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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

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TO: Admiral Poindexter - Assistant to the President
for National Security

DECLASSIFIED / RELEASED

FROM: E. L. Rowny - S/ART

(R)

NLS F99-060/1 #241

SUBJECT: Preferred Option for Responding to Gorbachev

BY AMF, NARA, DATE 5/30/0

I support Option 2.

This option gives the Soviets substantive responses to their substantive overtures, and it gives them promises for the future where that's all they've given us. It provides an appropriate response to Soviet movement in INF, without changing our existing positions in the other fora.

I would not categorize Option 2, as OWL-21 does, as clearly rejecting the Soviet framework. We should agree, in principle, that moving toward eliminating all nuclear weapons will have to be done in some sort of phased approach. We should insist, however, that all we can hope to do at this time is concentrate on the initial bilateral reductions, as agreed in Geneva. We should further insist that subsequent stages be tackled sequentially. This would provide us time to take stock of the strategic situation and ensure that reductions had been properly implemented and verified before commencing further reductions. The UK, France, and the PRC could observe the completion of the first stage reductions prior to committing themselves to negotiating reductions in their own nuclear forces.

Option 1, although better than the original Approach A, still does not give the Soviets the opportunity to show whether they are serious or not. Proponents of this option have argued that the Soviets have reestablished a link between LRINF reductions and SDI, and that this does not merit a demonstration of US flexibility. However, the Soviets have stated that LRINF reductions are not linked to a ban on "space strike weapons." We should see if they mean what they say.

Option 3 offers too much for too little. There's no need for us to change our position in START. We have a good position, whereas they have introduced nothing new and maintain their precondition that no strategic reductions can take place until we give up SDI research. There is no need to offer not to amend the ABM Treaty during the first stage. We have no intention of violating the ABM Treaty. Thus, there is no point of "renewing our marriage vows." On the other hand, we should not perpetuate the idea that we never intend to seek amendments to the Treaty, even if SDI research is successful. Furthermore, opening the Treaty, in the hopes of arguing for wider interpretations of the ABM Treaty restrictions, could establish a negotiating record that might be used against us and our pursuit of testing that we believe is necessary and not in violation of the Treaty.

All options should bear down heavily on compliance and verification issues.

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