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UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

Washington, D.C. 20451

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

October 29, 1985

MEMORANDUM TO THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Soviet Themes and US Counters on Geneva Talks

Attached is a paper on the above subject for the President's
weekend reading.



Kenneth L. Adelman

Attachment
As stated

DECLASSIFIED
Department of State, Safeguard, July 26, 1997
By CS DATE 7/2/02

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NLRR 006-114/3 #7974BY OW NARA DATE 10/30/07~~SECRET~~SOVIET THEMES -- AND US COUNTERS -- ON THE GENEVA TALKS

The Soviets are concentrating on certain major themes in support of their positions. This paper outlines responses we have used. Many of the Soviet themes (e.g., SDI program aims at a first strike capability and will lead to Soviet responses and further arms race) parallel Soviet themes used earlier against the United States INF deployments.

1. Soviet Charge: The United States is violating the January Shultz-Gromyko accord on interlinking of the three negotiations--space, nuclear strategic weapons, and medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe.

This includes the charge that we are refusing to discuss "preventing an arms race in space" despite the January agreement on discussing space and nuclear issues "in their interrelationship." The Soviets have asserted that agreement on START would be impossible without a ban on "space-strike arms." Gorbachev reiterated this linkage in his Time magazine interview.

Background: The Soviets appear no longer to insist that there can be no progress on START or INF unless space issues are resolved. However, they are still linking agreement on reductions in strategic offensive arms to United States agreement to abandon its SDI and ASAT programs. They are no longer tying an INF agreement to SDI, which is positive from our point of view. It should be noted that the January agreements used words designed to "paper over" substantive differences.

Response: The interrelationship of nuclear and space arms, including the offense-defense relationship, is a key element of our position in the Geneva negotiations. For example, we have asked the Soviet Union to begin even now to discuss how we would jointly manage a transition to a more defense reliant posture, should effective defenses prove out. Moreover, we are open to ASAT limits that are verifiable and in the United States interest, but have found none. The January agreement does not mean that agreements, in the interest of both nations, in some areas should be held hostage to agreement in other areas. Secretary Shultz refuted this linkage at the time and we have done so consistently ever since.

2. Soviet Charge: The intent of SDI violates the ABM Treaty. Such a program, once started, would not, or could not, be stopped.

In Time, Gorbachev charged, "...if billions and billions of dollars had already been spent on research, then nobody is going to stop because all that money had been invested in SDI."

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Response: The ABM Treaty in no way limits research; it doesn't even mention it. Our research program is tailored to be fully consistent with the Treaty. If the research proves effective defenses feasible, cost effective and survivable, we would consult and negotiate with the Soviets on how the security of both sides might be strengthened by phased introduction of defenses.

We will judge defensive technologies by demanding criteria:

- A defensive system must at a minimum be able to destroy a sufficient portion of an aggressor's attacking forces to deny him confidence in achieving his objectives;
- It must be sufficiently survivable to fulfill its missions even with determined attacks against it; and,
- It must be able to maintain its effectiveness at less cost than it would take to develop offensive counter-measures to overcome it.

If the research is successful in meeting these criteria we could move forward toward strengthening deterrence and enhancing stability by reducing the role of ballistic missiles and by placing greater reliance on defenses which threaten no one. Our ultimate objective is a world free of nuclear arms--an objective to which all can agree. If the research is not successful we would not proceed with defenses, and, with close Congressional scrutiny and broad public debate certain, could not proceed.

The United States has terminated many defense systems which proved ineffective, such as the Skybolt Stand-off Air-to-Surface Missile and the DIVAD anti-aircraft gun, as well as major national non-military programs such as the supersonic transport. (The Soviet Union has also terminated programs such as the SS-10 heavy ballistic missile and the BOUNDER intercontinental bomber.)

3. Soviet Charge: SDI prepares the way for a United States first strike capability and for space weapons to strike terrestrial targets.

Response: The United States does not seek a first-strike capability. The research program as presently structured could not result in one. Finally, while one cannot envision all potential future technology developments, it is unrealistic to believe that the United States could obtain one through SDI.

Technologies being studied under the SDI program have, even in theory, little or no potential to attack targets on the ground. Space-based technologies selected specifically take advantage of the absence of atmosphere in space; most systems based on them could not penetrate the atmosphere to hit ground-based targets.

Soviet treatment of the "first strike" issue is misleading. In their lexicon, any United States weapon, new to their force planning is defined as destabilizing and a "first strike" system. They have even applied this to the space shuttle.

4. Soviet Charge: SDI will require Soviet responses and thus accelerate the arms race and preclude offensive reductions.

In Time Gorbachev said "In the opinion of our experts (and, to my knowledge, many of yours), this (elimination of nuclear weapons) is sheer fantasy. However even on a much more modest scale, in which the Strategic Defense Initiative can be implemented as an antimissile defense system of limited capabilities, the SDI is very dangerous. This project will, no doubt, whip up the arms race in all areas, which means that the threat of war will increase."

Response: If defenses were sufficiently cost-effective, i.e., if it were less expensive to augment defenses than to take counter measures (such as increasing offensive forces) against them, there would be no incentive to increase offensive forces.

Since such cost effectiveness is a key United States criterion for SDI, the United States would proceed with defenses only if they prevented, rather than produced, an arms race.

If effective defenses prove feasible, we would hope for a jointly managed transition to a more defense-reliant world. Both sides would obviously wish for a regime in which each could assure its own survival and not depend on the forbearance of the other.

Reducing offensive weapons is in the interest of both sides today and for the future, independent of whether effective defenses prove feasible. Such reductions were the centerpiece of our position before SDI, and are still the first priority.

5. Soviet Charge: United States Allies oppose SDI.

Background: Most Allies support SDI research. Even those Allied governments that have not explicitly supported research have moved to facilitate it, by authorizing participation of their industrial sectors. This does not mean that they necessarily "hope" for its success. Allies have expressed reservations on possible deployments because:

- for the British and French, it impacts on their deterrents;
- United States commitment to Allied defense could be seen as lessening, even though this is not the case;

-- the likelihood of conventional war could increase if the Soviets have defenses against nuclear weapons, unless Allies substantially increased their conventional forces which they are not inclined to do.

Response: Our Allies understand the military context of SDI. They support both the long-term goal of finding a more effective alternative for preventing war and the near-term goal of hedging against similar Soviet programs. Our common understanding was reflected in the statement issued following the meeting with Prime Minister Thatcher in December, 1984 (and in similar statements by other Allies since):

-- First, the United States and Western aim is not to achieve superiority but to maintain the balance, taking account of Soviet deployments;

-- Second, SDI-related deployment would, in view of treaty obligations, have to be a matter for consultations and negotiations;

-- Third, the overall aim is to enhance, and not to undermine, deterrence; and

-- Fourth, East-West negotiations should aim to achieve security with reduced levels of offensive systems on both sides.