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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

National Security Planning Group Meeting
June 12, 1986, 2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m., Situation Room

SUBJECT: US-Soviet Relations

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

State:
Secretary George P. Shultz

Treasury:
Secretary James A. Baker, III

OSD:
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger

Justice:
Attorney General Edwin Meese, III

OMB:
Director James C. Miller

CIA:
Director William J. Casey

JCS:
General John A. Wickham, Jr.

White House
Mr. Donald T. Regan
Admiral John M. Poindexter

NSC
Mr. Rodney B. McDaniel

Minutes

After a brief introduction by Admiral Poindexter summarizing the discussion on June 6, general discussion of a new arms control position followed.

Secretary Weinberger made the point that the Soviets wanted an agreement to cut their defense budget. We should not bargain SDI away, that Congress would not fund SDI if we agreed not to deploy

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it, and that he sensed no enormous public pressure for a new agreement. If new proposals were needed, he agreed that we should say we are not designing SDI to destroy targets on earth, that there should be no restraints on SDI research, and that we should go for reduction to zero ballistic missiles to be phased in with SDI deployments. He also noted that verification is a major problem and should be discussed first, not last in any serious negotiations.

Director Casey felt the Soviet proposals were clearly aimed at getting SDI which was not in our interest. We should stick to our goal, cuts in offensive forces and transition to defense. At some point, we will need to change the ABM treaty, and should not accept the Soviet proposal to bless it. More work needs to be done on transition and sharing, perhaps along the lines of the open labs proposal. We can possibly accept restrictions on the pace of our transition to defense, and should link this to reductions in offensive forces.

General Wickham thought the Soviets were timing their proposals to influence Congress on SDI funding. Their numbers were attractive, but there were hookers--especially in INF and SLCM. We should not undercut SDI, and new proposals were not necessary.

Secretary Shultz disagreed, saying we need to be seen as joining the process. He liked Secretary Weinberger's repackaging of the zero option. As long as the agreement permits SDI, we have not given away anything. He agreed we needed to focus on compliance, and that SDI could be seen as insurance against Soviet non-compliance. The stage was set for something dramatic, but the current US proposals were too complicated--the zero option linked to SDI sound good to him.

Don Regan agreed we should work now to develop a new proposal or a repackaging of the current one. If we do not take this seriously now, the Soviets will wait us out. The right agreement would give the Soviets what they want--reduced costs--and would be good for the allies and good domestic politics too.

The President said we do not want a first-strike capability, but the Soviets probably will not believe us. The Soviets have economic problems, and Gorbachev has his own internal problems with the hardliners. Further, Chernobyl has altered Gorbachev's outlook on the dangers of nuclear war. The time is right for something dramatic. We should go for zero ballistic missiles, agree to go forward with research permitted by the ABM treaty, invite the other side to witness testing when we come to that. No deployment of SDI until we eliminate ballistic missiles. Agree to share SDI with the world.

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Secretary Baker agreed we needed something new, but asked whether we would agree to share before giving up ballistic missiles.

Secretary Weinberger thought there was a timing problem also with respect to the linkage of deployments to ballistic missile elimination. He agreed we should develop a new proposal for after the break, but we need to be careful with any discussion of ABM or we risk being dragged into an agreement.

The President said the ABM treaty issue was okay, since research was permitted--we need an agreement to cover what we do when we are ready to test, providing for joint observers or something like that. The issue of the timing of the period of deployment and how deployment was linked to elimination of ballistic missiles needed to be negotiated.

Admiral Poindexter concluded by saying we would summarize the President's views and circulate them to NSPG principals, and then energize the interagency process (at Tab I is a summary of the President's position).

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The President has provided the following guidance with respect to our arms control process:

1. The USG should act positively towards Soviet proposals put on the table at Geneva during this round. We should take their proposals seriously and develop appropriate counter-proposals within existing policy guidelines. Our public posture should project this positive/serious stance.

2. I believe that the Soviets oppose our development of SDI because they genuinely believe that we seek a first-strike advantage. Accordingly, I propose the development of a new initiative designed to counter this fear and to lead as rapidly as possible to a system of mutual deterrence based on defense. Development of this dramatic new proposal should commence now and be introduced at the next Geneva round in September. The basic elements of this initiative should include:

-- Continue our SDI research at our current pace. Acknowledge that the Soviets are free to continue their ABM research.

-- Agree that, when either side reaches the point in their ABM research that testing is required, then the other side will be invited to observe the testing.

-- Agree that there will be no deployment of an ABM system by either side until agreement is reached on reductions of ballistic missiles by both sides. Actual deployments of ABM systems would be linked and phased to actual ballistic missile reductions by both sides.

-- Agree that either side will share its ABM system with the other side, after the mutually witnessed testing has demonstrated that the system works. Eventually, our goal would be sharing the ABM systems with all responsible nations of the world.

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