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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D. C. 20505

91319 Response

GENEVA TALKS 4218

22 December 1984

Mr. President,

Bud has asked that I provide you with some of my personal observations on the Gromyko talks in Geneva. As I have indicated in a separate and more detailed memo to you, I am convinced that verification will be a pacing factor in any future strategic arrangement with the USSR and has to be an integral piece of our planning. I want, in this memo, to focus on the instructions that George will be taking with him and on what we can hope for when it comes to prospective arms control negotiations.

[redacted] what Gromyko will propose, or be prepared to offer, in response to any US proposals at Geneva. Senior Soviet officials, including Politburo member Gorbachev, have indicated that Moscow views any agreement on strategic nuclear arms as largely dependent on some agreement on space weapons. Chernenko said, on 26 November, that the demilitarization of outer space and the reduction of nuclear arms were interconnected questions.

[redacted] that [redacted]
[redacted] US space technology worries the Soviets.
[redacted]

Because the Soviet Union is so intent on stopping US SDI efforts, Gromyko is likely to push for an agreement on the demilitarization of space and a reaffirmation (or expansion) of the 1972 ABM Treaty. Gromyko is also likely to take a tough position on INF issues, even though the Soviets no longer make the removal of US missiles from Europe a precondition for the January talks. [redacted] the USSR wants to take UK and French forces into account and that recent "counterdeployments" by Moscow in Eastern Europe could be designed to set the stage for a mutual moratorium on further US and Soviet deployments.

The principal objective Gromyko will be tasked with in Geneva is to find out whether there are any real prospects for constraining those US programs--and in the first instance, this will be SDI--that the USSR is most concerned about. He will, of course, also be seeking details of our policy positions but not really expecting to be able to delve very deeply into those kinds of niceties.

Renewed negotiations in the year ahead will be conducted while Soviet military planners are making decisions that will determine to a significant degree the capabilities, size, and composition of the USSR's strategic forces in the 1990s.

-- We already see evidence of programs aimed at more survivable weapons systems through increased mobility and more flexible and sophisticated operational planning.

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- The Soviets will not let any arms control agreement slow their research and development efforts, nor will they accept an agreement which would prevent a significant level of force modernization.

Soviet military planners must contend with various on-going or projected military efforts by the US and NATO that challenge the USSR's ability to continue to meet its strategic force objectives in the 1990s. These challenges include: MX, the small mobile ICBM ("Midgetman"), Trident II missiles, the B-1B, Stealth bombers, Pershing IIs in Europe, and the SDI. These new programs, now underway or planned, pose major challenges to Soviet political and military strategy. From the Soviet perspective, if the planned US strategic and intermediate force programs go forward, there will be an erosion of the gains the Soviets have made during the past ten years, even as they deploy new offensive and defensive systems of their own. The Soviets obviously hope some, or all, of the new US weapon systems will be delayed, or not go forward at all, without the Soviets having to give up much, if anything of real significance, in arms control negotiations.

A salient feature of Soviet arms control policy in the years ahead will be its emphasis on trying to delay or undercut the US SDI program. ~~No one~~ believe they will offer a major concession to halt the SDI program as long as it remains in the research stage and is strongly susceptible to unilateral US restraint.

[REDACTED]

Soviet interest in slowing the pace of this competition through arms control negotiations is likely to increase with the slowdown in their economic growth.

The Soviets will replace most of the weapons in their strategic offensive forces with new or modernized weapons by the early-to-middle 1990s. These weapons are now being deployed, are in flight-testing, or are in preflight development. Major features of the Soviet strategic force of the early 1990s will include:

- Continued reliance on the ICBM force as the backbone for intercontinental strikes and on the SS-20 force for meeting nuclear mission requirements on the periphery.
- Significantly greater survivability, including more warheads on submarines, and deployment of road-mobile and rail-mobile ICBMs.
- Major improvements in manned bombers and deployment of long-range, land-attack cruise missiles.

The Soviets will significantly improve the capabilities of their strategic defensive forces over the next ten years:

- ~~Vigorous~~ pursuit of advanced defensive technologies (directed energy, antisubmarine warfare).
- Increased emphasis on air defense to counter bombers and cruise missiles that fly at low altitudes and those that have very small radar cross sections.
- Continued research and development efforts that give the Soviets the potential for widespread ABM deployments during the next decade.

In particular, Moscow will not agree to steps that would significantly detract from the key elements of Soviet nuclear strategy: counterforce strikes against enemy nuclear forces and limiting damage to the Soviet homeland. Thus, deep reductions in the Soviet ICBM force, especially heavy ICBMs, remain unlikely. A realistic appraisal of our arms control prospects has to conclude that large enough reductions in Soviet offensive weapons to make the world significantly safer is not likely to occur as a direct result of the arms control efforts in the near-term; rather, we must look at this as a long-term proposition at best.

*fundamental
points
of debate
SDI project*

You are likely to encounter great pressure from the public and from within the US Government to offer up your SDI research program in order to demonstrate US seriousness. You ought not to yield to this pressure; I believe it is vital to pursue SDI research for all the reasons you have previously stated. In my view, it would be a tragic mistake to abandon the SDI research program, or to restrict necessary development or testing, in order to get an arms control accord with the Soviets. There is no way such concessions on SDI can produce reductions in Soviet offensive forces of commensurate value in long-term stability and safety.

But I do think we could reach an agreement, when George meets with Mr. Gromyko two weeks from now, on scope and format matters.

The Soviets have forewarned us that they will be looking for some solid agreements out of Geneva, not just an exchange of views. What this means is that they will press us to sign up to some declaration or communique which prejudices the future negotiations in terms of their own rhetoric; e.g., "offensive force agreements based on equality and equal security," meaning some inclusion of UK and French systems, and "prevention of the militarization of space."

We should resist such one-sided gambits at all costs because we shall, for political reasons, find it far more binding on us than on them as the actual negotiations proceed. In fact, we should bluntly call them on their penchant for vague but prejudicial language which does not conform with realism; e.g., that "prevention of the militarization of space" by itself is not a realistic goal as the world now stands.

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We are not ready to engage in substantive negotiations in January; if agreement can be reached on the scope and objectives of these new negotiations, ~~we are going to have~~ to reconsider the details of our positions for these ~~new~~ talks.

I believe that our principal concern in the format area will be how to ensure that negotiations on offensive and defensive forces remain in tandem. We need to be certain that the Soviets cannot force the pace of negotiations in areas where the US possesses actual or potential strengths, while they manage to draw out the negotiations in those areas where they possess strengths that represent principal US concerns. Therefore, my sense is that what we ought to be seeking is a single set of negotiations for offensive (START and INF) and defensive (air defenses and ballistic missile defenses) systems so that the two can, to the extent possible, be kept in harness. I would prefer that ASAT negotiations be kept separate [redacted]

[redacted] But this may not work and I can foresee ASAT being tied in directly as well. The worse thing of all would be to have a separate forum where SDI, or SDI and ASAT together, is the only subject.

If we agree to space talks with ASAT and SDI, in a forum apart from other offensive or other defensive missiles (as it is implied we may do in the December 18 paper that I just saw entitled "Geneva Roadmap"), we will have given the Soviets a propaganda and negotiating edge of immense value.

There appears to be a distinct preference in our bureaucracy for three separate tables for intercontinental, INF, and space issues, or perhaps for two tables; e.g., offensive and space, or offensive and defensive. As among these, there is much to be said for the latter. As Paul Nitze argues it will tend to make SDI a less accessible target and bring out in negotiations on defensive weapons the large superiority the Soviets now have in air defense, some of it possibly adaptable to ballistic missile defense, as well as ballistic missile defense itself.

We ought to weigh carefully the merits of delaying the splitting of these negotiations into separate tables until the political and substantive thrust of the whole process becomes clearer, on both sides. The Soviets will have a much easier time of keeping multiple tracks in political tandem than we. They will work hard to exploit the inevitable divergence of interests among the supporting casts behind these separate tables on the US side.

There ~~is~~ a case to be made for keeping one umbrella process going under Nitze, perhaps with periodic meetings at the foreign minister level, and one coherent management process back home until we have decided what specific agreements are really feasible and are able to table drafts or at least very specific proposals on the separate issues. Then separate tables can be set up.

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I think that the broad message George should be taking with him to Geneva is one of continuing US willingness to be serious, flexible and ready to negotiate in good faith. That is what the American people hope for, what the Congress expects, and what our European Allies want. The Soviets have no intention of rolling over and playing dead because they have, in essence, been forced to return to the negotiating table. But they are probably on the fence with respect to whether or not they believe that the US intends to approach these talks with an intent to produce some type of real agreement. It is in our mutual interests to strengthen the perception within the USSR and throughout the world that we are "serious."

Still, there is no guarantee that either the 7-8 January talks, or those that follow, will be productive. To keep the Soviets from getting the rhetorical high ground, we should be prepared to go somewhat beyond a discussion of how we see things. For this purpose we might have at hand in Geneva a general but substantive set of propositions that state what we shall be driving for in the subsequent negotiations, inviting but not insisting that the Soviets sign up to them in Geneva, but using them in any case as a way of dealing with Soviet generalities.

I hope this has been helpful to you. By the middle of this next week, about 26 December, I may send you some additional thoughts on Paul Nitze's concept of the offensive-defensive relationship that we should be striving for, and perhaps other ideas as well.

Respectfully yours,


William J. Casey

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