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By CRG, NARA, Date 2/2/96SALT

We are now close to final agreement on almost all the major SALT issues. Some issues may be kept open for ostensible resolution in Moscow, but as discussed with Brezhnev, they will be settled in the confidential channel before hand, so that the final outcome will be arranged by the time you arrive in Moscow. The basic agreements are along the lines explored with Dobrynin before my trip to Moscow, and are essentially the proposals made by Brezhnev to you, and approved at the NSC meeting.

Brezhnev indicated strongly that he desired these agreements to be signed during your stay in the USSR, and we are planning on a signing ceremony on Friday, May 26 in the Kremlin.

Since the initial agreements will be completed in Moscow, the discussion of SALT will probably revolve around the next phase. Both sides are committed to this follow-on stage by the terms of the ABM treaty, and it is in our interest to pursue it. Little has been said, however, about the content of this phase. The Soviet Delegation has emphasized that it will be "comprehensive." Brezhnev raised with me the question of our forward-based aircraft and what he called "intermediate range" missiles (we have none), and implied that these systems would be the focal point of further negotiations. He also mentioned concluding a nuclear non-aggression treaty, which I diverted to a further private exchange. Dobrynin has given me a draft text, which I will deal with separately from this paper. This paper includes highlights of the agreements, background on the negotiations, unresolved issues, and issues for the next phase.

I. The Current Agreements

We will conclude an ABM treaty and an Interim Agreement on Limiting Offensive Weapons. The following are the highlights.

A. The ABM Treaty

-- Limits each side to one ABM site for defense of Moscow and Washington and one site for each side for the defense of an ICBM field.

-- There will be a total of 200 ABM interceptors, 100 at each site.

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-- Radars will be limited to Modern ABM Radar Complexes (called MARCs) for each within a circle of 150 km radius around the national capitals; (MARCs are a circle of 3 km diameter, in which radars can be deployed; in practice they can accommodate about one large radar or a few smaller ones).

-- For the ICBM defense fields there will be a total of twenty radars permitted; two of them will be the size of our two large radars deployed at Grand Forks; the other eighteen radars will be much smaller.

-- The Soviet ICBM protection site will be East of the Urals. (The Soviets are balking at specifying this location, but Brezhnev told me they would inform us of where it would be.) It is important that their site not be in the populated area of European Russia. Our comparable site will be at Grand Forks.

-- Other non-ABM radars that may be built in the future will be restricted, so as not to create a clandestine ABM potential but the precise limits are still under discussion.

-- The treaty will be of unlimited duration with withdrawal rights if supreme interests are jeopardized, and on six months notice.

B. The Interim Offensive Agreement

-- Limits ICBMs to those under construction or deployed at the time of signing the treaty or July 1. This will mean 1618 ICBMs for the USSR and 1054 for us. The USSR will field 313 large SS-9s, but they will be prohibited from converting other ICBM silos to accommodate the large SS-9 types. Other silos can be modified but not to a significant degree. Modernization is permitted.

-- Submarine launched ballistic missiles will be limited along the lines of Brezhnev's proposal to me. For the Soviets there will be a ceiling of 950 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) on "modern submarines." This means about 62 submarines. We will be limited to our current 41 submarines.

-- The further construction of submarines on the Soviet side, however, will be compensated in part by their dismantling of older land-based ICBMs; in this way they reach their ceiling of 950 but their level of ICBMs goes down.

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-- The Soviets will justify the unequal levels by counting 9² British and French submarines along with our 41, and reserving the right to increase their own level if this total is exceeded on the NATO side.

-- We cannot acknowledge in any agreement that the British and French boats are relevant to SALT, nor can we accept the Soviet contention that the SLBM matter is only temporarily resolved because of our forward bases.

-- The Interim Agreement will run for five years (compared to the original Soviet proposal of 18 months), and both sides are committed to replacing it with a permanent and more comprehensive agreement.

-- Both sides will abide by the obligations of the agreement once it is signed, though formally the implementation will await ratification of the ABM treaty.

II. Pre-Summit Background

We arrived at the present agreement in two stages: in the May 20 agreement, which broke the deadlock over a separate ABM treaty versus an offense-defense package, and the most recent private discussions which resolved the ABM level and achieved the inclusion of submarine limitations.

A. The May 20 Understanding

By late 1970 the negotiations were grinding to a halt over two issues: (1) the Soviets wanted a separate agreement on ABMs only, which would mean leaving aside their most dangerous and dynamic programs; (2) if offensive weapons were to be included, however, the Soviets insisted on a strict definition of "strategic" that would include all our aircraft based abroad and on carriers.

In these circumstances, if we were to resume progress, there had to be some compromise. The explorations with Dobrynin and your exchanges with Brezhnev gradually developed a new basis for discussions. On May 20 you announced the breakthrough that we would concentrate on an ABM agreement, but also, in parallel, negotiate for limitations on certain offensive weapons. This permitted the USSR to back away from its separate ABM proposals and drop the inclusion of forward based systems since the offensive agreements would be limited and temporary.

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B. The New Impasse May 1971 - April 1972

The May 20 Agreement did not resolve the details of either the level of ABM or the scope of offensive controls. I made it clear to Dobrynin that we would not be restricted to one ABM site in Washington. This would mean tearing down our site under construction in Grand Forks, while the Soviets merely kept their existing site in Moscow. I had also raised in the confidential channels the likelihood that our proposals would include both ICBM limits and limits on submarine launched missiles. The Soviets emphasized a freeze on ICBMs rather than limits on both ICBMs and submarines.

The negotiations began to deadlock. The Soviets insisted that if we protected our ICBM fields, then they should have an equal right to do so. Indeed, they went on to make a principle out of the question of strict equality (meaning identical) ABM systems. Since we had no site for our national capital, working out pure symmetry became a tedious exercise. In any case, we ultimately came to the position that either side could choose between having 2 ICBM protection sites, or 1 ICBM site plus defense of the national capital (NCA). The Soviets countered with several proposals, all of which gave them an advantage. They claimed that since we could protect more ICBMs in one single field (about 150) than they could (their ICBM fields are smaller), they needed 2 or 3 ABM sites for ICBM defense, while we retained only one. Their reasoning that the number of ICBMs protected was the criterion was, of course, specious. The number of ABM interceptors and radars determine the capacity of the defense, not the area of protection.

The second impasse was over whether to include a limit on submarine launched ballistic missiles. The Soviets claimed that this was outside the May 20 understanding, but they backed away from a confrontation on this. They argued instead that SLBMs required compensation because we could base them in forward areas and they could not. They also pointed out that we were initiating a new program of ULMs, while proposing to freeze the Soviet program.

To accommodate their concerns about freezing the number of submarines, we shifted to a limit on the number of missile tubes, so that they could scrap older submarines and replace them with newer ones.

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With the summit in mind, and your trip to Peking approaching, Dobrynin began to explore in January that either the issue of SLBMs be set aside and resolved after the initial agreements, or that the limit be placed on the total number of missiles for submarines with freedom to dismantle older land-based ICBMs and replace them with submarine launched missiles. (This was originally an American idea introduced in our early proposal in 1970, but not pursued in the context of a limited agreement.)

I impressed on Dobrynin the need to include submarines, and told him that our ABM position would ultimately depend on the resolution of the SLBM question. When negotiations resumed in March of this year, we tied the ABM and SLBM issues together.

Dobrynin was told that we could introduce some flexibility in our ABM position if it appeared that the USSR could agree to the inclusion of SLBMs. Contrary to the general skepticism in Washington that this linkage would work, Brezhnev in his letter in late March indicated that they would study our position. In the formal negotiations, however, they continued to balk. I returned to the idea broached by Dobrynin that there could be a solution based on allowing both sides to replace older land-based ICBMs with new submarine launched missiles.

On the ABM impasse, it was clear that we either had to concede more Soviet sites for ICBM protection or reconsider deploying our own defense of Washington. On a purely personal basis, Gerard Smith discussed the latter with his counterpart, and there was an indication of a willingness to move in this direction, but without commitment on the SLBM package. The Soviets obviously hoped to achieve the compromise on ABMs without making a concession on SLBMs. I stressed to Dobrynin that this was not our position.

C. The Brezhnev Proposal

The Soviets had indicated through the confidential channel that they were anxious to sign a SALT agreement in Moscow during your visit. Thus, in my meetings with Brezhnev, he made two new proposals that reflected discussions with Dobrynin and moved close to our basic positions.

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-- First, he proposed that we each have two ABM sites, one for defense of the national capital, and the other for ICBM defense; Brezhnev emphasized he had retreated from the proposition that they had to defend an equal number of ICBMs and needed more ABM sites than we did.

-- Second, he proposed a numerical ceiling on SLBMs at our present level for the US, and 950 SLBMs on "modern submarines" for the USSR. This would involve continuing construction of Soviet submarines up to about 62 for the USSR. He justified the differential by pointing out that the US, Britain and France combined would have a combined total of 50 submarines, and that the differential between our 50 and their 62 would be achieved by dismantling older land-based ICBMs.

I told Brezhnev that these proposals were generally constructive, but the ABM issue would be reviewed, and that we had problems with the differential in submarines. I pinned down the concept of replacing old land-based with new submarine launched missiles, and told him that our delegation could work out the numbers. On the introduction of the British and French that while they could make such a justification unilaterally, we had no right to tell our Allies what to do. We could negotiate the numbers but not accept the Soviet rationale. We left it that the figures were agreed.

These were the proposals discussed at the NSC, and the underlying positions that constitute the current agreements.

III. Unresolved Issues

A. Limits on other large Phased-Array Radars (OLPARs)

The US has consistently sought some controls over OLPARs since enough of these large radars scattered throughout the Soviet Union could be clandestine base for a territorial defense ABM system. The Soviets agreed to general but vague provisions which prohibit giving these radars ABM capabilities or testing them in an ABM mode.

The US further sought some control over future construction of these radars. The latest US proposal was that, except for verification or space tracking purposes, neither side could build an OLPAR larger than our Safeguard missile site radar (MSR).

-- This is a highly technical problem. The measurement criteria used is the product of the area of the radar's antenna (i. e., the aperture) and the radar's power. The power-aperture of our MSR is just less than 3 million (3×10^6) watt-meters squared.

-- The two exceptions -- verification or space tracking -- are because radars are needed in small numbers for such purposes and because radars for these purposes are the easiest to distinguish from ABM radars.

The Soviets apparently accepted this proposal on April 22. There was an ambiguity in their language, but there were indications that this would not be a problem.

About a week later, the Soviets discovered that there was a "small problem" of defining power-aperture levels. The Soviets claimed that they thought the MSR had a power-aperture of 50 million (5×10^7) watt-meters squared, or about 15-20 times larger than it is. In fact, at least two Soviets had been told the MSR's correct size in January.

It is unclear whether the Soviets have changed their mind on accepting our proposal, or whether they had all the time intended to look conciliatory initially and then to claim a significant misunderstanding over levels.

We cannot accept the Soviet standard since it is so high as to be almost meaningless. Moreover, it implicitly accepts radars of a "smaller" size. If we are unable to achieve an acceptable compromise, we may drop the disputed provision on definitions and rely on the more general exclusion of large radars except for agreed purposes.

B. Location of the ICBM Defense Area.

There is some dispute, however, over where the Soviets can deploy their ICBM defense area. (The US site will obviously be at Grand Forks, where construction is already well along.)

The Soviets have ICBM fields scattered throughout much of their country. We have strongly insisted the ICBM defense area be

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somewhere east of the Urals, since this is a relatively unpopulated area, thereby reducing concern over the system providing extensive population defense. This is an altogether reasonable request since all six of the Soviet SS-9 fields are east of the Urals.

The Soviets have balked at specifying now where their ICBM defense would be. We will withhold final agreement on radars until we are certain of the Soviet location.

C. SLBM Limitation.

The remaining issues with the language of the SLBM provisions are:

1. Whether each additional SLBM which is constructed must replace on a one-for-one basis old ICBM or SLBMs. Our current position at Helsinki requires this; it keeps the aggregate total of missile launchers constant. The Brezhnev proposal was vague. Now the Soviets more or less agree, but are fuzzing the question of their starting base, i. e., how many "modern" SLBMs they have at this point. They are saying 48 (which we think means their current 37 plus 9 to compensate for Britain and France.

2. How the British and French boats will be handled. The Brezhnev proposal specifically referred to the Allies as one reason for the Soviets getting a numerical edge. Further, the Soviets claimed the right to build one more submarine (beyond 62) for each additional ones the Allies built.

We resist any reference to our NATO Allies in the Interim Agreement. The Allies would be upset if they were unknowingly made a part of the bilateral agreement.

D. Including Mobile ICBMs.

We seek to include all ICBM launchers in the interim freeze, including mobile ICBMs. Since neither side has deployed mobile systems, this would effectively ban their deployment. In contrast, the Soviets argue that mobile ICBMs should be negotiated in the follow-on talks. This is important but not crucial in the short term.

If we are unable to include mobiles in the interim freeze (i. e., effectively ban them), we may:

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more
to come

(1) Agree that there is no decision one way or another on banning mobiles, but obtain a parallel understanding that the Soviets would not deploy mobiles for a few years.

(2) Allow replacement of old ICBMs by mobile ICBMs. This would allow deployment, but halt an increase in the overall number of Soviet ICBMs.

(3) A unilateral statement by the US that we would expect both sides to consult on the number of mobiles, etc., before either side started deployments.

E. Definition of "Light" versus "Heavy" ICBMs.

While the Soviets have agreed not to convert "light" ICBMs to "heavy" ICBMs, they have balked at agreeing to a definition of the dividing line between the two. We proposed that the line be no larger than the Soviet SS-11, or no larger than 70 cubic meters.

-- The SS-11 is about 67 cubic meters and the SS-9 is about 220 m³. Some definition is likely in the next few days.

IV. Follow-on SALT Negotiations

A. Soviet Perceptions.

If the first phase of SALT negotiations are successfully concluded, both sides have committed themselves "to continue active negotiations for limitations on strategic offensive arms." (Article XI, ABM Treaty) However, there has been little discussion of what Phase II would entail.

Soviet objectives are likely to be: (1) to maintain their numerical lead in missile launchers, while being allowed to catch up with us in MIRVs and qualitative characteristics; and (2) to limit our Forward Based Systems (FBS). The Soviets consider FBS a strategic threat to themselves, a way to loosen our ties with our Allies, and a good bargaining point. Given this general approach the second phase could confront us with some serious problems, including problems with our Allies. Moreover, we cannot be sure that the Soviets will have any serious interest in an agreement.

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B. Issues and Talking Points.

In Moscow, you may wish to keep the discussion of the next phase quite general. Our objectives in the follow-on negotiations should be primarily to limit Soviet offensive forces further (especially their first-strike capabilities) and to do this on a more permanent and equitable basis. The Interim Offensive Agreement is not only "interim," but it allows the Soviets a considerable latitude in offensive forces.

-- Modernization and replacement is allowed so that the Soviets could replace their SS-9s with the new, larger missile under development. (While the Soviets cannot dig new silos, they can make some changes in existing silos.)

-- Qualitative improvements are unconstrained so the Soviets can develop and deploy MIRVs and make accuracy improvements in their ICBM warheads.

-- The Soviets are allowed to continue building missile-firing submarines up to a level of 62 (versus 41 for us). The numerical edge has little strategic significance, but could have implications for the Allied perception of the power balance.

In contrast, the ABM treaty limits the Soviets to minimal ABM deployments.

Given possible US and Soviet objectives, the key substantive issues which might arise at the Summit are:

1. A General Statement About the Follow-on Negotiations:

Soviet Position. The Soviets are likely to propose some general statement reiterating the countries' commitment to continue active negotiations to further limit strategic offensive arms. Privately, the Soviets might also push for commitments on specific issues (discussed below).

Your Position. We could accept a general commitment to further negotiations, without binding ourselves on substance.

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2. Forward-Based Systems.

Soviet Position. Brezhnev raised the question of our forward-based aircraft and our "intermediate range" missiles, and this may be the critical issue in the next phase. Their latest SLBM proposals refer to our bases as a matter for future discussion.

Your Position. We should resist a specific commitment to discuss forward-based systems. However, we should recognize that we cannot avoid the subject.

-- We should respond by noting that Soviet position involves Allies and we cannot negotiate on their behalf. We can only listen to the Soviets and consult; as we stated previously in the negotiations, if all other issues are disposed of, we can perhaps take into account the forward-based systems.

3. Zero ABM.

Soviet Position. The Soviets will probably not push for further limits on ABMs since they want to retain their deployments at Moscow.

Your Position. In Moscow our position should be that the treaties should be ratified and the second offensive phase begun before reopening ABM issues.

4. Reductions, Especially of ICBMs.

Soviet Position. The Soviets might want a commitment to seek reductions in offensive forces. However, the Soviets will avoid any commitments which suggest that they will give up their numerical edge in missiles.

Your Position. We should make it clear that an ultimate objective is reductions, especially of the increasingly vulnerable ICBMs.

-- Note that the powerful Soviet ICBMs make our Minuteman more vulnerable than the Soviet ICBMs, and we explored a reduction proposal in the early stages of SALT.

-- A promise of some reductions is implicit in the ABM agreement.

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5. Limiting MIRVs.

Soviet Position. Since we are well ahead in MIRV development and deployment, the Soviets are likely to resist any commitment to freeze MIRV testing and deployment on their side. They might press restraint on our MIRV deployment by a production ban.

Your Position. Since our MIRV deployments are well-advanced and the ABM treaty fixes low levels, we might have more interest in freezing additional MIRV testing and deployments. Heretofore, we have needed adequate verification which we have said should include on-site inspections. The Soviets would be in an especially tough spot if we did not insist on some on-site inspection. Soviet opposition to on-site inspection has been their excuse to avoid MIRV limits in the past.

-- A possible fallback from a complete MIRV freeze could be a freeze on MIRVs for large ICBMs (i. e., the Soviets' SS-9 and their new missile and our Titan). This fallback would be rationalized as focusing on the most likely first-strike weapons.

6. Timing of the Next Round.

Soviet Position. The Soviets may seek an early start to SALT II.

Your Position. The US could either seek: (1) a July-August "exploratory phase" or (2) a start sometime in the Fall.

The choice between the two alternatives turns on:

- How fast we seek ratification of the initial SALT agreements.
- How comprehensive and serious we want our opening position to be. A careful position will take some time to prepare especially because of FBS issues.

You may say that over the summer we could focus on setting up the Standing Consultative Commission (SCC) to implement the agreements, while we both proceed with ratifications.

- Waiting until this fall would allow more comprehensive discussions and some contact could continue in the private channel.

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-- In sum, you can foresee that MBFR could be even more complicated than SALT in defining comparability of forces, in creating a balance in reduced forces, and calculating the various factors of geography and reinforcement capabilities.

-- This is why you urge an early exploratory phase, similar to the first SALT discussions to discuss some underlying principles.

D. Collateral Constraints to Accompany Reductions

(We are studying some measures to restrict the movement of forces, exchange of observers at maneuvers, perhaps some observers at border crossing points. These might inhibit clandestine reintroduction of forces, or provide more early warning of a buildup.)

Soviet Position

There have been no public statements by the Soviets for or against stabilizing measures in addition to reductions. They would probably be reluctant to consider any such measures unless they accompany reductions. Intelligence sources indicate Brezhnev told the Sawsaw Pact that Moscow might consider constraints on military maneuvers, especially near the East-West border and other unspecified measures.

Your Position

This is a level of detail you may prefer to avoid. You might allude to the question:

-- We would want to consider limitations on massing of forces for "exercises" and advance notification of significant movements of forces so as to enhance confidence in early warning -- such measures are generally unfavorable to the "attacker," so they may be seen to provide benefits for both sides.

E. Scope of Reductions

Soviet Position

Until Brezhnev's March 1971 speech to the 24th CPSU Congress, the USSR had spoken only of the reduction of foreign forces. Since then, the possibility of indigenous force reductions has been admitted. The January 1972 Warsaw Pact statement mentions both "foreign and national forces."

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As for the kinds of forces involved (e. g., ground, naval, nuclear) the USSR has been less specific. Both the Brezhnev speech of March 1971 and the Pact statement of January 1972 use the phrase "armed forces and armaments." Brezhnev indicated in his speech that there had been questions asked in the West as to whether nuclear forces were meant to be included, but he said the USSR would reply to such questions after the West agreed to negotiate.

In view of past experience, however, the Soviets may intend to concentrate on our nuclear forces in Europe. Brezhnev raised with me the question of our forward based aircraft and "intermediate range" missiles, though he was talking about SALT. He also referred to "very slight" reductions, in order to build confidence. Beyond this we have no idea of the size of reductions the Soviets might be interested in.

Your Position

You should probably not go into much substance on the size of reductions or whether both foreign and national forces should be reduced in each phase. NATO is still not agreed on these issues.

-- You may indicate some preference for an initial stage which involves foreign forces and their armaments.

-- As for the kinds of forces involved, the emphasis should be on ground forces.

-- Nuclear aspects should be set aside in the first stage of talks.

IV. MBFR Principles and the Final Communique

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Assuming that the procedural impasse over how to start exploratory negotiations on MBFR is broken at the summit, this could be recorded in the communique language. This would be a satisfactory outcome for us, and probably is as far as the Soviets will want to go.

On the contingency, however, that we or they may want to build up the substance of the communique and to create an impression of more extensive US-Soviet discussion, there might be included a statement related to the principles of MBFR. In order to remain within the agreed policy framework of the Alliance, we should not go beyond some versions of abbreviated principles that already have been endorsed in the Alliance.

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outcome could include the following agreed US-Soviet communique language:

"The US side presented for discussion certain principles related to the reduction of forces in Central Europe. The principles are: that reductions should be consistent with undiminished security of all parties, should be balanced and mutual, should be phased in their scope and timing where appropriate, should be subject to adequate verification, should include certain specified types of forces and should be accompanied in each phase by constraints on forces in order to enhance stability."

The Soviet side might "take note" of these principles and indicate that they could be the basis for exploratory discussions.

Attached is an outline of MBFR Principles generally acceptable to the Alliance. If the Soviets show interest in reaching some agreement on principles, the attached outline could be the basis.

I recommend you not pursue an agreed statement of principles in any detail, since we would be clearly acting as a surrogate for the Allies.

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