

ANOTHER TRY AT SALT

My indoctrination into the world of SALT can best be described as one in which I prepared by previous experience to be ready for a complexity of issues, but not ready for the new style developing in the arms control bureaucracy - that of stampeding the normal staff process.

I had spent a fascinating tour in the arms control business as the Director of Arms Control in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, from August 1962, until November 1963. I had served as an Assistant to Paul Nitze on Cuban Affairs during the time that he was a member of the XCOM of the National Security Council, during the Cuban Missile crisis. As a result of that crisis and the scare that the leadership in both super-powers had received that nuclear war had nearly occurred, interest in negotiation of the ban on the tests of nuclear weapons increased on both sides. (This was one of three programs adopted by the Soviets in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis. A second one was to initiate the largest strategic construction program in history. A third was to initiate the second largest maritime construction in history. All three programs were part of an inter-related strategy: to reduce the risks of nuclear war and to shift the "correlation of forces" in a way that would make it possible for Soviet foreign

policy objectives to be supported by increasingly awesome Soviet military capability relative to the West.)

Rather rapidly after the Cuban missile crisis, those of us in the arms control business began to get indications here and there from the Soviet Embassies and negotiators/^{as}to ways in which previous impasses might be overcome. In a matter of weeks it was apparent that the Soviets wanted a test ban treaty and would be reasonable as to its terms. In a matter of months it was clear that we could get the treaty. The treaty had to be limited to a ban on testing in the air and water, but with tests underground permitted in order to get the agreement of the then Joint Chiefs of Staff. I had gained a great deal of respect in this process for the statutory requirement for the JCS to be military advisors to the President. Because they were recognized in law as such, the Congress expected the JCS to be ready to testify on the advice they had given when it came time for the Senate to exercise its constitutional right to advise and consent. And because the Chief Executive knew that this was to be expected, he had to pay greater heed to the advice than would be the case if the decisions of the Commander in Chief were not to be examined in the Senate. In essence, the JCS military advice is available at two critical points when a treaty or arms control agreement (which must by law, whether treaty or lesser deals with a

foreign power, be submitted to the Congress) is being considered. The first is when the President, giving consideration to all factors, makes a judgment as to whether to end a specific arms control relationship with another power. Second, is when the Congress determines whether or not to approve. And as the President must give consideration to the military aspects of the proposed arrangement as evaluated by the JCS, and as he must further give weight, politically, to Congressional reaction to that same military advice when they hear during the advise and consent period. This gives the JCS greater clout in the arms control field than in many others. I had observed the great emphasis that the Kennedy Administration put on getting JCS support during the test ban negotiations. I had devoted a great deal of time and effort to the two-way flow of information between the White House and the Defense Department, necessary to achieve that end. And I had observed a Test Ban Treaty more likely to serve long-term U. S. interests emerge from this process.

At the time the U. S. entered the Test Ban Treaty with the U.S.S.R., those of us in the arms control arena, in general, considered it as just a first step - a contract between ourselves and someone we didn't trust and who didn't seem to trust us - to ascertain whether enough common thought and dogma could emerge to permit a series of contracts. We were already then talking about a non-

proliferation arrangement, a hot line, a ban on weapons of mass destruction in space, limitation on the use of seabeds for strategic weapons - all of which have subsequently come to pass. And we then believed that somewhere down the road it might prove possible to achieve what we then refer to as a Separable First-Stage Disarmament Proposal - and what later became known as SALT.

In 1962, Paul Nitze and I had tried to think through the interwoven complexities of a Separable First-Stage Disarmament Agreement. We collaborated on a long paper which was, I think, definitive for its time, and was well received. I quote here some of the key thoughts to demonstrate: (1) that I was among those who supported efforts in the arms control field; (2) I appreciated the complexities of arms control; (3) I was not wedded to agreements for the sake of agreement but rather agreement for the improved security of the United States and the world in general.

With this detailed awareness of the potential complexities of SALT, with the knowledge of the key role that the JCS had played on the Test Ban Treaty, I felt in May of 1970, as I planned my orientation activity for the 1 July assumption of Command of the U. S. Navy, a need for rapid acquisition of the detailed knowledge I would need to deal with SALT problems.

I sent out a message to line up a visit to Vienna to the SALT Delegation as part of my return trip home by way of Europe. I had in mind that Paul Nitze, who was the best mind in the United States on such issues and who was the Secretary of Defense's representative in the Delegation and my old friend, would be able to get me up to speed rapidly. But the bureaucracy stepped in. I received word from Governor Shaffee's office that Admiral Tom Moorer considered it inappropriate for me to visit my former boss, that the connotation would be wrong, and had suggested instead that the JCS representative, Lieutenant General Roy Allison, meet me in Brussels and give that briefing. This was done. The briefing covered the ongoing issues well but did not give me that wider vision of the dynamics of world and super-power politics within which these issues were being discussed, nor the insight into the domestic considerations which were

relevant. All this I had to wait to get from Paul Nitze when he returned from Vienna to Washington, as he did fortuitously in June 1970, when the SALT Delegation temporarily recessed.

The briefings from Paul Nitze and General Allison recapitulated what had happened as I entered the SALT theatre officially on 1 July 1970, after the drama had begun. An effort had been made during the last months of the Johnson Administration to get negotiations started but it had floundered in part because the new Administration was unwilling to commit itself to carrying on work begun by the previous regime. After an initial period of reluctance to do so, the Nixon Administration had developed an interest in such discussions. Several factors went into that development. There was a popular view that it was a way to prove most stability than to liquidate the arms race. It seemed likely that the U. S. Congress would kill the ABM (12 Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile Programs) in the not too distance future and, therefore, that the U. S. should try to get a negotiated agreement in exchange for the ABM before Congress killed it anyway. Some held that we should give parity of strategic arms to the U.S.S.R., despite the fact that she had only half our Gross National Product, in order to prove good faith and promote psychological relief from Russia's feeling of military inferiority. Some held that the most urgent concern was to reduce the

fear of first strike by so constraining the ABM systems that the first striker would not have been able to deal with any surviving ballistic missiles from the victim and therefore would be prevented from a first strike.

There was an overwhelming desire, throughout the Government, to stop Soviet development of their huge SS-9 missiles and other ICBM's. It was thought that SALT might provide a centerpiece for East-West negotiations with which to legitimize other negotiations - for example, the U.S.- U.S.S.R. negotiation over Berlin. It was considered desirable to have a negotiation on a matter exclusive to the Big Two. It was felt that the negotiation could contribute to the political enhancement of the Administration domestically. There was a view that SALT would serve both as the servant and the beneficiary, a transition from Cold War to negotiation.

Until the Fall of 1969, the initiation of SALT was linked to progress in South Vietnam and in the Middle East. After that it was de-coupled. In my judgment this may have been satisfactory as a tactic, but as a permanent erosion of position it leaves real question. I think later when Soviet interest was whetted, and after their general tentative commitment to detente, a decision to establish an inter-locking relationship among several major negotiations

could have provided great benefit to the United States.

The Soviets had much to gain from SALT. They undoubtedly saw these talks as an opportunity to help Congress to kill Safeguard and MIRV developments through the euphoria of disarmament talks. They sought a period of better relations with the United States to give them political maneuvering room to deal with the PRC. They saw it as an opportunity to set back U. S.-Western Europe relations to establishing a ^{super-power to} super-power relationship and by achieving negotiated Soviet strategic superiority. They needed our trade and our technology. And they aspired to gain free world acceptance of the U.S.S.R. and Warsaw Pact - World War II gains in Europe. These talks began in a milieu of Soviet expansion of both their sea-based and land-based strategic missiles, including their giant SSN-9's with new triplet warheads (MRV's), and U. S. deployment, within a limit of missile numbers that had been constant for many years as a matter of policy, of MIRV's (Multiple Independently Retargetable Vehicles) in both the land-based Minuteman and sea-based Poseidon forces.

After much study by several task forces set up to deal with verification, cheating, central systems, etc., an 80-page report had been prepared by the NSC Staff which Mr. Nixon had reportedly read. Nine options had emerged from these studies. These options ranged all the way from one, going back

to the Johnson era of the summer of 1968, to more recent ones, and ranged all the way from zero ABM launchers to proposals of 100 to 1,000, later changed to "some set and equivalent number." The scope of these options was quite large in other ways. Some permitted MIRV's; others prohibited them. Some disregarded bombers in the proposal; others limited bombers; some permitted mobile land-based launchers; others did not.

After this menu of options was prepared, a decision was made to limit the SALT Delegation during its first talk, SALT I, at Helsinki, to a general discussion of the major issues: ABM, MIRV, links between them, and not to discuss any of the options. This was done and unknown to the SALT Delegation, Dobrynin was secretly advised that this had been done and that no options would be put forward at Helsinki.

General Allison pointed out that in a JCS action, dated 16 September 1968, the JCS had stated "Reduction in world tensions should precede arms control measures and that the Czechoslovakian invasion made it inappropriate to start at that time." He further reported that on 8 August 1969, the JCS had suggested a treaty of nine to ten years duration and had reaffirmed their belief that the strategic systems should consist of a triad of air-, land- and sea-based systems. He went on to report that after the JCS had reviewed National Security Study

Memorandum 28, they concluded that any SALT treaty should not be longer than six years with re-negotiations one year prior to that end point, and that they had also called for a withdrawal clause in any agreement. He reported that in November of 1969, he had given his own views on a number of matters including the fact that the JCS are military advisors and should not make arms control proposals while endorsing a limited approach to SALT. I took exception to this view of arms control since it seems to me that the military balance resulting from arms control agreements is an overriding constraint, every bit as conclusive as budgetary decisions and that the JCS must be similarly involved with any means for limiting military power and for determining its relationship to the power of potential adversaries.

Both Paul Nitze and Roy Allison believe that the question of defense of the National Command Authority was a primary issue and would continue to be so, and Paul Nitze was already convinced that the Soviets were interested in using forward-based systems as a way of demanding superiority of central systems. It was Paul Nitze's view that Henry Kissinger's view of the 9 Options that had been put forward in NSDM form was that each of them constituted potential U. S. positions, already worked through the Governmental bureaucracy, and therefore subject to the exclusive control of the White House to use as they saw fit

subsequently.

My impression of the first round of SALT which had lasted from November 17, 1969 to December 22, 1969, was that not much had been accomplished, that some progress had been made with regard to getting acquainted and establishing methods of operation. It was apparent that the Soviets had revealed a major concern in one which they would seek to use to their advantage by surfacing the FBS (Forward-Based Systems), and the fact that these tactical nuclear systems in Europe could reach Soviet territory whereas the Soviet MRBM's and IRBM's in Europe could not reach U. S. territory would be treated by the Soviets as a reason for maintaining a greatly superior number of central systems. It was also clear to me that the Soviets were using the SALT talks to sow concern among our NATO allies and to seek to create uncertainty in the minds of our sea leadership through their approaches to us about provocative attacks, etc.

Paul Nitze reported that prior to SALT II he had been making the case that there was a distinct linkage between the MIRV problem and the ABM problem and that the Soviets were quite apparently concerned about the U. S. advantage in ABM's and concerned that this would give them inadequate assurance that they could get through our ABM's. He felt that our willingness to negotiate an ABM treaty at parity, or in other words to give the Soviets the opportunity to head

off our lead in this field was negotiating leverage that could be used to great advantage with regard to the offensive deal and had been urging that it be so considered.

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NOTE TO BOB:

I, therefore, skip what I believe comes in here and get on with diving through the JSC notes, having previously taken us up through the conclusion of SALT I in August.

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My first six weeks in the job of Chief of Naval Operations and as a member of the JCS, have coincided with the last six weeks of SALT II which ended on August 14, 1970. During this period some significant things had happened, not only with regard to the addition of Option E by the White House, but also because the Senate Armed Services Committee had rejected four new Safeguard sites which left two sites already funded and two for which the long lead time had been funded, but it seemed likely that we would lose those latter two sites on the floor of the Senate. Also, Secretary Kissinger had been acquired to brief Congress concerning the need for ACBM financing in order to have negotiating leverage. This took place on the 23rd of July, just one day before the Soviets were scheduled to be briefed on our U. S. ABM position. The attendance

at the meeting was desultory from among the 13 Senators and 13 Representatives invited, and a leak appeared concerning his "bargaining chip point" in the newspaper the day after he gave the briefing and there was some acrimony associated with the briefing because Henry Kissinger was reproached for having briefed NATO first.

As I reviewed the bidding upon the conclusion of SALT II, I saw reason for concern. First, with the submission of Option E at Vienna on 4 August, the U. S. for the first time had departed from the concept of a freeze of strategic systems which would give the United States some advantage. Second, the Soviets were quarreling that even this number was unsatisfactory to them and hinting that they would come up one of their own which seemed to me would have to be one giving them distinct advantage in numbers. The Soviets had made it clear that they were going to demand some compensation in central systems because of our advantage in forward-based systems and yet at the same time one could sense an official air of optimism within the Government, undoubtedly for political purposes with the Congressional elections coming up, and in my discussions with members of the NSC Staff it was clear that they considered again that the White House had a tool kit of options from which it could put forward additional choices as soon as the Russians rejected the one without necessarily

having to have any discussion or adversary debate within our own Government, as for example when Option E was put forward. I also saw very little prospect of a satisfactory ABM deal given that the Soviets were still refusing to discuss any reasonable restraints on radar controls. My participation in the process had been limited to the following.

On July 10th in a meeting of the JCS, there was concern about the fact that Chalmers Roberts had carried in the Washington Post a thoroughly accurate report of the Presidential decision on Option E, and we noted that the decision to go for a number of 1900 vehicles was a couple of hundred below what the JCS had recommended. We were also somewhat concerned about the sense of haste on the part of the Administration which had instructed Ambassador Smith to tell Semenov that the U. S. was about to present a new package in order to keep the Russians at Vienna when they were talking about getting on with their summer vacation. In a JCS meeting on the 13th of July, we expressed concern that the NSDM-69 had been worded in such a way that a reduction in bombers was required and that no new silos could be constructed. We considered the latter especially serious since it denied us the opportunity of a two-way flow to build missiles of large megatonnage, while at the same time forcing the U. S. to give its superiority in bomber megatonnage. And on 17 July, Admiral Moorer felt that he was leery

that the Soviets were trying to give a picture of being allied with the U. S. and the impact that this was having on our allies. It was clear at that time that the North Atlantic Council was apprehensive over the omission from our options of controls on MRBM's which were the major threat facing them.

I was worried about the report that Henry Kissinger in the Verification Panel Meeting of 15 July had said we've got to "separate negotiations from objectives." It seemed to me that that was something the Russians never do and something the U. S. has frequently tended to do which has led to unfortunate results.

The true measure of the need for me to pay great personal attention to the strategic situation was driven home to me in the JCS Meeting of 29 July when the Chiefs were briefed by General Holloway, Commander of the Strategic Air Command and also Commander of the Joint Strategic Targeting System, on the results of his latest evaluation in the field of strategic war. This briefing covered the threat, and the force levels, the damage analysis and the consequences of an execution of an exchange in nuclear weapons. It painted a grim picture on the relative strengths of the two sides on the outcome and on the relative position of great disadvantage that we would have after an exchange.

It demonstrated not only the need for the United States to develop a
weapon which was a good, hard-target killer by achieving greater accuracy
and higher yield