

that Zakharov, whose arrest had started the incident, would have to be released, he insisted that his release would have to be arranged differently from Daniloff's. It was to be made clear, he hinted, which man was "the real spy." In this diplomatic minuet everyone had to save face.

In the end, a compromise was struck. Zakharov would be let go after a court hearing in New York at which the judge would say that he believed the man was guilty but was dismissing the case for political reasons at the request of the administration. Daniloff was to be released at about the same time, and Orlov a few days later. Shevardnadze and Shultz worked on the final details of the scenario for hours, and several times the outcome appeared doubtful. Shevardnadze later said to Shultz that he too was not sure Moscow would approve the deal. But it did, and after a few tense moments of waiting for a call from the court building with the news that Zakharov was free, the nerve-racking episode was over.

I did not have much sleep those days. The record of every conversation had to be made immediately, to be cabled to Moscow. A two- or three-hour talk sometimes takes twice as much time to record and check. On some days I came back to my hotel in the small hours of the morning and slept for a few hours before rushing back to the Soviet U.N. mission. I rarely had time for walks in my favorite areas of Manhattan: the East Sixties and Central Park. Shevardnadze seemed to work around the clock, and though I would have liked to show New York to him, I understood that he did not have the time and was in no mood for that. In his five and a half years as foreign minister he did not do much sightseeing.

The Gorbachev-Reagan Reykjavik Summit

We were returning to Moscow with a date set for the Reykjavik meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan. I did not know what kind of meeting Gorbachev had in mind, but the agenda seemed certain to focus on arms control. The talks in Geneva had stalled once again, as they would so many times afterward. The ability of the U.S. and Soviet bureaucracies to entangle any negotiation in a web of abstruse technical details was amazing, and I often saw how impatient Gorbachev was with that, although he appeared to have no difficulty grasping the technical issues. But he must have felt how much better it would be to strike a grand bargain that would cut through the mass of details and make the negotiations proceed at a different pace toward a clear

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outcome. Such a change would also strengthen his position at home, leaving him with more time for dealing with the difficult domestic issues.

Reykjavik does not look very hospitable in mid-October. It is cold, and the little snow on the ground does not make it feel warmer, as the big banks of snow do during Russian winters. The motorcade with Gorbachev and the accompanying officials was long; it is never possible to organize "a really small, informal get-together with as few people present as possible," as Gorbachev had suggested in his letter to Reagan. As the cars sped to the city, I was wondering whether in their second meeting Reagan and Gorbachev would get along.

They started off one-on-one the next day, with my colleague Nikolay Uspensky interpreting for Gorbachev. I stayed with Shevardnadze and Shultz, who started a conversation on the overall U.S.-Soviet relationship and the accumulated range of issues. In about half an hour, however, word came from the room where the two leaders were talking that the foreign minister and the secretary of state were being invited to join them. The talks then went on in the two-on-two format until their dramatic finale.

Gorbachev had started by proposing to Reagan a simple deal on strategic arms: 50 percent reduction in all categories. He wanted to simplify the Geneva negotiations and put them on a fast track to an agreement. He also proposed that the two sides limit their strategic defense programs to research conducted "in laboratories."

When Shevardnadze and Shultz joined their leaders in the small room at Hofdi House, where the talks were held, Reagan seemed to be somewhat confused. He was not used to discussion of arms control matters in any detail, and even Gorbachev's simple proposal was not something he was ready to discuss alone. The four men then started a review of the overall arms control situation, dealing with its three main areas: strategic offensive arms, defense and space, and the INF missiles.

Space defense—"Star Wars"—was the most sensitive issue, a "neuralgic point" for the Soviet Union. Many on the Soviet side thought that the U.S. SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative) program could not be stopped, but they hoped to restrain it at least enough to prevent a full-scale arms race in space. There was also what turned out to be ill-informed concern that space arms—for example, laser weapons—could be used to strike targets on earth. (In Reykjavik I heard Soviet nuclear physicist Yevgeny Velikhov, who accompanied Gorbachev there, say that this was technically extremely difficult, and impossible from the cost-benefit standpoint.) Reagan was prepared with an elaborate explanation of his concept of SDI and of why it should not be regarded by the Soviet Union as a threat.

Reagan's arguments for SDI have become well-known since then—often repeated and, with a new world and new issues emerging, regarded by many as "overtaken by events." He said that the goal of SDI was to make nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete." He emphasized that relying on nuclear weapons for global security was immoral. Gorbachev countered that the answer to this was to destroy nuclear weapons and recalled his program for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000. *disarmament*

Then Reagan produced a relatively new line, that SDI was needed as a kind of "gas mask" the ultimate protection against nuclear weapons even if the superpowers decided to destroy them. Imagine, he said, a madman like Gaddafi having nuclear weapons and threatening to use them. With space defenses, we would be protected against this eventuality, he said. He even suggested that he would be ready to share the Star Wars technology with the Soviet Union, to ensure that both countries were safe.

In hindsight some of Reagan's arguments may not sound so bad, but in the circumstances of 1986 they appeared quite implausible. Gorbachev was particularly skeptical about the offer of SDI technology to the Soviet Union. "I may believe you, Mr. President," he said, "but would your successors repeat the offer?" Even many American officials were incredulous that their president would suggest something like that.

By the end of the day, Reagan and Gorbachev had decided to ask their experts to consider the issues in light of their discussions. Gorbachev went back to the Soviet ship *Georgi Ost*, where he and his team stayed. He met with his delegation, including Marshal Sergey Akhromeyev and such advisers as Georgy Arbatov, Yevgeny Primakov, and Valentin Falin, and foreign ministry officials, including Shevardnadze's deputies Bessmertnykh and veteran arms control negotiator Victor Karpov.

Gorbachev asked me to read through my notes of his discussion with Reagan. I did so while everyone listened, and he commented from time to time on certain points. He then appointed Akhromeyev to head the Soviet group of experts that was to discuss the issues with the U.S. group, led by Paul Nitze, overnight.

The next morning the experts reported that they had agreed on the general scheme of a fifty percent strategic arms reduction, which was more complicated than what Gorbachev had proposed but still fairly simple and nontechnical. Then Gorbachev proposed to Reagan a deal on INF: zero missiles in Europe and one hundred warheads elsewhere. Reagan immediately accepted. But they stumbled again on the SDI. Reagan said he could not accept confining SDI research and testing to the laboratory, and Gorbachev

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asked why he did not want to consider it in combination with the elimination of all nuclear weapons, say, within ten years. To my surprise, Reagan answered that he would not be against the destruction of all nuclear weapons, including tactical and battlefield ones.

I frequently wondered afterward why Shultz did not try then to restrain Reagan, who was suddenly saying something quite contrary to the U.S. strategic doctrine. I think that as an expert Shultz understood very well that what Reagan was saying was heresy, but he did not interfere.

Was it because the rationale of Star Wars, upon scrutiny, was equally inconsistent with the dogmas of nuclear deterrence? Or did Shultz want to see how far his boss would go to probe what could be achieved in serious negotiations? I don't know. But I remember that years later, when George Shultz, retired and teaching quietly at Stanford, met with Shevardnadze in New York, he said something like this: "When our leaders, each in his own way, began to speak of a world without nuclear weapons, the experts thought that they were wrong and that this was a goal that could never be achieved. But the experts did not understand that Reagan and Gorbachev were on to something: they felt what people wanted in a profound way." Shevardnadze agreed. I hope they were right.

In the end, of course, there was no agreement in Reykjavik. Reagan continued to insist on the need for SDI as protection against a madman and therefore refused to accept limits on it. Gorbachev said that without an agreement on defense there could be no agreement on offensive weapons—the two things were linked. What is more, he included the INF missiles in that link.

As Reagan and Gorbachev left Hofdi House, the reporters did not know what had happened, but Reagan's dejected face told the story. Their final exchange was picked up by reporters and was in most newspapers the next day, as well as the photo of Gorbachev and Reagan saying goodbye to each other in front of Hofdi House, with me standing between them.

Shultz gave a gloomy press conference right afterward, saying that promising agreements had been discussed, but fell through because Gorbachev insisted on limiting SDI. As Gorbachev entered the crowded auditorium where his press conference was to be held thirty minutes later, everyone was expecting a similar assessment. But as I interpreted his words, I sensed that Gorbachev took a completely different line.

The talks in Reykjavik, Gorbachev said, had not produced a deal, but they were not a failure. In fact, they were a breakthrough, because for the first time the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union were discussing

the possibility of destroying all their nuclear weapons. Was he putting a good face on a bad situation? Or was he looking beyond the details of the day to the deeper meaning of what had occurred? I wanted to believe that the latter was true.

The next day, I drove to the airport with Shevardnadze. The foreign minister was pensive. I try never to ask too many questions, and so did not ask him what he thought. I remember one remark he made: "Well, now it is all tied together again." As a diplomat whose mind focused on the practical tasks, he understood that it made reaching specific agreements more difficult. While the link between strategic offensive arms and strategic defense was quite natural and inevitable, throwing in INF was more difficult to justify and complicated the efforts to reach agreement on the one area that looked more promising—intermediate-range missiles. So both the overall arms control situation and the prospects for some agreement that would justify holding a full-scale U.S.-Soviet summit seemed uncertain once again.

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Once the U.S. experts and bureaucrats had a chance to analyze what had happened in Reykjavik, they immediately began to backtrack from Reagan's incautious remarks about destroying nuclear weapons. The argument that Star Wars would make nuclear weapons obsolete was one thing, but discussing the abolition of nuclear weapons in the context of specific arms control negotiations was quite another. The European leaders too were concerned, for they still regarded nuclear weapons as the ultimate guarantee of their security and the only weapons that were genuinely reliable.

A round of megaphone diplomacy began, with the Americans trying to alter what had actually transpired at Reykjavik, and the Soviets countering with quotes from my transcripts of the talks. I found the exchange quite distressing. It was quickly degenerating into a transatlantic shouting match and did not bring agreement on any issue closer. I thought it played into the hands of those who did not want any agreement. And the longer we would insist on lumping all issues together in one package, the less likely an agreement could be reached. In the endless discussions with my colleagues in Moscow, that was, for me, the bottom line.

The Gorbachevs Go to Delhi

A month later Gorbachev went to Delhi on a short official visit. We left on a cold wintry day, but when we landed it was, by Moscow standards, summer.