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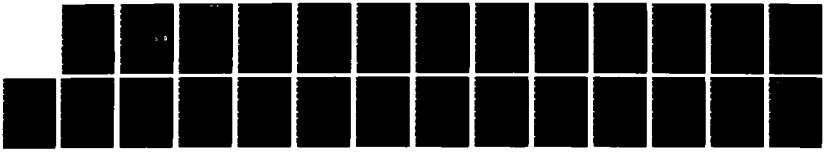

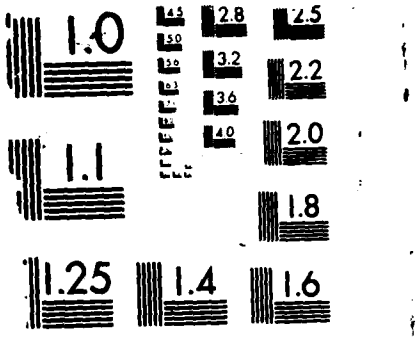

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# Gorbachev's Arms Control Strategy

Joseph L. Nogee
University of Houston

Paper delivered at conference

"Soviet Military in the year 2000"

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Soviet foreign policy under the Gorbachev administration, along with domestic policy, has been in a state of flux, particularly in the realm of arms control policy. Both in substance and style Gorbachev introduced a new dynamic in arms control policy. He has skillfully manipulated the issue for propaganda appeal. But also he has shown flexibility in modifying Soviet positions both to respond to U.S. demands and to exert pressure on the United States to reach an agreement. Soviet arms control objectives (some of which are incompatible) may be realized either through a formal agreement with the United States or without an agreement. These objectives include: (a) to use arms control to build a new framework for relations with the United States to replace detente; (b) to kill the strategic defense initiative; (c) to constrain U.S. development in manned aircraft and cruise missiles (d) to deligitimize nuclear weapons as an instrument of military strategy; (e) to exacerbate differences between the United States and Europe.

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During his first year in power Gorbachev relied heavily on propaganda with calls for eliminating nuclear weapons by the 21st century, his test ban moratorium and denunciation of SDI. After the 21st Party Congress he significantly modified Soviet positions closer to those of the United States with his acceptance of the "zero option" for INF forces, deep cuts in strateigc weapons and willingness to accept limited research on SDI. Gorbachev now sees an arms control agreement as essential to his program for domestic reform and is prepared to make genuine concessions to achieve it. With or without an agreement the Soviet Union is committed to the long term goal of building a psychological barrier in the West to the use or contemplated use of nuclear weapons.

Joseph L. Nogee

# Gorbachev's Arms Control Strategy

Gorbachev assumed power in March 1985 as a reformer. His proposals for domestic reform have attracted a great deal of attention though it remains to be seen how much of an impact they will have. Parallel to his concern over domestic reform Gorbachev has sought to introduce important changes in Soviet foreign policy. His call for "new thinking" and "a new approach" to international politics have resulted in changes in both the style and substance of Soviet foreign policy.[1] It seems clear that his needs for domestic and foreign policy reform are closely intertwined. The character of domestic changes will almost certainly be influenced by the degree of tension existing between the United States and the Soviet Union and the extent to which resources must be committed to achieve foreign policy objectives. But beyond the "guns vs. butter" dilemma there is also the vision or model which Gorbachev has concerning the changes in contemporary international politics, particularly regarding nuclear weapons. "Changes in present-day world developments are so profound and significant," he told the 27th Party Congress on February 25, 1986, "that they require the reinterpretation and comprehensive analysis of all its factors."[2]

One factor in Gorbachev's assessment which continues from the recent past is his stress on Soviet-American relations. He reminded his listeners at the party congress that "we attach great importance to the state and nature of relations between the Soviet Union and the United States."[3] The United States remains the greatest obstacle to Soviet global aspirations as well as the only state capable of threatening its national survival. Since the collapse of detente at the end of the 1970's Soviet-American relations have been in a protracted crisis. Relations have frequently been

tense with an abundance of hostile rhetoric emmanating from both Washington and Moscow. Unlike previous periods of Soviet-American tension, however, the two sides have not been involved in crises with a potential for confrontation like the Berlin, Cuban and Middle Eastern crises of earlier years.

The primary issue dominating U.S.-Soviet relations for almost a decade has been arms control. The rise and fall of prospects for an agreement, the walkout and resumption of negotiations, the stalemates and concessions have served as a barometer of superpower relations. The arms race is by no means the only source of contention, but the high level of weapons possessed by both sides---particularly in the nuclear category---accompanied by the implicit threat of their use should a political crisis lead to a military confrontation is a major source of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Arms control has emerged as the central issue governing superpower relations for two reasons. First the goal of arms control is to stabilize the deterrent relationship so as to make it less likely that nuclear weapons will ever be used. Avoiding a nuclear holocaust is a central goal of both sides. Secondly, arms control is the only important issue currently negotiable between the two superpowers. Issues like trade and scientific and cultural exchanges may be negotiable, but they are comparatively minor. Other issues, like the competition in the third world, are of considerable importance but they are not negotiable. Indeed, the fundamental political and ideological struggle between both sides is beyond negotiation. Thus arms control has become virtually the surrogate for Soviet-American relations in general.

It is in the field of arms control that Gorbachev has shown the greatest determination and innovation. His initiative in March 1987 on medium range nuclear weapons in Europe raises the prospect that an agreement could be reached with the United States while the Reagan administration is in office. As will be shown below Gorbachev's arms control strategy is designed to secure important Soviet objectives with or without a formal treaty.

It should be noted that the arms control policies inherited by Gorbachev were as bankrupt as the economy. The massive effort to stop the deployment in Europe of intermediate nuclear forces (INF) in the early 1980's failed dismally. Even the badly divided Dutch eventually came around to accepting their share of cruise missiles. Moscow's termination of negotiations in 1983 damaged the Soviet Union before public opinion. President Reagan's proposal in 1983 for a space-based strategic missile defense, while controversial, won considerable public backing and enough congressional support to sustain a strong research program. And, though Moscow could not be faulted for the outcome of the 1984 presidential election, Reagan's re-election guaranteed that Moscow would be faced with a tough negotiating partner through 1988.

Now going into his third year in power Gorbachev has shown initiative and imagination with the issue of arms control. He has broken with previous Soviet positions by agreeing to deep cuts in strategic weapons, by accepting Reagan's 'zero option' for medium range weapons in Europe and by agreeing to on-site inspection for verifying nuclear tests as well as for dismantling missiles on Soviet territory. Clearly Gorbachev wants an arms

control treaty. However, some of his objectives may be served without a formal agreement. It must be noted that the diplomacy of arms control may yield two different types of benefits: those that accrue without the necessity of an agreement and those that are explicitly a part of an agreement. Arms control and disarmament have always been complicated because of this dual character. Proposals may be made not so much to be accepted as to influence public opinion. Thus we often make the distinction between proposals which are "serious" or "propaganda". The two are not necessarily incompatible as the record of the Gorbachev administration attests.

It is sometimes difficult to know whether a proposal is made with the intention of reaching an agreement or whether it is an appeal to public opinion. There are a few general guidelines. One is whether a proposal is realistic or not. Realism depends on the issue and circumstances. What is realistic at one time may not be so under different circumstances. Some proposals today are by their nature unrealistic, for example, a proposal to abolish nuclear weapons. Indeed, nuclear disarmament has been the mark of gamesmanship in arms control diplomacy for many years.

Another measure of seriousness in arms control is the context in which a proposal is made. One that is introduced in a time of great tension and under conditions in which there is a possibility of a military confrontation is not likely designed to be part of an agreement. Arms control requires a political framework that goes beyond the immediate issues under negotiation. The important arms control agreements to date--the nuclear test ban treaty and SALT I--were reached during a period of detente, however short lived. SALT II, on the other hand, had had to struggle under

the burden of what some have called Cold War II. Thus, one measure of the seriousness of Soviet intentions to reach an agreement with the Reagan administration is Gorbachev's willingness to seek a broader rapprochement with the United States.

Gorbachev's most important objectives require an agreement with the United States. The overriding political objective behind current Soviet arms control policies is to restore a measure of detente in the superpower relationship. To undertake his domestic reforms Gorbachev needs to minimize the intensity of competition and the crisis atmosphere in U.S.-Soviet relations. A normalization of relations with his major adversary would reduce pressure to expand the military budget and open up opportunities to import American technology and expand the market for Soviet exports. A new agreement would also provide the Soviet military for a mechanism to curb the growth of those weapons---particularly manned aircraft and air and sea-launched cruise missiles---in which it is inferior to the United States.

A particularly important objective of Soviet arms control diplomacy under Gorbachev has been to stop the strategic defense initiative (SDI). It is ironic how thoroughly an issue which did not exist four and a half years ago has come to dominate arms control. Moscow's objections to SDI are several. First, the Kremlin does not wish to become involved in a space race with a nation whose technological and economic resources are greater than those available to it. The economic costs would make more difficult reform of the civilian economy. Secondly, though Soviet scientists doubt the feasibility of a comprehensive spaced-based defense against missiles, the Kremlin fears that even a partially effective defense

when combined with a fully modernized offensive missile force would give the Unites States a real first strike capability.[4] Third, it would have a destabilizing effect on U.S.-Soviet military relations by stimulating the production of offensive missiles to overcome a ballistic missile defense. Such an all-out arms race would spell the demise of arms control, probably for a long time. And fourth, it would destroy any prospects for a revival of detente. The ABM treaty---which would have to be jettisoned by deployment of SDI---is important not only because it constrains missile defense, but also as a symbol of detente. On this point the Soviet military and civilian leadership agree. Chief of Staff Sergei Akhromeyev wrote in Pravda in October 1985, "The unlimited-duration ABM Treaty is of fundamental importance for the entire process of nuclear arms limitation; even more, it is the foundation on which strategic stability and international security are based."[5]

The surest way to stop strategic defense is by means of a negotiated agreement, but Moscow understands that SDI can also be terminated by domestic opposition. Georgi Arbatov, a Soviet specialist on American politics, has observed that popular and congressional opposition to "star wars" is very strong. "Given a certain turn of events," he has written in Pravda, "it could fall apart and lose its influence."[6] It is highly unlikely that Soviet propaganda could kill SDI, but a combination of domestic factors could undermine it fatally. President Reagan's clout has been severely weakened by the Iran-Contra disclosures and SDI along with other of his foreign policy initiatives will likely be affected adversely.

Underlying a variety of proposals and initiatives of the Gorbachev administration has been the goal of de-legitimizing nuclear weapons as an instrument of military strategy and national security. This objective has

driven Soviet diplomacy and propaganda since the beginning of the nuclear age. As a theme of Soviet propaganda it goes back to the "ban the bomb" campaigns of the 1940's. It has never entirely been absent from Soviet diplomacy and under Gorbachev has been an integral part of his push for a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty and the moratorium on nuclear weapons testing that lasted for a year and a half, ending in the winter of 1987. When he initiated the unilateral moratorium Gorbachev defended it as:

> an important step on the path to the termination of the further sophistication of lethal nuclear weapons. In addition, the longer the period in which there are no tests, the faster the process of the 'aging' of stockpiled weapons will take place. And, finally, a moratorium creates the most favorable conditions for reaching an agreement on the cessation of nuclear tests and for the progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons altogether.[7]

He almost certainly encountered military opposition to the moratorium. He claims that it was not easy for the Politburo to take that decision because it interrupted their testing program.

The push for a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests serves both the effort to stop SDI and to inhibit the use of nuclear weapons in general. A nuclear test ban would terminate the current program to develop X ray-generated lasers, one of the technologies for potential use in a space-based strategic defense. But beyond that, the termination of nuclear weapons tests is a lynchpin for the broader objective of delegitimizing nuclear weapons. Just prior to the summit meeting in Reykjavik last year Michael Gorbachev emphasized the importance that the Kremlin attached to that goal. "One's attitude toward ending nuclear tests," he said, "toward the earliest possible drafting of a treaty on their complete prohibition, is today a very persuasive indicator of how really serious the attitude of each of the major nuclear powers is toward

disarmament, international security and the cause of peace in general..."[8]

Finally, an important objective of Soviet arms control policies has been to influence European opinion and exacerbate differences between the United States and its allies. Gorbachev has attempted to use the Geneva, Stockholm and Vienna meetings to reinvigorate a detente between the Soviet Union and Europe at the same time as he has tried to stimulate Europe's anti-American "peace movement". The large peace demonstrations in Europe during 1982 and 1983 showed Moscow what potential there was for mobilizing anti-American sentiment over the deployment of intermediate nuclear forces (INF) in Europe, though in the end the peace movement did fail. Compared to the campaign organized by Andrei Gromyko, Gorbachev's effort was more subtle. Where Brezhnev and Andropov focussed upon popular European fears of a nuclear war, Gorbachev has appealed primarily to the leaders of Europe, especially in Britain and France.

Gorbachev's accomplishments in realizing these objectives to date are mixed. Not surprising his arms control policies have evolved and changed as he has consolidated his power and established his authority within the political system. He has pursued a dual track strategy mixing both serious efforts to reach an agreement with propaganda. Some of the contradictions in Soviet policy undoubtedly reflected undertainties over what was possible with the Reagan administration and in some instances differences within the leadership over what was desirable.

Gorbachev's arms control diplomacy falls into two periods with the 27th Party Congress in March 1986 as the dividing point. His first year in power, marked by a heavy emphasis on propaganda, accomplished little. In his initial speech before the Central Committee plenum Gorbachev

dreged up the hoary Soviet call for "the complete elimination of nuclear arms and their prohibition once and for all."[9] In April he began his campaign for a nuclear test ban by announcing a unilateral test moratorium scheduled to begin on August 6, the 40th anniversary of the American bombing of Hiroshima. That moratorium was subsequently extended several times in 1985 and 1986 notwithstanding the refusal of the United States to reciprocate.

During 1985 there was pressure on both Reagan and Gorbachev to meet. They agreed to hold their first summit meeting in Geneva in November. Gorbachev saw the summit as an opportunity to press for his two main goals of stopping SDI and getting a comprehensive nuclear test ban. As the pre-summit negotiations bogged down in stalemate Gorbachev made a determined effort to score a breakthrough. In October he offered two significant concessions to United States' demands. He (1) agreed to a 50% reduction in strategic forces and (2) he expressed willingness to consider a plan for the reduction of INF forces in Europe separate from the problems of strategic weapons and space. The effort proved to be futile as both concessions were linked to conditions unacceptable to the United States.[10]

The Geneva summit turned out to be a victory for the President and a defeat for the General-Secretary. Not only did Reagan give no concessions on SDI, there was not even a reference to strategic defense in the joint statement at the conclusion of the conference. Underscoring Reagan's success, the final statement specifically reaffirmed both parties' committment to the nonproliferation treaty but made no reference to the anti-ballistic missible treaty.

Soviet prestige required that the Geneva summit be declared a success

and inevitably the press did refer to the accomplishments of Geneva and the "spirit of Geneva". But Moscow was under no illusions. Chief of the Soviet General Staff Sergei Akhromeyev told the Supreme Soviet after the summit, "The United States does not intend to part with its 'star wars' plans....Therefore, we must not put our minds at ease."[11] Although Gorbachev had agreed at Geneva to a follow-up summit in Washington in 1986, he was determined not to be outmaneuvered by Reagan a second time.

In February 1986 the Communist Party convened its 27th Congress. As a part of his preparation for the Congress Gorbachev worked out a revised initiative for arms control negotiations with the United States. It was launched with great fanfare on January 15th. The initiative was a perfect illustration of the contradictory tendencies that have marked Gorbachev's policies on arms control. On the one hand, reflecting the assumption that an agreement was remote, the January 15th proposals contained utopian elements whose purpose could only be to appeal to public opinion over the heads of responsible officials. On the other hand they also contained a major concession which could be the basis for a significant agreement. The utopian part of his plan called for ridding the earth of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 in three stages. In the first stage strategic weapons would be reduced 50% (with a limit of 6000) warheads on the remaining vehicles. "Space strike" weapons (SDI) would be renounced and all nuclear testing would cease. All U.S. and Soviet medium range missiles (INF) in Europe would be eliminated. In the second stage other nuclear powers would join in nuclear disarmament. Tactical nuclear weapons would be eliminated in stage 2. In the third stage all remaining nuclear arms

would be destroyed. This plan contained no details for verification, but Gorbachev did commit the Soviet Union to on-site inspection.

This scheme obviously was a propaganda gambit. The provision for on-site inspection was potentially significant, but the major new element was Gorbachev's agreement to what was known as the "zero option" for Europe's medium-range missiles. Moscow for the first time agreed to the plan for removing U.S. and Soviet---but not British or French---INF forces in Europe. Britain and France could retain their nuclear forces with only the limitation that they would be frozen, i.e., not modernized. When Ronald Reagan originally proposed his "zero option" in 1981 many in the West viewed it as a propaganda ploy which Moscow would never accept. Of course, in the January 15th proposal (unlike the 1987 proposal) the zero option was linked to other measures.

Which was the real face of the Kremlin: the fantasy of a nuclear-free world or the potential reality of an INF-free Europe? The 27th Party Congress meeting six weeks later offerred some important clues. Gorbachev's political report to the Congress is an important document which identifies several of the main springs of Gorbachev's foreign policy. It was not without its contradictions. As Gorbachev acknowledged: "Our program is essentially an alloy of the philosophy of shaping a safer world in the nuclear-space era and a platform of concrete actions."[12]

He began the foreign policy section of his report reminding everyone of his call to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year 2000. As if to underscore the propaganda value of this appeal he noted that "(W)e have presented our proposals not only through traditional diplomatic channels but also directly to world public opinion, to the peoples."[13] But then he

moved quickly to a new line. He told the 4993 assembled delegates that he saw signs for a change for the better in U.S.-Soviet relations, referring at one point to the United States as "that great country". "Ensuring security," he said, "is becomming more and more a political task, and it can be accomplished only by political means." He reiterated his opposition to "star wars" but only briefly. In the realm of "concrete actions" he repeated Moscow's willingness "to resolve the question of medium-range missiles in the European zone separately from the problems of strategic arms and space." Separating the INF issue from SDI, combined with the previous acceptance of the "zero option" created the basis for an agreement on one of the major problems of arms control. It has been said that the Reyjkavik summit later that year was a trap set by Gorbachev. That does not seem likely, but if it was, then certainly here was the bait.

At Geneva both men agreed to a second meeting which was to be in Washington. Each leader, for his own reasons, wanted another summit. But Gorbachev was determined to use the occasion to force some concessions from the United States. Almost certainly he understood that he could not kill SDI, but he might chip away at it in a second meeting with Reagan. Perhaps he could begin a process of erosion which conceivably could lead to its abandonment by a post-Reagan administration. The Soviet leader said he would not come to Washington unless there was progress in pre-summit negotiations which would result in a tangible agreement.

What kind of an agreement was Moscow angling for? There were two alternative possibilities: a limited objective and a grand one. What these two possibilities had in common was a de-emphasis in the role of nuclear weapons in the superpower confrontation. The more limited alternative

was a total ban on nuclear weapons tests. In his report to the 27th Party Congress Gorbachev had explicitly linked the date for a summit with an agreement to end nuclear tests. On March 30 Gorbachev went on television to condemn the continued U.S. testing and offerred to meet with Reagan in Europe to negotiate a test ban. (This suggestion forshadowed the Reykjavik meeting as an alternative to the Washington summit.) On August 18 he again went on television to announce an extension of the Soviet moratorium on testing, and he again called for a test ban agreement that would be signed at a summit. "This event," he told his television audience, "would, without any doubt, be the main real result of the meeting..."[15]

Earlier in the summer he had invited the US Natural Resources Defense Council to bring its seismological test equipment to what he called the "holy of holies", the area adjoining the Soviet proving ground near Semipalatinsk to offer assurances that with some on-site inspection the problem of verification could be overcome. Indeed, up to their second summit meeting the issue given the most attention by Gorbachev was the test ban issue.

The larger potential Soviet objective of a summit in 1986 was what has been referred to in the United States as "the grand compromise": that is, the Reagan administration would agree to put SDI on hold in return for deep cuts in strategic weapons. There is no evidence that Gorbachev was unrealistic enough to think that Reagan would abandon SDI completely; it was a matter of putting it on hold or chipping away at it. Specifically, Gorbachev wanted Reagan to agree not to abandon the ABM treaty for a definite period and to limit SDI during that period to a research program.

Under the terms of the ABM Treaty both sides are now forbidden to deploy a space-based ballistic missi le defense, but each party is permitted to withdraw from the treaty if it finds that "extraordinary events...have

jeopardized its supreme interests."[16] In an exchange of letters in the summer Gorbachev proposed that both sides commit themselves not to withdraw from the treaty for 15-20 years and that during that period strategic defense be limited to laboratory research only. Reagan countered with a proposal for unlimited research and testing but with deployment to be forbidden for a period of 5-7½ years. Shortly before the second summit Gorbachev came down to a flat 15 year commitment to the ABM Treaty, but he remained adamant on limiting work to laboratory research. There was room for some give on the duration for observing the ABM Treaty, but the lines were drawn hard on the question of what would be permitted during that period.

Which of these two objectives Gorbachev thought most feasible is difficult to know. He insisted that a summit must revolve one or two substantial questions. "It is not worthwhile," he said, "to hold a meeting for the sake of nothing."

In order to make a deal more attractive to the West Gorbachev offerred several concessions during the summer. He agreed to exclude among strategic forces U.S. forward based systems, i.e., fighter bombers based in Europe and on aircraft carriers. He relented on his previous opposition to cruise missiles on submarines. As an enticement to those in Western Europe who particularly wanted a reduction of conventional forces in Europe the Warsaw Pact proposed a new series of measures in June 1986. Among these were:

1. Phased troop reduction of up to 500,000 men by the early 1990's.
2. Reduction of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.
3. Removal of Soviet increased range operational tactical missiles in the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia along with all medium range missiles in Europe.

4. Verification of conventional disarmament and confidence building measures by on-site inspection.

5. Establishment of economic relations between the East bloc and the European Community.

Other proposals made by the Warsaw Pact were less attractive to NATO, but on the whole the East bloc position showed unusual flexibility.

This flexibility did lead to an accord signed in Stockholm in September 1986 at the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures providing for prenotification and observation of military exercises including on-site inspection on Soviet territory. But on the big issues---nuclear testing, strategic weapons and space---there was little movement toward an agreement.

In August the maneuvering toward a summit was disrupted by the Zakharov and Daniloff arrests. One can credit Washington with bad timing on the Zakharov arrest, but it is hardly likely that the administration expected or wanted it to be an excuse for deferring Gorbachev's impending visit to Washington. Daniloff's arrest---because it was based on a fabrication---was another thing. It is possible that Gorbachev was looking for a way to avoid coming to Washington for what he expected to be another fruitless session. Or it may be that he did not imagine what a strong reaction Daniloff's arrest would produce. In any event, by proposing a meeting in Reykjavik Gorbachev got out of his dilemma of not having to come to Washington and not wanting to take responsibility for aborting the summit.

In retrospect we can see clearly that no agreement of substance could have come from the meeting in Iceland because of (1) the lack of adequate preparation and (2) the general antagonism in Soviet-American relations at

the time. Everything pointed toward a propaganda slugfest. What emerged from Reykjavik surprised everyone. That fact alone is an indictment against both sides. Much has been made about the commitments made by the two leaders, as though there was a meeting of the minds, which in fact, there was not. Positions which are linked to unacceptable conditions do not constitute agreements at all. Everything offerred by the President was premised upon the retention of the right to develop SDI just as Gorbachev's proposals were linked to a commitment not to go beyond laboratory research for ten years and a nuclear test ban. In the struggle between the irresistable force and the immovable object the latter prevailed.

Reykjavik, however, was a clear victory for Gorbachev as Geneva had been for Reagan a year earlier.[17] Unlike at Geneva Gorbachev succeeded in making SDI the central issue. Furthermore, the issue was cast in a way that Reagan became responsible for the break up of the summit because of his unwillingness to compromise on SDI. The President's positions at Reykjavik have offended elements from every part of the political spectrum. The liberal to moderate elements were angered by his unwillingness to consider swapping restraint on SDI for some of the concessions Gorbachev offerred, particularly deep cuts in strategic weapons. Those in the center to conservative outlook were outraged at the apparent willingness of the President to abandon the nuclear deterrent within a ten year period. Others were appalled at the lack of preparation that went into such radical proposals. But Gorbachev's biggest victory was his apparent success in his campaign to delegitimize nuclear weapons. Moscow was able to claim Reagan's endorsement of nuclear abolition within a decade.....which incidentally beats by a few years Gorbachev's call for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

Of course, Reagan had not committed the United States to any such thing. What he did propose was the abolition of all ballistic missiles within a ten-year period, which in itself was a major departure from U.S. policy. Gorbachev countered with the proposal to abolish not just ballistic missiles in a decade but all strategic weapons. From the informal discussions that followed the American proposal and Soviet counter proposal the Soviets have drawn the picture of U.S. assent to the abolition of nuclear weapons. Gorbachev in a press conference an hour after the meeting described the end of the ten year period under discussion as one in which "...the nuclear potential of the Soviet Union and the United States of America would be eliminated..."[18] This message was amplified in the Soviet press. For example, on November 10 Foreign Minister Shevardnadze offerred evidence to support this theme. He stated:

> Yet the package--let me call it a package of agreements--remained, and the most important part of it was the two sides' agreement to eliminate "all nuclear devices", which is to say any and all nuclear weapons, within a 10-year period. Incidentally, the US President spelled out exactly what was to be eliminated. His list, I dare say, did not leave out a single type of nuclear weapon. To clarify this matter once and for all, I am forced to quote the President's actual words. Here is what he said: "I want to ask: Is what we have in mind--and I think this would be very good--that by the end of the two five-year periods all nuclear explosive devices would be eliminated, including bombs, intermediate-range weapons, and so on? If we are in agreement that all nuclear weapons would be eliminated by the end of the 10-year period, we can turn this agreement over to our delegations in Geneva, so that they can draft a treaty that you could sign during your visit to the US."[19]

It is now a part of the mythology of Reykajavik that as Georgi Arbatov recently wrote in Pravda, Reagan "all but put his signature to an accord on the complete elimination of nuclear arms."[20] Until the prospects for an agreement improve Moscow will use the Reykjavik theme to undermine the

legitimacy of a Western nuclear strategy. As the Politburo stated in approving Gorbachev's performance at Reykjavik, "a qualitatively new situation has been created and...the struggle for nuclear disarmament has reached a higher level, from which it is now necessary to continue to increase efforts aimed at radical reductions in nuclear weapons and their complete elimination."

Reykjavik appeared to be the culmination of both Soviet and American efforts to achieve their goals by means of a negotiated agreement. To many Gorbachev's ploy in Iceland of linking all his previous concessions---particularly those involving medium-range missiles in Europe---to a United States commitment to limit SDI to laboratory research for a ten year period and Reagan's emphatic rejection of that condition meant the collapse of arms control efforts completely, if only temporarily.[22] And indeed, for a time after the summit there was recriminations on both sides over responsibility for the failure at Reykjavik. But the Reykjavik fiasco has not destroyed the possibility that a new treaty may yet be negotiated by the Gorbachev and Reagan administrations.

Powerful factors continue to push Moscow and Washington toward an agreement. Gorbachev's dual arms control strategy maximizes Soviet objectives with or without formal agreements, but there is no doubt that his larger goals can only be achieved by an arms control treaty. There is no reason to doubt the Soviet leaders' expressed desire for an improvement in relations with the United States. The success of his domestic program is dependent upon avoiding an all-out arms race with the United States. His and Soviet prestige can only be enhanced by an agreement that codifies Soviet equality with the United States.

Washington too is under powerful pressures to achieve an arms control agreement. President Reagan has been severely weakened by the Iran-Contra scandal. Now that both houses of Congress are controlled by the Democrats opposition is bound to intensify against all of the president's defense programs and most particularly SDI. It is not a question of operating from weakness, for the United States position has for years been a very strong one. It is a question of an incentive to come to terms with the Soviets. President Reagan needs a foreign policy success now more than ever and arms control could give him one, especially if an agreement achieves some of his stated objectives in either medium range or strategic weapons. Every president since Harry Truman has achieved some distrinction in the field of arms control and Reagan's opportunity is drawing to a close.

In February 1987 Gorbachev restored the momentum toward an agreement by accepting the United States plan for the "zero option" in Europe for medium-range missiles without any conditions. This was one of the deals thought possible by Washington prior to the Iceland summit, but at Reykjavik Gorbachev linked the "zero option" to American restraint on SDI. Gorbachev's initiative came as it became apparent that Reagan was not going to budge on SDI. In addition, the fall out from Reykjavik was not as advantageous to Moscow's propaganda as the Soviets apparently expected. In the United States there was considerable rallying behind the American president over not limiting research on SDI. In Europe there was widespread concern over the possibility of losing the American strategic deterrent for its defense.

Gorbachev's dramatic concession in February had the elements of a

no-lose strategy. If rejected by the United States, Reagan would be in the position of having a bluff called since he originally authored the "zero option" in 1981. If accepted, it would raise again the spector of a European defense "de-coupled" from the Unites States since the original purpose of the INF force was to link Europe's security to the American nuclear umbrella. Still, in dismantling their SS-20's the Soviets would be paying a substantial price for the benefits of an agreement.[23]

The central issue for Moscow remains SDI. It is quite probable that Gorbachev sees an agreement on medium-range missiles as a helpful step toward an agreement on space issues. The Soviet goal is to put SDI on hold for at least a decade. Over the years Gorbachev has shown considerable flexibility toward achieving that goal. When he first took office Gorbachev insisted that a ban on "space strike" weapons had to include all research. Subsequently he found "fundamental" research acceptable and then "laboratory" research. Limiting SDI research to the laboratory was the issue on which the Reykjavik conference broke up. Since then, however, Soviet spokesmen have indicated a willingness to consider laboratory research as something permissable beyond the confines of a building.....though not in space. Gorbachev could wait for a post-Reagan administration, but he claims that he wants the issue resolved before then. Reagan and Gorbachev has been negotiating intensively for two and a half years. They are now running against the calendar, a fact which might be the spur to bridge some critical differences.

Footnotes

[1] Useful current analyses of the changes in Gorbachev's foreign policy can be found in Dimitri K. Simes, "Gorbachev: A New Foreign Policy?" Foreign Affairs, v. 65, no. 3; F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, "Gorbachev: The Road to Reykjavik," Foreign Policy, winter 1986-1987; Charles Glickham, "New Directions in Soviet Foreign Policy, "Radio Liberty Research Bulletin"(2/86), September 6, 1986. See also the entire issue of Orbis, vol. 30, No. 2, Summer 1986.

[2] "Gorbachev's Political Report, "Current Soviet POlicies IX, The Documentary Record of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Current Digest of the Soviet Press (henceforth CDSP), 1986, p. 10.

[3] Ibid., p. 33

[4] David B. Rivkin, Jr. "What Does Moscow Think?", Foreign Policy, No. 59, Summer 1985, pp. 95-96 and Raymond L. Garthoff, Detente and Confrontation, American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1985, p. 1027.

[5] CDSP, November 3, 1985, p. 8

[6] CDSP, December 11, 1985, p. 7

[7] CDSP, September 11, 1985, p. 9

[8] CDSP, October 8, 1986, p. 5

[9] CDSP, March 27, 1985, p. 8

[10] Gorbachev's proposals were made in France on the occasion of a state visit. His offer of a 50% cut in strategic weapons was tied to the abandonment of SDI. His proposal for the reduction of INF forces in Europe involved eliminating the British and French nuclear forces in Europe. Gorbachev proposed direct negotiations between the Soviet Union and Britain and France to accomplish this, but he received a negative response from the two countries.

[11] CDSP, Decmeber 25, 1985, p. 14

[12] CDSP, March 26, 1986, p. 2

[13] Ibid., p. 27

[14] Ibid.

[15] CDSP, September 17, 1986, p. 8

[16] Article XV.

[17] A particularly perceptive account is Michael Mandelbaum and Strobe Talbott, "Reykjavik and Beyond," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 65, No. 2, Winter 1986/87.

[18] CDSP, November 12, 1986, p. 4

[19] CDSP, December 10, 1986, pp. 11-12

[20] CDSP, December 24, 1986, pp. 6-7

[21] CDSP, November 19, 1986, p. 15

[22] That was James Schlesinger's assessment in "Reykjavik and Revelations," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 65, No. 3, p. 428

[23] As this is written important details remain to be worked out including verification, elimination of short-range missibles and the location of 100 warheads on medium-range missiles outside of the European theater.

END

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