

Record of the Main Content of the Consultations

Between A. A. Obukhov and R. Bartholomew

October 7, 1991

(10:00AM-6:00PM)

A. A. Obukhov: I propose that we continue the issues on the agenda.

R. Bartholomew: It seemed to us that in President Gorbachev's statement there was no answer to one of the initiatives proposed by President Bush. Specifically our proposal to begin dialogue on command and control of strategic nuclear weapons.

A. A. Obukhov: In M. S. Gorbachev's television statement it was said that, "we express our willingness to enter into a substantive dialogue with the United States on developing safe and ecologically responsible technologies for storing and transporting nuclear warheads, methods of using nuclear charges, and raising nuclear security." Likewise, it was announced that, "with the goal of raising the reliability of control over nuclear weapons we are combining under a single operational management all strategic nuclear forces and including the strategic defensive systems into a single branch of the armed forces."

In this way I get the impression that the Soviet side gave an exhaustive response to the U.S. proposal.

Along with that, because the American side pays special attention to the issue relating to control systems over strategic nuclear forces, we would like to hear additional thoughts from your side about what exactly is meant by that.

R. Bartholomew: In President Bush's speech about this, possible measure on perfecting command and control systems were mentioned which would prevent the possibility of unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

I. Shalikashvili: We would particularly like to discuss the following issue: technical measures related to the existing system of command and control over strategic nuclear forces that would prevent the possibility of unauthorized use of these weapons; the procedures making up the integral part of the strategic weapons' chain of command, which would prevent the possibility of launching ICBMs as a result of accidental or intentional actions.

I'd especially like to mention the fact that the American side isn't proposing to engage in an in-depth exchange of opinions on this issue in such a way that would touch upon topics related to state secrets and interests of national security.

R. Bartholomew: In this context I'd like to mention that at the very top of the chain of command of strategic arms of the US are civilians, not military personnel.

A. A. Obukhov: The strategic nuclear forces control system available in the Soviet Union provides reliable use of nuclear weapons and guarantees against its unauthorized use. As in the US, in our country the supreme commander is civilian, the President of the USSR.

We have listened in the most attentive manner to the thoughts of General Shalikashvili about what is meant in discussing the issue of the command system of strategic arms. It's becoming clear that we're talking about developing procedures that will provide stronger guarantees against unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, without penetrating into the field related to national security interests.

We will recommend to our leadership that as part of future contacts with the American side, these issues be reflected. In particular, they could be touched upon at the upcoming discussion with the USSR Minister of Defense E. I. Shaposhnikov.

R. Bartholomew: We will undoubtedly use your advice.

S. M. Rogov: Several questions related to this. Do the US proposals mean that naval strategic forces of the US would be placed under the authority of the Strategic Air Command? Do you mean to install a PAL system on American SLBMs? Doesn't the American side believe that it would be expedient to place warheads in air-launched tactical nuclear weapons under the authority of the Strategic Air Command as well?

I. Shalikashvili: The questions asked by Mr. Rogov illustrate the possible agenda for Soviet-American consultations on this issue.

R. Hanmer: Couldn't the Soviet side share with us its thoughts on specific methods of physical elimination of nuclear charges? Likewise we are interested in specifying the term "raising nuclear security," under which the American side has specific "mechanical" methods of ensuring greater safety of nuclear charges.

A. A. Obukhov: The questions asked by Ambassador Hanmer will also allow the clarification of the possible frame of Soviet-American dialogue on the aforementioned issue. The Soviet side is basically in favor of cooperating with the United States, exchange expertise, and gain use out of it by solving issues related to the security of nuclear charges.

(Consultations renewed after a brief break)

A. A. Obukhov: Allow me to inform you that the important conversation between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR B. D. Pankin and Ambassador Bartholomew has just concluded. The results from the expert-level discussion were reviewed. The Minister wished Mr. Bartholomew successful work from USSR President M. S. Gorbachev who is closely following the negotiations and is pleased by the positive reaction of President Bush to his televised statement.

R. Henmer: In President Gorbachev's speech he stated that you intend to "unite under a single operational command all strategic forces," likewise "to include the strategic defensive systems in a single branch of armed forces." Two questions on this topic. Specifically which strategic armaments will enter the new strategic command? What is meant by the inclusion of strategic defensive systems under a single branch of the armed forces?

B. A. Omelichev: All strategic armaments, particularly Strategic Missile Forces, naval strategic forces and heavy bombers, land and space warning systems, and also the Moscow ABM would be united into a single branch of the armed forces.

R. Henmer: Do you intend to include anti-aircraft systems in this branch of armed forces, first of all fighter interceptors?

E. I. Ladygin: The events mentioned by General Omelichev are taken by us in the context of ongoing military reform. At the current time the final decisions on reform parameters have not yet been made. At the same time, air defenses, particularly fighter interceptors, probably will not be included in this new branch of armed forces.

S. Hadley: I'd like to state that the explanations from the Soviet side are extremely useful to us.

A. A. Obukhov: I suggest that we give attention to the problem discussed by Minister Pankin and Ambassador Bartholomew. I am referring to the decision by the USSR to declare that from October 6th of this year there will be a one-year moratorium on conducting nuclear experiments. This is a unilateral measure taken by us with the goal of encouraging other states to join us. The Soviet specialists present here can probably fetch a serious argumentation in favor of our proposal. Both the Soviet leadership and Russian leadership are in support of decisive actions aimed at ending nuclear experiments. I'm asking the American side to comment on this Soviet proposal.

S. Hadley: Unfortunately I have little to say on the given matter. We understand the difficulties with which the Soviet nuclear testing program is faced and also those issues which can be raised in relation to nuclear tests. We try to take into full account the ecological problems related to the nuclear testing program in the United States. The Soviet and American presidents have discussed issues of the safety of nuclear arsenals many times. These questions predetermine our position relating to nuclear tests. As long as we possess nuclear weapons, a modest but effective nuclear test program will be necessary for ensuring the safety and reliability of the available nuclear armaments.

A. A. Obukhov: I think there is an urgent need of continuing the Soviet-American dialogue on this important topic. Some authoritative experts believe that ending nuclear tests is an attainable goal even with the condition of keeping nuclear arsenals. Halting the tests would allow us to vigorously accelerate the "Disarmament Race." Such a step, also, would protect

humanity from the harmful effects of underground nuclear explosions. I'd like to note that the Soviet community actively speaks out for ending nuclear experiments. This is the position expressed repeatedly by the Soviet and Russian leadership. With this I'd ask the American side to carefully review this issue again.

E. I. Ladygin: The decision made by us to make certain adjustments to the Soviet announcement of unilateral measures related to taking 503 ICBMs off alert. The total number of warheads on these armaments will be increased in comparison to the earlier announcement by 60 units. The specific plan will eliminate 326 RS-10 ICBMs, 40 RS-12 ICBMs, 37 RS-16 ICBMs, 90 RS-18 ICBMs, and 10 RS-20 ICBMs.

S. Hadley: These are good news.

A. A. Obukhov: Could you please comment on the Soviet proposals of terminating the production of fissionable material for weapons production on a mutual basis, likewise we call on all nuclear states to declare a no-first-use policy regarding their weapons.

S. Hadley: The issue of no-first-use of nuclear weapons isn't new. We certainly have to look at it from the angle of a new international situation. Nevertheless we continue to believe that this new situation merely confirms the correctness of our approach. As must be known to the Soviet side, the US has declared that it won't use its armed forces – be it nuclear or conventional arms – in any situation, except for defense purposes.

As for the the Soviet proposal of terminating the production of fissionable material. I think that we must take a fresh look at this issue, accounting for the seriousness with which the Soviet side proposed it. We will study this proposal of yours.

Now allow us to comment on issue of the non-nuclear, limited missile defense system.

D. Graham: The SDI program was first thought of as a large-scale missile defense system which would ensure defense from a significant number of nuclear weapons. Deploying such a system was meant to be carried out in phases. This concept of SDI came together during an era of confrontation and was calculated for a global Soviet-American nuclear conflict.

In the 90s we are faced with a different military-strategic situation. Soviet and American strategic offensive weapons are being reduced. Moreover a trend has been observed of such weapons being built in other countries. The process of their improvement is ongoing. Under influence of these trends, the United States has adopted a new military doctrine which is focused not on a global Soviet-American conflict but on regional threats to peace.

In accordance with this new doctrine, the SDI program is being reoriented with the goal of developing a defense system against limited strikes. The Corresponding decisions were made by the President of the United States in the beginning of 1991 and have developed into his initiative of September 27th.

According to the new SDI concept, the antimissile defense system must ensure protection from limited strikes, shelter American armed forces in various regions of the world, US territory, its friends and allies. At the same time, such a system should not ensure protection from a massive nuclear attack and therefore wouldn't undermine the effectiveness of the Soviet deterrent capability.

According to our estimates, there are currently 15 governments in possession of ballistic missiles and by 2000 that number will rise to 20. Besides that, there is a tendency to proliferate weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical, and biological, and also advanced conventional technology weapons.

It's necessary to account for the factor of political instability. The United States, for example, is concerned by the unreliability of the command systems related to ballistic missiles in third-world countries. Experience shows that in conditions of political instability, modern weapons may be used against American armed forces in various regions of the world.

In this way, the problem of proliferation of ballistic missiles is a global problem affecting the USSR and the US. The US Armed Forces, as well as allied territory, is currently under threat of a missile attack. The same thing pertains to the territory of the Soviet Union. In the future such a threat will increasingly affect the national territory of the United States.

Ballistic missiles are viewed as the most "valuable" kind of weapon in third-world countries. Leaders of several third-world governments have demonstrated a willingness to use these weapons. To date, hundreds of ballistic missiles have been used in the Iran-Iraq War, hundreds – in Afghanistan, 86 missile launches were registered as part of Operation Desert Storm, in 1986 Libya made two unsuccessful missile launches against an American facility in the Mediterranean Sea. The fact that in the Iran-Iraq War both sides possess ballistic missiles is worrisome and this didn't stop them from using such missiles. Weapons of mass destruction have been used in regional conflicts although until now missiles weren't used as means of delivery.

The United States undertook numerous measures in order to prevent the proliferation of the aforementioned weapons – diplomatic, political, and military. In particular, we even ran to such methods as threatening a retaliatory attack, tried to destroy ballistic missile launch systems as part of the Gulf War, and also went on the path of deploying a limited SDI system based on the Patriot system.

All of this brought us to the conclusion that it is necessary to create a more effective anti-missile defense system. Such a system, we believe, could consist of ground-based and space-based sensors which would fixate the missile launches, monitor them, allow us to distinguish between real or false warheads; non-nuclear interceptors that are ground or space-based. The last element of the system would be control.

The entire system would ensure the interception of anywhere between 10 to 200 warheads at any given moment. It wouldn't assume deploying "directed energy weapons," instead it would be based upon means of direct interception.

The actual space echelon of the antimissile defense would consist of two types of interceptors: to destroy missiles in the boost phase of their trajectory (before dividing into multiple entry vehicles) and to destroy the warheads themselves. The system would simultaneously be capable of intercepting 20-25 ballistic missiles during the boost phase of their trajectory.

A. A. Obukhov: Does the American proposal provide for exchange of technology?

D. Graham: Currently we are not proposing exchanging technology. With that, we would be willing to exchange information on these issues. We welcomed with interest the Soviet proposal on measures of cooperation in developing a joint ballistic missile launch early warning system.

In the final stage we suggest to agree on a new regime which would weaken the limitations installed by the ABM Treaty and allow the deployment of limited ABM systems. The American side formally proposed this last week in Geneva. A more important element of these American proposals is the US agreement of installing such limitations on defense systems which would be compatible with the goal of ensuring protection from a limited attack, but not undermining the effectiveness of a deterrent potential.

S. Hadley: I'd like to remind you that earlier the American side insisted that both the USSR and US withdrew from the ABM Treaty but didn't install any limitations on deploying defense systems. We attach great importance to the USSR President's announcement about the Soviet side being prepared to discuss the issue of deploying non-nuclear ABM systems. We could agree on what forums such an exchange of views would take place at.

A. A. Obukhov: Would this ABM system ensure shelter for all of the US territory or would this be an ABM of specific regions or facilities?

D. Graham: If the ABM system which I described was deployed in full capacity, it would provide protection for the entire territory of the US.

A. A. Obukhov: What about the territory of US allies, and also American forces abroad?

D. Graham: These tasks would be carried out with the help of tactical ABM systems, such as Patriot or similar naval-based systems as well as space vehicles.

A. A. Obukhov: In this way, the conversation is about deploying a tactical ABM?

D. Graham: Yes, that is so.

(Consultations were continued after a break at 4:00PM)

A. A. Obukhov: Do Soviet representatives have additional questions to the American side relating to information about the ABM system for protection against limited nuclear strikes?

S. M. Rogov: Judging by the message from the American side, the conversation is about deploying an ABM system with a complicated architecture. Such a system would consist of space elements, ground stations, and mobile bases. The "limited" character of the system is ensured by the deployment of a relatively small amount of nuclear systems. What guarantees can the American side present that this deployment would not continue during a crisis situation? In other words, in what way would assurance be ensured that the "limited" ABM would not turn into something else?

R. Bartholomew: Both sides would take onto themselves the corresponding obligation in establishing an international legal form. Evidently it would be expedient to complete such an agreement with a package of predictability measures in the area of ABM. The limits on capabilities of the ABM system would be ensured and determined by technological limits. Ultimately, a factor such as internal American legislation would be involved, budgetary constraints. Deploying a large-scale ABM system requires establishing new architectures of such a system of substantial additional funding. All of this cannot be implemented without Congressional approval.

S. M. Rogov: By our assessments, the amount of funds requested by the administration for Fiscal Year 1992 to implement an ABM system to protect against limited nuclear strikes would be enough to ensure the procurement of missile defense for intercepting a significantly larger number of warheads than what was indicated here by the American side.

S. Hadley: The questions asked by Mr. Rogov are well founded. The exchange of ideas must be a subject of Soviet-American dialogue on that account. Also, in the opinion of the American side, the administration's request for SDI for Fiscal Year 1992 cannot ensure funding for the scope of work required for deploying a large-scale ABM system.

E. T. Agayev: As far as I understand, the American side is putting forward the issue of deploying a limited ABM system mainly due to concerns of missile and missile technology proliferation. If the American proposals were to assume transferring the corresponding technology then I would, without a doubt, recommend to the Russian leadership to accept this gift. But according to Mr. Graham's statement, the American side is not prepared for such a step. The topic is merely of exchanging information. It's no secret that in these conditions deploying an ABM system, if only on a limited scale, would require the Soviet Union to attract significant additional funds to this goal.

Isn't it better, considering these circumstances, to take additional steps which would reliably block access of third-world countries to weapons of mass destruction and modern delivery vehicles.

R. Bartholomew: I share your ambition to spend less money on defense. I do not accept, however, that reducing the defense budget assumes a decrease in the scope of funding of each military program. On the contrary, under the conditions of the transforming international relations with account of emerging new realities and threats may demand priority financing for certain military programs which, in our opinion, refers to ABM as well. Moreover, it's no secret that in the Soviet Union, funding for antimissile development is carried out without that at a very high level. I do not presume to give you advice but the American side is of the opinion that a significant part of this money is going to the wrong programs. Therefore implementing the proposal of our idea of deploying limited ABM systems, apparently, would not require exorbitant additional expenditures from the Soviet side.

And a few more thoughts about this. In my opinion – and the developing situation in the world confirms this – policy in the area of missile and missile technology nonproliferation can be effective only with the condition that it will be complemented with deploying a limited ABM system.

I cannot imagine that a responsible American politician would make the decision in the current situation to refrain from deploying a limited ABM system and, in this way, leave the US vulnerable to a possible missile strike from some small country with an unstable political regime.

I cannot imagine how your people can exercise patience in the given situation.

A. A. Obukhov: I thank you for your explanations. I think that the focus of the questions asked by the Soviet representatives about the American idea of deploying a “slim” ABM system demonstrates our excessive concern over the high cost of the corresponding measures, and also that efforts by both sides in the area of security don't lead to undermining strategic stability. These concerns are completely legal.

We are also still concerned about the fate of the ABM Treaty which during several decades ensured strategic stability. I think that the American side must consider the value of the ABM Treaty in the same manner.

The considerations which were expressed by both sides undoubtedly predetermine the continuation of the dialogue that we began.

S. M. Rogov: Please allow me to share a few thoughts about the Soviet proposal about establishing a common missile attack early warning system. Both sides, apparently, have an interest that the EWS systems of the USSR and US be extremely reliable, especially under the condition of the huge remaining nuclear weapons arsenals. With eliminating the Krasnoyarsk

Radar Station facing the Pacific Ocean, our EWS system currently doesn't ensure the necessary opportunities. Such a situation, I think, should be a cause for concern for the Americans. In the Arctic Ocean, the NORAD system crosses with our EWS system which suggests the possibility of problems rising in this geographic region.

We could think about establishing a means of warning each other about a missile attack which would complement the existing American and Soviet means. This could be created jointly and launched by Soviet-American satellites to monitor the northern part of the Pacific Ocean, Atlantic, Arctic, and Indian Oceans.

We could think about the possibility of installing "black boxes" in locations where ABM systems are deployed to locate missile launches.

Another element of guaranteeing against unauthorized attack would be the installation of self-destruct systems in START. Everything mentioned above would allow us to enhance stability during a crisis.

Establishing a joint system missile attack warning system would ensure the flow of information about what is happening in third-world countries, allow to warn about possible provocations meant to provoke the Soviet-American conflict.

R. Bartholomew: I accept what Mr. Rogov said. I don't think that everything that was talked about is practicable but there are areas in which it is possible and we will bring forward our thoughts.

A. A. Obukhov: Allow me to summarize. Our discussions were conducted in a constructive, friendly manner and this is a good sign. The dialogue was defined by the counter-initiatives of the Presidents of the USSR and US. The information that we exchanged, I think, will contribute to implementing the aforementioned initiatives. We also outlined the direction of future dialogue that will allow us to accelerate the disarmament process.

R. Bartholomew: I'd like to express to the Soviet side my appreciation for their traditional hospitality.

In my approach to security issues of the United States come from the assumption that times of confrontation between our countries have remained in the past. In the military-technical area our armed forces are reducing so as to remove the potential for a sudden attack. In the political area, recent events in your country – the decisive breakthrough toward democracy – predetermine our firm determination to help you in every way.

We need different armed forces that will reflect greater extent than they do now the mutual relations between the USSR and US, the new situation in the world.

The discussions we've held strengthened my belief that we have laid a solid foundation for continuing dialogue.

In the nearest future I intend to contact you about a schedule of subsequent discussions.

V. E. Belashov: I'd like to express my appreciation to the American side for expressing your interest in exchanging ideas on the matter of nuclear weapons with representatives of the republics. I am grateful to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the provided opportunity of participating in the working Soviet- American consultations.

The fate of nuclear weapons in Ukraine must be solved with account of the opinion of the Ukrainian people. Ukraine intends to constructively participate in resolving issues pertaining to its interests and territory.

A. A. Obukhov: In conclusion please allow me to thank all the participants in this consultation from both sides.

Participants in the consultations:

-From the Soviet side:

Deputy Minister Obukhov

Georgiy Mamedov, MFA

Yuriy Nazarkin, MFA

General Omelichev

General Ladygin

Sergey Rogov, USA and Canada Institute

G.M. Yevstaf'yev, MFA

Andrey Kolosovskiy, RSFSR Deputy Foreign Minister

Vladimir Belashev, Ukrainian MFA

Andrey Sannikov, Belorussian MFA

Rustem Kurmanguzhin, Kazakh Permanent Representation

-From the American side:

Undersecretary Bartholomew

John Gordon, NSC

Steven Hadley, OSD

Lt. Gen. John Shalikashvili, JCS

Victor Alessi, DOE

Doug McEachin, ACIS

Reed Hanmer, ACDA

James Timbie, T

Douglas Graham, OSD

John Ordway, EUR/SOV (Notetaker)

Dmitriy Arensberger, interpreter

The conversation was recorded by First Secretary of the US and Canada Desk of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, M. V. Berdennikov.

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