

As Prepared for Delivery

ARMS CONTROL, STRATEGIC STABILITY, AND GLOBAL SECURITY

ADDRESS BY

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Radical reductions, in fact, can increase the incentive to cheat, since a balance at lower levels can more easily be tipped.

The U.S. Proposal

The United States has serious proposals now on the table at Geneva. We have been criticized for our restraint in the public-relations field. But our proposals were not made for propaganda; they were made to make progress toward these central objectives. Our proposals cover reductions in strategic offensive forces; reduction or elimination of U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range nuclear forces; and a serious dialogue on defensive weapons and the relationship between offense and defense. These issues are being discussed now in the Geneva negotiations in three separate but interrelated forums.

First, in the talks on strategic arms reduction, the United States has proposed radical reductions down to 5,000 ballistic-missile warheads on each side. This represents a cut of nearly 50 percent from the current Soviet level. We have proposed substantial reductions in the number and destructive power of ballistic missiles, and limits on heavy bombers and on the cruise missiles they carry.

The strategic forces of the United States and the Soviet Union are very different. The great majority of Soviet warheads and destructive power are concentrated on their large, land-based ICBMs. We have a more balanced approach, with as much emphasis on submarine-based missiles and bombers as on ICBMs. The Soviet force is designed for preemption, ours for retaliation. These differences greatly complicate the achievement of an equitable agreement. We are prepared to explore tradeoffs between areas of relative advantage -- such as our advantage in bombers versus their advantage in ICBMs -- to establish an overall balance.

Our proposal is comprehensive, but its core is a recognition that reductions should focus on the most destabilizing systems. Weapons like large fixed land-based ICBMs with multiple warheads, capable of destroying missile silos -- these are the most powerful strategic weapons, the most rapid, the most provocative, the most capable of carrying out a preemptive strike, the most likely to tempt a hair-trigger response in a crisis.

The Soviets have over 300 heavy ICBMs; we at present have none. (Our first deployments of MX, a smaller missile but roughly comparable because of its accuracy, will begin late next year.)

With their accuracy, destructive power, and multiple warheads, the Soviet weapons are capable of destroying virtually the entire land-based portion of our retaliatory force. For nearly a decade this category of weapons has been, for us, one of the central issues of arms control. One of the odd features of the current debate is that the Soviets would have us believe this central issue has disappeared. It's as if the threat from these powerful weapons, which already exist in the hundreds, is somehow less important than research into new categories of systems which don't exist, won't exist for many years at best, and won't come into being at all unless research is successful in meeting stringent criteria we ourselves have set.

The second negotiation in Geneva is about intermediate-range nuclear forces, or INF. This negotiation is taking place because in 1977 the Soviet Union began deploying SS-20 intermediate-range nuclear missiles in the western USSR, aimed at our European allies, and in the Soviet Far East, aimed at our friends and allies in East Asia. Today there are 441 operational launchers deployed; with three warheads on a missile, that makes over 1300 modern nuclear warheads aimed at the cities and defense facilities of our friends and allies.

In response -- and I repeat, in response -- the Atlantic Alliance decided in 1979 that it had no choice but to deploy weapons of its own in this category, as a deterrent, while seeking to negotiate with the Soviet Union on a formula for mutual restraint. The Soviets agreed to talk, but have not negotiated on the basis of mutuality. They insisted on their right to a monopoly of longer-range INF missiles; they waged an unprecedented campaign of political warfare to intimidate our allies into retreating from the NATO decision of 1979. Our allies -- governments and legislatures -- stood firm, NATO Pershing II ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles began to be deployed in several allied countries in 1983 -- six years after the SS-20 deployment began.

The United States proposed at Geneva that we agree to eliminate both sides' longer-range land-based INF missiles on a global basis. The Soviets refused. Then we proposed that both sides reduce to the lowest possible equal number of warheads. The Soviets still refuse. Our position is based on the principle of equality between the United States and the Soviet Union. And limits must be applied globally, since the SS-20 is a mobile missile and it is not our objective simply to shift the SS-20 threat from Europe to Asia.

The threat of the SS-20 goes to the heart of our commitment to our allies. These are weapons aimed at Europe -- although they could be aimed at America. Their purpose is to "decouple," that is to separate you from us by intimidating you. The alliance's response is a united response, and a unifying response, in that it symbolizes once again that our destinies are tied together. The principle of collective security is thus confirmed, and reinforced. Europe is safer, because deterrence is strengthened.

The third area of negotiation is that of defense and space arms. But the core issue is the same: the stability of deterrence.

The SALT I Accords of 1972 limited anti-ballistic missile systems and were also a partial first step toward limiting offensive weapons. We continue to comply with them, provided the Soviet Union corrects its noncompliance and negotiates seriously in Geneva. We must remember, however, that those accords of 13 years ago, and the hopes they engendered, were founded on certain assumptions. Developments since then have called those assumptions into question.