

*Linhard  
RAC Box 8*

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

February 4, 1986

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 210

Allied Consultations on the US Response to General Secretary Gorbachev's January 14, 1986, Arms Control Proposal (U)

Earlier last month, General Secretary Gorbachev proposed a plan for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by the end of this century. I have completed my review of our options in responding to the General Secretary's proposal, and I have reached certain decisions. Before proceeding further, I would like to ensure that we have consulted fully with our allies. In accomplishing these consultations, the primary focus should be on our approach to handling the general concept of a process leading to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and on a proposed U.S. initiative in the Intermediate-range Nuclear Force (INF) area. (TS)

The Concept. With respect to the concept advanced by the General Secretary as his "plan" for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, the U.S. should respond in the following manner. (C)

1. The United States is pleased that the Soviet Union agrees with our ultimate goal of moving to the total elimination of nuclear weapons when possible, consistent with our overall requirements for security and stability. (C)

2. As a means of accomplishing this, the U.S. has proposed, and continues to advocate, a process by which the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. would take the first steps toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons bilaterally, specifically by implementing the principle of a 50% reduction in the nuclear forces of both sides, appropriately applied, and by promptly negotiating an interim INF agreement. When U.S. and Soviet forces are reduced, and additional reductions are under discussion, we can envision subsequent steps which could involve the United Kingdom, France and the People's Republic of China so that all can move to zero nuclear weapons in a balanced and stable manner. (C)

3. The U.S. believes that our immediate focus should remain on the prompt accomplishment of the first steps of this process, especially the implementation of the principle of 50% reductions appropriately applied and an interim INF agreement. Achieving 50% reductions and a separate INF agreement will

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J. Sanders, DIA, Sec 8/18/86*

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require serious negotiation. Significant differences on the elements that would constitute an equitable agreement exist between the two sides. Both sides must focus their negotiating efforts on resolving these differences. This is in keeping with the commitment, made at our most recent summit, to accelerate efforts to find common ground. It is also clearly the foundation upon which both we and the Soviets agree all else must build. (C)

4. The U.S. is pleased that the Soviet Union recognizes our long held position that verification of negotiated agreements is critical, and we intend to pursue General Secretary Gorbachev's offer to come to terms on any necessary verification measures. (C)

5. We cannot agree with many of the specific details proposed in the subsequent phases of the Soviet plan at this time. Any commitment to the specifics of the Soviet subsequent phases would require extensive, detailed discussion. This would divert time and talent from the immediate work at hand, likely add difficulties for that critical bilateral work, immediately involve other sovereign nations in the process, and, once done, result in, at best, very tentative commitments which would still depend upon the results of the first steps now in process in Geneva. For this reason, we see no benefit in negotiating with the Soviets on a framework going beyond the points contained above. (C)

In explaining the commitments associated with the approach outlined above, the United States would make it clear that, in its view, the total elimination of nuclear weapons requires conditions that include correcting conventional and other force imbalances and problems, full compliance with existing and future treaty obligations, peaceful resolution of regional conflicts in ways that allow free choice without outside interference, and a demonstrated commitment by the Soviet leadership to peaceful competition. The U.S. would also make clear its view that the elimination of nuclear weapons would not obviate the need for defenses against such weapons, particularly to protect against cheating or breakout by any country. (C)

Nuclear and Space Talks (NST). I am not inclined to change our November, 1985, positions in those areas in which the Soviet Union has failed to indicate any motion on their part, nor even addressed fully our most recent proposals. Therefore, I do not envision new U.S. initiatives in either the START or Defense and Space areas at this time. I am considering authorizing the U.S. delegation to propose a new U.S. initiative in the INF area along the following lines. (T8)

1. The United States continues firmly to believe that the best solution remains the global elimination of the entire class of U.S. and Soviet, land-based LRINF missiles. We are prepared promptly to negotiate an effective, verifiable agreement to that end without any additional constraints. However, since the Soviet Union continues to refuse to join us in moving immediately to such a global, zero-zero solution, the U.S. would propose the elimination of U.S. and Soviet LRINF in Europe west of Novosibirsk (and therefore, Barnaul) coupled to initial, significant reductions in SS-20s in central and eastern Asia (of at least 50%), subsequently to zero. (S)

2. These reductions and limits would involve US and Soviet systems only. There would be no agreed constraints on the forces of the United Kingdom or France. (S)

3. Associated with this, the United States would also propose a global LRINF missile warhead ceiling under which the U.S. would retain the right to global equality, i.e., to match any Soviet SS-20 warheads remaining outside Europe with U.S. systems in the Continental United States or elsewhere outside of Europe. Soviet LRINF systems which are reduced would be destroyed. U.S. systems based in Europe could be withdrawn to the U.S. unless, or until, they were in excess of the equal global ceiling, in which case they would be destroyed (while protecting a right to convert the Pershing II missiles to Pershing IB missiles). (S)

4. This would also be associated with an equal Shorter-Range INF (SRINF) ceiling at current Soviet level or to freeze SRINF at both sides December 31, 1982, levels. (S)

5. Finally, the United States would introduce the basis for mutual exploration of a verification regime as an integral part of this proposal. (S)

Consultation. I would like consultations based upon the positions outlined above completed on a priority basis with our European and Asian allies. (S)

Ronald Reagan