

WENT TO WA

in November.

MR. WEINBERGER. They went in as rapidly as they could.

Q That's right. As soon as the Germans got parliament approval --

MR. WEINBERGER. Well, there's an interesting footnote there if you want to use it and that was that the Belgian^(?) also -- that we were ready. I had everything lined up and as soon as by telephone we got the word, they were on their way. And they got over there a lot faster than anybody thought they could, because I was very worried about the difficulty of getting permission of the NATO allies to actually deploy, even though it had been NATO policy since '79 and even though every single NATO meeting I attended the matter was reopened, reargued and redebated and every time it came out the same way. So I just didn't want to have anymore motions for a new trial or anything of that kind so to speak. So they went over very fast.

*Full
PS*

Q I want to ask you about a now somewhat disputed incident. That fall there was a NATO exercise by the name of Able Archer -- command post nuclear release exercise. 7

MR. WEINBERGER. Yes, they're held every year.

Q Subsequently -- you probably know this. I'll just tell you to give my question its setting -- the KGB Chief in London at that time was -- it turned out to be an agent and he later defected. A man named Gordievsky. Maybe you've met him. He subsequently said that the Russians got so upset by this exercise that they put out all kinds of special bulletins -- find out this, that and the other -- there were some nuclear capable aircraft that were alerted in some countries in Europe by the Soviets. There are some people who feel that this was a very serious thing, other people who feel it's not a very serious thing. That's neither here nor there.

*Able
Archer*

In interviewing Bud McFarlane, he recalls talking to you prospectively before this exercise -- there was all this tension in the air. The Soviets were beating the drum about the dangers of the deployments taking place and so on -- about whether certain things should be done to make it clearer that this is purely an exercise, that we're not going through any wartime kind of drill, to tone it down a little bit, have a few people out of place who would otherwise be engaged in the exercise. What do you remember about this whole episode?

MR. WEINBERGER. I don't remember anything about that. McFarlane's memory -- I guess the kindest way to phrase it -- exceeds mine in many instances. I think that's the phrase I used in my book about it. I don't remember that. Able Archer under one

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name or another was a standard annual I think but maybe semi-annual exercise that was run by the NATO countries. And we had others that we did where we'd fly a large number of reinforcements over to see how quickly we could do that -- Reforger. And two or three others that we did very regularly. It obviously, because it was a NATO policy, involved the timing of the release of nuclear weapons, the chain of command -- who would have the authority, how quickly could it come back here and go back over there -- all that sort of thing. It was a standard exercise. I do not remember McFarlane saying that it ought to -- (inaudible).

Q Do you remember any particular alarm or --

MR. WEINBERGER. Not about this, no. But I do remember -- and I do know, because I felt the same way on our side -- that it is sometimes quite difficult to tell the difference between an exercise and the beginning -- the raising of indicators that we watch all the time every day, every hour. I was particularly worried once about North Korea, because they were moving a hell of a lot of stuff in position and everybody knew it was just a maneuver and it was an annual exercise, but I got quite alarmed, because I kept saying "What if it isn't? We've lost about five days of time." So the difference between a realistic exercise or maneuver and what could be preparations for an attack, that line is sometimes quite blurred. I don't remember anything specifically about that. I do remember that my feeling was that the Soviets had walked out of the negotiations, as they were. They weren't really negotiations. We were just sitting around the table with a bunch of guys who wouldn't bend an inch -- was a natural event to be expected when we deployed.

And I was extremely anxious to deploy, because of two or three reasons. One was that I didn't know how long the atmosphere for deployment was going to last. I hoped it would, but the Soviets were always sure they could block deployment and they had mounted huge demonstrations from 1981 on and never found one that said anybody demonstrating against the SS-20. But a lot of these were -- and so I wanted to deploy and we had urged deployment and the European countries had, in very courageous decisions, accepted deployment.

And the other one was -- the most important reason -- it was simply I felt very uncomfortable with having 440 SS-20s and no response except the intercontinental missiles or the submarines. And frequently, as I pointed out, when you have those you don't have to worry. And I thought that if they could use an intermediate-range missile and we had to respond with the intercontinental, something would be very badly -- it was very badly awry and it could trigger all kinds of reresponses, etc.

So my feeling was that we should proceed with exercises, we should not feel that the Soviets were doing anything other than

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continuing their propaganda efforts to try to block deployment. And that once deployment was in, ultimately they would come back, because I knew that they feared the Pershing II more than anything else. And that's why I was so strongly opposed to this "walk in the woods." What was the date of the "walk in the woods"?

Q The "walk in the woods" was earlier. That was in '82.

MR. WEINBERGER. Well, anyway, there had been a tremendous amount of discussion of that and I got quite unhappy with Paul Nitze and others for pushing that, because -- (inaudible) -- seemed to me way beyond the instructions and, secondly, it seemed to me that it was something that would leave us far weaker than we ought to be if it had ever been agreed to. But that's a kind of another footnote. But on this particular thing you're asking me about, yes, I opposed -- I don't remember anybody suggesting that we modify the exercise. None at all. If they had I would have said, "No, I think we've got to go through with it, because I don't think we can let the Soviets feel that any of this propaganda attempt to block deployment is --"

Place Archer

There's one other thing they did when deployment started, as I'm sure you know. They moved their submarines closer. They started maneuvering around with their Polish and East German divisions and stuff like that. And I said I think all that is -- and it's all designed since the governments have agreed to deployment, it's all designed to block the deployment and I don't think we should have the deployment blocked. But I don't remember McFarlane saying "You should modify Able Archer," or anything of that kind. Maybe one of his staff people told him and maybe he muttered it to somebody in the Pentagon. But I don't remember it as any big crucial issue.

Fall '83

I do remember the earlier part -- that I felt that after the shooting down of the KAL plane that we should take some positive steps and if all we could do would be to call off some meetings, at least we ought to do that.

Q I want to ask you about another historical thing that's of great interest, because of the various bounces it took. This has to do with the idea of eliminating all ballistic missiles. In January of 1986 -- we're leaping ahead now a little bit -- Gorbachev proposed a grandiose plan for total disarmament just about by the year 2000. The U.S. tried to find a way to respond to it and it did respond to it in various ways at Geneva and so on.

Then in the summer, he sent over a letter to Reagan and there was a discussion of how to respond, what move to make with Gorbachev on the arms side. I talked to Fred Ikle and to several others, including Max Kampelman. The idea was going around about the dangers of ballistic missiles.