ABM systems. Without the ABM Treaty and with a vigorous ABM program, the U.S. today would probably have an anti-missile system to protect the MX and the beginning of a nationwide ABM system to protect the U.S. population.

Fact Five--U.S. undefended

The ABM Treaty has imposed dangerous restrictions on the U.S. By denying the U.S. the ability to defend itself against nuclear attack, the treaty weakens NATO's strategy of Flexible Response.¹⁶ It also impedes the U.S. government from its moral duty to assure the survival of the United States in war. An effective strategic defense capability seems technologically feasible. It is not destabilizing, because it removes any incentive for the Soviet Union to attack the United States.¹⁷

Fact Six--Curtailing U.S. Weapons Development

According to the Senate Armed Services Committee, "the adverse U.S.-Soviet military balance is, to a significant degree, the consequence of...an undue reliance on negotiations with the Soviets as an alternative to our own efforts to assure a military balance."¹⁸ SALT, then, has actually harmed U.S. national security by undermining U.S. resolve to proceed promptly with programs to counter the Soviet buildup. SALT curtailed research and development of ABM technology, adversely influenced the development and testing schedules for ground launched and sea launched cruise missiles, and delayed the development of the MX. According to some accounts, arms control played a major part in President Carter's decision to cancel the B-1 bomber in 1977.

Fact Seven--Soviet Violations

Since SALT has not significantly limited the deployment of Soviet nuclear weapons, it has not aided U.S. security planners

¹⁶ NATO's strategy of Flexible Response, officially adopted in 1967, states that the Alliance will use whatever weapons are necessary, including nuclear weapons, to thwart a Warsaw Pact conventional force invasion of Western Europe. To constitute a credible deterrent and effective defense, however, such a "first use" strategy requires that the United States have the capability to initiate nuclear war and survive Soviet nuclear retaliation. In the jargon of strategists, the U.S. must have "escalation dominance."

¹⁷ For a more detailed presentation of the argument for a national ballistic missile defense and a description of one possible kind of system, see General Daniel O. Graham, High Frontier: A New National Strategy (Washington: High Frontier, Inc., 1982), a study report sponsored by The Heritage Foundation.

¹⁸ The Military Implications of the Proposed SALT II Treaty, p. 6.

to determine the likely course of Soviet weapons programs. Indeed, planning uncertainty is aggravated because the SALT agreements are riddled with loopholes, ambiguities, and imprecise language allowing the Soviets wide latitude in weapons development.¹⁹ The Soviet Union has pushed linguistic imprecision in SALT I and SALT II to the limit and under reasonable interpretations of treaty language has actually violated several important arms control provisions.²⁰

Many SALT proponents dismiss charges of Soviet SALT violations on grounds that the treaty language is ambiguous. Arms control advocates, however, cannot have it both ways. Either the SALT agreements are meaningfully restrictive or they are not.

Fact Eight--Obstructing Verification

SALT is supposed to open a window on the Soviet Union by allowing the U.S. to snoop on Soviet weapons developments. Arms control boosters say that this helps create stability by limiting worst-case assumptions. Indeed, the SALT agreements sanction for purposes of verification the use of "national technical means" (NTMs) which is generally taken to include satellites and earth based radars and listening posts. The treaties also prohibit interference with NTMs and deliberate concealment measures, including encryption of telemetric data, to impede verification. The Soviet Union, however, insists that only those activities which it considers restricted by treaty limits are open to verification procedures, and from Moscow's point of view, this is narrowly defined. Indeed, after 1972, Soviet concealment, camouflage, and deception (CC&D) increased significantly, making the job of U.S. intelligence analysts more difficult. In some cases, CC&D have been used to cover up activities prohibited by SALT. Recently, for example, the Soviets encoded data on missile performance necessary for verification of the "one new ICBM" provision."²¹ In effect, SALT has legitimized Soviet CC&D efforts without doing much to limit their use.

¹⁹ For a discussion of some of the more troublesome loopholes in SALT II, see Military Implications of the Proposed SALT II Treaty, *op. cit.*, and Richard Perle, "What is Adequate Verification?" in SALT II and American Security (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1980).

²⁰ A partial list of Soviet SALT violations includes: testing SAM systems in an ABM mode, deploying ABM battle management radars for nationwide defense, developing components for a rapidly deployable, mobile ABM system, testing two new ICBMs, and stockpiling and deploying mobile SS-16 ICBMs. See "Soviet Violations of Arms Agreements," National Security Record (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, May 1982).

²¹ Michael Gelter, "Soviet Encoding of Missile Data Assailed," Washington Post, January 6, 1983, p. 27.

Fact Nine--Superpower Tensions

Arms control advocates are hard pressed to show how the arms control process itself or specific arms control agreements have diminished Soviet antagonism toward the West. Softer Soviet rhetoric during the SALT decade must not be mistaken for substance. Too often, strident verbal blasts from Moscow have been viewed as a sign of heightened danger to U.S. security, while friendly statements were seen as signs of a blossoming detente. The record of Soviet actions is a far better indicator of Soviet attitudes and intentions than is Moscow's rhetoric, which is used to manipulate public opinion in the West.

The record shows that, while negotiations were taking place in Helsinki and Vienna on strategic arms control, the Soviets helped start a war in the Middle East and aided Marxist revolutionaries seize power in Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, which they later invaded. If anything, the U.S. desire for arms control during the 1970s probably strengthened Moscow's confidence that arms control is a useful tool for undermining Western political-military strength.

WHY THE MEAGER RESULTS OF ARMS CONTROL?

Nine solid facts testify to the meager results of arms control. Why they are so meager is mainly due to Moscow's lack of real interest in seeing arms control succeed or in reaching an accommodation with the West on a power balance. Viewed from the Kremlin, the Soviet-led forces of socialism and the U.S.-led forces of capitalism are locked in an irreconcilable conflict that "will continue until the final victory of Communism on a world scale."²² Soviet leaders have not abandoned the Leninist thesis that "the existence of the Soviet Republic alongside the imperialist states over the long run is unthinkable."²³ For Marxist-Leninists, "detente" and "peaceful coexistence" are just another phase in the struggle between the two world ideological systems. To defeat of the West, moreover, is to eliminate an example of freedom and economic well-being which can only undermine Moscow's repressive rule of its own and other peoples.

Soviet leaders presumably do not want nuclear war. But for them peace is maintained through military superiority, not through the U.S. idea of a superpower balance. As A. A. Grechko, Soviet Defense Minister during the SALT decade once remarked: "The more powerfully [Soviet armed forces] are equipped, the better personnel

²² F. Ryzhenko, "Peaceful Coexistence and the Class Struggle," Pravda, August 22, 1973. Quoted in Albert L. Weeks and William C. Bodie, editors, War and Peace: Soviet Russia Speaks (Washington, D.C.: National Strategy Information Center, 1983), p. 33.

²³ V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Volume 29. Quoted in ibid., p. 9.

is trained, the more peace there will be on earth." Consequently, Soviet and U.S. approaches to arms control differ greatly. By and large, Americans view arms control as a cooperative endeavor making use of compromise and good faith gestures (often unilateral concessions) to achieve a shared goal--nuclear balance. For the Soviets, arms control is a tactical operation in a "zero-sum" game aimed at gaining unilateral advantages in the nuclear balance and stopping U.S. weapons programs by exploiting Western hopes for a negotiated end to the "arms race."

The USSR thus consistently has rejected U.S. proposals to limit or drastically reduce deployment of large multiple warhead land-based ballistic missiles, which threaten the survivability of America's retaliatory deterrent force. In 1977, for example, the Soviets rejected the Carter Administration's offer to forego deployment of the MX in exchange for cutting the Soviet SS-18 force in half. Moscow has also actively sought to prevent survivable deployment of U.S. ICBMs by insisting that various proposed basing schemes violate SALT II. The Soviets have backed off from many of their extreme demands to settle for more modest restrictions of U.S. forces, but Moscow has not given up anything significant in these "compromise" agreements, and it has insisted on such unilateral advantages as not counting its Backfire bombers.

Moscow is again seeking a unilateral advantage at the START negotiations, where it has proposed severe limits on the deployment of new U.S. weapon systems, such as the MX, Trident II, and cruise missiles. The net effect of this would be to assure the Soviet Union's first strike capability while denying the U.S. the capability to destroy hardened targets equal to that of the Soviets.²⁴

The Soviets rationalize their proposals by invoking the notion of "equal security," a concept much more imprecise than strict numerical parity in weapon systems. At first glance, "equal security," makes some sense. It ostensibly takes into account non-military factors such as geography and unfriendly neighbors in measuring the "true" balance of power between nations. According to the Soviet definition, however, "equal security" means military superiority for the USSR.

U.S. SHARES THE BLAME

It takes two, of course, to negotiate and the United States must share the blame for SALT's failure. Both the Nixon and Carter

²⁴ Soviet leaders have called for an immediate halt to the construction of all new generation U.S. and Soviet strategic systems to be followed by (1) a reduction of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers) from 2,400 to 1,800; (2) sublimits on "nuclear charges" (missile warheads and bomber weapons); (3) a ban on cruise missiles over 600 kilometers range; and (4) various other modernization constraints. For a detailed assessment of the Soviet START proposal, see "Evaluating Soviet Arms Control Initiatives," National Security Record (Washington: The Heritage Foundation, March 1983).

Administrations negotiated from faulty conceptions of the role of nuclear weapons. Typical were Henry Kissinger's now famous rhetorical outburst at Moscow in May 1972 (since recanted) "What in God's name is superiority?" and Jimmy Carter's 1977 Notre Dame speech declaring that deterrence requires only two missile submarines. Not surprisingly, in negotiating SALT, military implications took a back seat to political considerations--both domestic (winning elections) and international (bolstering detente). Military inequities in SALT I and SALT II either were not acknowledged, on grounds that America's inferior forces still were sufficient to deter the Kremlin, or were excused, on grounds that the U.S. was in any case free to do what it wanted under the agreements to correct any military imbalances.

These rationalizations were unsound--as events have proved. Imbalances in nuclear forces do matter. A credible deterrent force is one that can match Soviet attacks blow for blow. Congress has acknowledged this by stipulating in Public Law 92-448 (cited above in footnote 11) that any follow-on agreement to SALT I must codify equal U.S.-USSR force levels. The terms of SALT would have allowed the Soviets unequal advantages, which the U.S. technically could have corrected with its own efforts.²⁵ Nevertheless, a treaty whose only value is that it leaves the U.S. free to do what it needs militarily to correct force posture deficiencies is a useless agreement.

Divergent U.S.-Soviet approaches to arms control are reflected in negotiating styles. The Kremlin is under no pressure from Soviet citizens to negotiate an agreement with the U.S. At Helsinki and Vienna, the Soviet team, dominated by Defense Ministry personnel, tabled vague, general, unverifiable, and frequently one-sided proposals designed to appeal to arms control advocates in the U.S. Pressure from these groups for greater "flexibility" eroded the U.S. bargaining position. The United States played into Soviet hands by setting self-imposed deadlines for agreements and tabling proposals representing compromises with domestic arms controllers and devised to be acceptable to Moscow.

The Reagan Administration appears better prepared than its predecessors to negotiate with the Soviets. It has shown greater

²⁵ Moscow has interpreted several SALT provisions as prohibiting deployment of critical U.S. weapon systems. These complaints are not valid if SALT is understood strictly. The SALT II Protocol, however, contains a number of disturbing provisions limiting U.S. force deployments. For example, it bans mobile ICBMs, which the Scowcroft Commission believes should be deployed, and sea and ground launched cruise missiles over 600 kilometers range. Many SALT skeptics were concerned that the Protocol would prejudice a follow-on agreement, as indeed the Soviets insisted. SALT II proponents argued that the Protocol was only temporary--it was to expire December 31, 1981, and hence would not prevent deployment of the weapons in question. But if so, why sign the Protocol? The Protocol served only as a vehicle for U.S. arms controllers to further limit U.S. force deployments.

willingness to stick with proposals. Those involved in the arms control process are for the most part highly experienced and share a realistic view of Soviet arms control strategy. Even so, the prospects for a meaningful agreement are not bright.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF ARMS CONTROL

At the minimum, an arms control agreement should meet the following criteria:

- 1) It should be verifiable;²⁶
- 2) It should impose meaningful limits on the Soviet threat;
- 3) Limits should be equal for both sides;
- 4) It should not prevent the U.S. from deploying those forces necessary to support its military strategy.

By these criteria SALT II and the "nuclear freeze" proposal are unacceptable. The latter because it is almost certainly unverifiable, as even many arms control enthusiasts admit.²⁷ It also would freeze U.S. nuclear forces in inferiority.

The "verifiability" requirement for arms control agreements severely restricts the range of possible agreements.²⁸ U.S. leaders must assume that the Soviets will try to cheat on an agreement and that Soviet breakouts (rapid deployment of weapons produced and stored surreptitiously) are possible. It is certain,

²⁶ To help sell SALT agreements to Congress and the American people, both the Nixon and Carter Administrations argued that arms control treaties do not have to be strictly verifiable, in the sense that the U.S. can detect Soviet behavior inconsistent with the treaties. It is sufficient that SALT agreements be "adequately verifiable," in that U.S. intelligence agencies can detect Soviet cheating early enough for the U.S. to take remedial action before the strategic balance is altered. Before the notion of "adequate verification" can be effectively used, however, there must be a consensus on what constitutes a significant change in the military balance. No such consensus exists today, which renders use of "adequate verification" as a criterion in judging the acceptability of arms control agreements extremely dangerous.

²⁷ See, for example, Living With Nuclear Weapons, pp. 207-209. For a more negative assessment of the nuclear freeze proposal, see Bruce Weinrod, "Nuclear Freeze: Myths and Realities," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 251, March 3, 1983; and Jeffrey Barlow, "The Hard Facts the Nuclear Freeze Ignores," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder No. 225, November 3, 1982.

²⁸ It is doubtful, for example, that the U.S. can verify the "build-down" proposal, now under discussion in the Senate, requiring reductions in warhead deployments without on-site inspection of missile assembly plants, which the Soviets have so far rejected.

moreover, that the Soviets will do whatever is possible within the bounds of U.S. restraint to inhibit U.S. verification of treaty compliance.

The most serious obstacle to negotiation of a worthwhile arms control agreement, however, is the fact that Moscow is simply unlikely to accept any treaty establishing a truly equal force balance and requiring dismantling of weapons it considers necessary to prevail in a nuclear war.

It is possible that a Soviet economic or political crisis could develop to which the Politburo would respond by genuine arms control and a shift in resources away from the military to consumer investment. It is just as likely the Kremlin would respond by strengthening its military might to maintain tight control. At present, however, with the opposition to strategic modernization in the U.S. and the criticism of the Administration's arms control proposals, there is little incentive for Moscow to negotiate seriously to stabilize the nuclear balance.

In view of this, what should the U.S. do? First, U.S. nuclear forces must be restored to "essential equivalence." Why should the Soviets trade away their deployed weapons for U.S. weapons which are still in the development and testing stage? Second, Congress and the media must study arms control issues more intently and not be so quick to charge the Administration with inflexibility. Congress should resist the temptation to construct its own alternative arms control proposals. Why should Soviet leaders make concessions at the bargaining table when Congress and the media are undermining the U.S. negotiating position?

It is frequently said that negotiating with the Soviet Union on arms control is essential for survival in the nuclear age, and hence is a moral imperative. This is true only if Americans realistically understand the limits imposed on the process by the Soviet Union. In 1979 the Senate Armed Services Committee warned that, "Unwarranted notions about Soviet cooperation, an unfounded assumption that SALT treaties reflect Soviet restraint and forbearance, and overly optimistic hopes that the Soviet threat to our security is being lessened [by arms control]...undermine efforts to summon the resolve to arrest the decline in our military posture."²⁹ These notions and assumptions, still common in the arms control community, threaten to sidetrack current efforts to restore the strategic balance.

Rectifying the serious deficiencies in U.S. nuclear force is essential for deterrence and national survival and should be the top military priority for Congress and the Administration. Arms control has not and probably cannot contribute anything significant

²⁹ The Military Implications of the Proposed SALT II Treaty, p. 6.

to solving these problems. Arms control is unlikely even to moderate to any significant degree the future development of the Soviet nuclear threat. The role of arms control in U.S. national security policy for the near term, then, is quite limited.

Many Americans of late have enthusiastically embraced arms control because they fear another round in weapons building and a greater risk of nuclear war. But if there is an "arms race" today, it is sustained by the Soviet quest for military superiority. It is a race being run only by Moscow. The Soviet Union has shown that it will continue to upgrade its nuclear capability even if the United States practices restraint. As Carter's Secretary of Defense Harold Brown has aptly concluded: "When we build they build--when we stop, they continue to build." The United States failed to control the Soviet strategic nuclear buildup through arms control. It must now modernize its strategic forces to restabilize the nuclear balance.

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