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ARMS CONTROL ISSUES

1. Questions for new Administration:

a. Has it mastered history of strategic arms negotiations? Soviets repeatedly try old, once/twice-rejected arguments, negotiating ploys whenever a new U.S. team comes in. SALT is exceedingly complex -- from technical and strategic point of view; adequate understanding of issues requires detailed mastery of subject, not only by technicians but by key negotiators and policy makers.

b. Related to foregoing, is there adequate continuity in new Administration's SALT support team? How objective are second and third echelon officials who will be dealing with subject? Does their track record indicate an ideological cast to their views? If so, what are their predispositions? Is there a diversity of viewpoints represented?

c. How is continuity on Soviet side? Brezhnev involved from beginning. Marshal Ustinov (MINDEF), formerly responsible for defense procurement, called most shots in SALT I (was brought in at last minute during summit to resolve remaining issues; drew on detailed knowledge of Soviet plans/programs to ensure that SALT I did not inhibit anything Soviets already intended to do.)

d. What is track record of SALT I officials who have been brought into new Administration? Do they adequately understand how bad SALT I was, and -- most importantly -- why it was bad? Will they feel compelled to justify the SALT I outcome and play down its detrimental effect on U.S. security because of their involvement?

e. Does new Administration accept Kissinger's argument that strategic superiority is "meaningless"? Does it adequately perceive the political consequences (NATO, third countries) of allowing the Soviets to gain a clear margin of superiority? More broadly, does it really understand the role of nuclear weapons (tactical as well as strategic systems) in our alliance relationships? Does it understand/accept the NSDM 242 strategy (providing a range of limited nuclear options in order to maintain credibility of U.S. deterrent, particularly in respect to NATO). Does it adequately grasp the thrust of Soviet strategic programs; i.e., translation of superior throwweight (ratified in SALT I and Vlad) into strategic superiority via MIRVing and improved accuracy? Is it sensitive to the significance of the diminishing survivability of land-based systems?

f. Does it understand that negotiating deadlines typically work to the advantage of the Soviets, who are not subject to the internal political pressures to which the U.S. president must respond? Related to this, does it realize that signalling eagerness for a SALT II agreement in the near term only increases Soviet expectations of large negotiating gains, hence increases their intransigence in the negotiating forum?

g. Does it appreciate the fact that neither SALT I nor Vlad effectively inhibited any Soviet offensive force programs, but simply provided the framework within which the Russians could proceed with planned force expansion/improvement assured that U.S. competition in quantitative aspects had been effectively forestalled? (To plan where we want to go next you must know where we are now, and how we got there.)

h. Does it realize that the prospect of SALT I lapsing in October 1977 without renewal/replacement is more frightening to the Russians than to us? The Soviets already have major force expansion/improvement programs that will go forward for several more years under the umbrella of SALT I/Vlad; our programs lag. If SALT I were to lapse it is unlikely that the Soviets would make any significant alteration in their strategic programs for several years. The prospect that we might expand our own, once relieved from the restrictions of SALT I, is a source of concern to the Russians however. By appearing as the demandeur in the negotiations we relieve the Soviets of that concern to a significant degree, hence reduce their incentive to make meaningful concessions.

2. Other issues:

a. Cruise missile.

(1) Sea and land based missiles were excluded from the Vlad arrangement. The status of air launched missiles was disputed between the parties. U.S. position (Kissinger) was that they were also excluded; though the aide memoire to which we finally assented can be interpreted idfferently.

(2) Despite exclusion of sea and land based missiles, Soviets subsequently pressed for their inclusion and, in typical fashion, we have accepted this as an issue to be negotiated. (By letting the Soviets frame issues which amount to renegeing on their previous agreement we undermine the credibility of our whole negotiating posture.) The Soviets are motivated by the fact that we have a significant technological lead in cruise missile systems (particularu precision guidance). Cf. our experience in ABM negotiations. This again points up our ineptness as negotiators. We let the Soviets take the initiative in formulating "issues," which then become the basis for further compromise of our negotiating position. ("What's mine is mine; what's yours is negotiable.")

(3) Why do we want cruise missiles? More survivable (mobile platform), hence (since hard to pre-empt) add to stability of the strategic balance. At the same time, since they require significant time to reach the target (compared to ballistic missiles), they are not suitable for first strike, hence should appear less threatening to Soviets. Because of their small CEPs (zero theoretically possible in relatively few years), they have potential to raise the nuclear threshold (goal of all arms controllers) by allowing destruction of important military and military-industrial targets with conventional warheads. (Because of the relatively large CEPs of older systems, we have grown accustomed to thinking that "strategic" targets can be destroyed only by nuclear weapons. Our targeting philosophy needs a thorough re-thinking in light of evolving technological possibilities.) Cruise missiles are a potentially important adjunct to our conventional forces on land and at sea, which can allow us to redress the growing Soviet conventional force superiority.

(4) Argument that development of cruise missiles could encourage nuclear proliferation by providing a ready delivery system for smaller countries is weak. If we and Soviets forego cruise missiles, there is no reason why third countries will necessarily follow suit. Cruise missile technology is not esoteric; systems already exist in inventories of a number of countries. More importantly, decision to develop nuclear weapons is basically a political one that is unlikely to hinge on delivery system availability. Most countries capable of developing nuclear weapons already have suitable manned aircraft for delivery in any event.

(5) Verification of cruise missile range constraints is virtually impossible because of tradeoffs between fuel and warhead weight, even in relatively small airframes. Verification of any ban on building and testing cruise missiles is equally difficult because of low flight profile below the radar horizon. Russians could be expected to cheat.

(6) Conclude: net advantage to any limitation on cruise missiles lies with Soviets. Stability would be unlikely to be served by such limitation. Any range limitation asymmetrically advantageous to Soviets because of large U.S. population centers near the seacoast.

b. BACKFIRE.

(1) Kissinger gave this one away at Vlad, as he later admitted (recall his post-Vlad "off the record" press conference, text of which was later released as result of Mort Halperin's Freedom of Information Act action. Portion in which he indicated he had given away U.S. position on BACKFIRE was deleted without explanation from the public transcript after Kissinger realized that revelation of that fact would stir public controversy). Kissinger's concession was not recorded in the text of the Vlad agreement, however,

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and it should not be viewed as controlling U.S. current position on the issue.

(2) BACKFIRE was probably designed by Soviets to have primary mission as peripheral bomber (vs. NATO and over ocean areas), but with design "bonus" of intercontinental capability to augment Soviet strategic forces. It is capable of 1 1/4 way missions (strike U.S., recover in Cuba, e.g.) U.S. strategic bombers are not capable of two-way missions ~~xxx~~ without inflight refueling. (This fact needs to be checked; but there are many public statements to this effect.) Argument that BACKFIRE flight profile is not optimized for intercontinental missions loses much of significance in light of fact that U.S. has made decision to forego continental defense against manned bombers. (In this connection also recall that in all pre-Vlad discussions consensus existed in U.S. SALT community that the asymmetry in air defenses demanded that any inclusion of U.S. bombers in SALT limitations be accompanied by Soviet concession that recognized the Russian air defense superiority, or by equal limitations on air defense capabilities. This idea seems to have been lost in the post-Vlad discussion.)

(3) Constraints on Soviet inflight refueling capability, or deployment of BACKFIRE to advanced bases, suffer from verification problems. In the case of deployment constraints, the constraint could be quickly violated; and by the time it was discovered the Soviets presumably would already have launched their attack.

(4) U.S. acceptance of BACKFIRE as an "issue" to be negotiated (i.e., compromised) once again illustrates our willingness to let the Soviets frame the issues, then further water down our own position.

c. Does the U.S. have a clear perception of the objective of arms control negotiations? Do we view them as an end in themselves, or as a vehicle to improve our net security posture? Has any President ever clearly articulated what the ultimate goal is, and how it relates to national security? Do we have a negotiating strategy based on the statement of an overall arms control objective? Does it take into account Soviet negotiating style? Does it provide for strong going-in positions to provide some negotiating latitude; or do we pre-negotiate among ourselves and water down our posture to what we deem a "reasonable" position, only to see it further eroded by Soviet hard-lining? What has been the track record thusfar of arms control in enhancing U.S. security? Are we better off now than before SALT I? If not, to what degree is the deterioration in our position attributable to arms control agreements? (Challenge the conventional wisdom that arms control is good per se.) Have the SALT agreements enhanced or eroded the stability of the strategic balance? What have they done to public support of necessary

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military programs? What is the effect on our negotiating leverage when U.S. officials imply that our military ~~xxxxxx~~ strength is superior to the Soviets? (New Administration didn't have to say this; they start with a clean ~~xxxx~~ slate and no responsibility for past errors.) Are we prepared to engage all our negotiating leverage (including economic) in arms control dealings with the Russians? What is the effect of statements suggesting we are considering unilateral restraints (on, e.g., cruise missile development) in an effort to induce Soviet reasonableness? How effective have unilateral restraints been in the past? Arms control can be either good or bad, stabilizing or destabilizing, depending on the specifics of the agreement. We need to recognize this fact and disabuse people of the notion that any arms control agreement is an unalloyed blessing. Agreements which reduce the deterrent capability of U.S. military power are likely to be disruptive to peace in the long run.

d. NATO viability depends on the credibility of the U.S. deterrent. Growing Soviet strategic force capabilities, coupled with the increasingly vulnerability of U.S. strategic forces, diminishes that credibility. What is the new Administration's plan to reverse this trend? How does arms control strategy fit into the plan?

e. Soviet compliance with SALT I agreements. Most of the issues here have been swept under the rug; they are no longer being seriously pursued by U.S. (if they ever were). What effect does our failure to hold the Soviets accountable for their past violations have on Soviet incentive to abide by any new agreements? (Can be argued it gives them strong incentive to ensure that new agreements are replete with "ambiguities" which can be exploited for Soviet strategic advantage.)

f. Throw-weight. Is it a "phoney issue," as Kissinger argued? Or is it the crux of the matter, as Paul Nitze has pointed out in his speeches and articles? If it is important, what are we doing to redress the large Soviet throwweight advantage? Is this an objective of the new Administration's arms control strategy? If so, how is it manifested?

g. How real is the "arms race?" (Draw on Wohlstetter articles). ~~xxxxxxx~~ Do our views on the importance of arms control agreements stem from false premises?

h. How important is a comprehensive test ban? Would it serve U.S. or Soviet interests more? Why is testing important? Did Carter fall into a Soviet trap by advocating a CTB? What does presidential ~~xxxxxx~~ advocacy of a CTB in advance of negotiations do to our negotiating leverage?

i. How can we ensure CIA produces ~~xxx~~ accurate and objective estimates on Soviet strategic capabilities and ~~ix~~ objectives? How avoid the politicized SALT intelligence

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that came out of CIA during the Nixon administration?

j. Does the new Administration have an adequate appreciation of the fact that the Soviet goal is military superiority over the U.S.? Does it understand why this goal is important to the Russians?

k. What would a good SALT agreement look like? What would we have to do to get it? (Record shows Soviets ~~will~~ will back down and be reasonable when confronted ~~with~~ with tough U.S. position.) Must provide for real (rather than cosmetic) equality in capability; tight verification; progressive and automatic reductions in forces (driving both sides toward greater reliance on more survivable systems).

l. Qualitative constraints. The effort to impose qualitative constraints failed to ~~discriminate~~ discriminate between improvements in quality which are stabilizing and cost-reducing and those which are destabilizing and cost-increasing. E.g., had we frozen strategic system technology in the mid-fifties, we would not have deployed our SSBN force, hardened missile silos, or been able to reduce our large and vulnerable strategic bomber force. The consequence of all these force improvements has been to increase system survivability, hence strategic stability, to reduce total megatonnage, and to cut strategic force ~~investment~~ investment and operating costs. (Vide Wohlstetter articles.) *All of this, note, without benefit of arms control agreements.*
m. ~~Lessons~~ Lessons for the Carter Administration. Historically the most serious errors USG has made in arms control negotiations have been:

(1) Failure to understand that the objective of arms control is to enhance US security.

(2) Failure to have an arms control strategy.

(3) Failure to understand Soviet objectives in arms control, or to cope effectively with the Soviet negotiating strategy.

(4) Failure to engage all available US negotiating ~~we~~ leverage in support of US objectives.

(5) Failure to be truthful with Congress and the public about the impact on US interests of agreements reached.

(6) Failure to ensure adequate and objective intelligence is available on Soviet strategic force buildup and objectives.

(7) Failure to involve appropriate Congressional authorities during the negotiating stage.

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(8) Failure to provide for adequate verification, or to insist on Soviet compliance when non-compliance is discovered.

(9) Conduct of negotiation via the back channel, *or at the summit,* without adequate coordination within USG.

(10) Failure to understand potential impact of agreements on alliance relationships.

(11) Failure to appreciate the detrimental effect of negotiating against self-imposed deadlines, or of Presidential statements which give away important negotiating points in advance.

(12) Failure to generate public support for the military programs which are necessary to ensure successful negotiations -- and to hedge against the failure of negotiations/agreements -- by misrepresenting true state of the military balance.

(13) Failure to admit that previously negotiated agreements have gone sour, or are being violated by Soviets. (Or that they were bad ab initio).