

# INTERNATIONAL LUXEMBOURG FORUM ON PREVENTING NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE



## REYKJAVIK SUMMIT: LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE OF US-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

MOSCOW 2016

**INTERNATIONAL LUXEMBOURG FORUM  
ON PREVENTING NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE**

**REYKJAVIK SUMMIT:  
LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE  
OF US-RUSSIAN RELATIONS**

MOSCOW 2016

## CONTENT

### **PREFACE.**

#### **REYKJAVIK – AND ITS MEANING TODAY**

William Perry .....4

### **1. THIRTY YEARS SINCE REYKJAVIK**

Anatoly Adamishin .....7

### **2. REYKJAVIK: LESSONS FROM THE PAST, CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

Yury Nazarkin .....26

### **3. REYKJAVIK: A PERSONAL VIEW**

Pavel Palazhchenko .....41

### **4. BETTER WAIT THAN NEVER: TRANSITIONING FROM BILATERAL TO MULTILATERAL STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTIONS**

Michael Krepon ..... 50

**Reykjavik summit: lessons for the future of US-Russian relations** / National Institute of Corporate Reform. – 2016. – 64 pages. Cover photo – Yury Lizunov, Alexandr Chumichev/TASS.

The idea of this book was prompted by the Conference “30th anniversary of the Reykjavik Summit – Lessons of the Past and the Tasks for the Future” held by the International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe in Amsterdam on June 7-8, 2016. The texts were contributed by the participants in the Summit and those who took part in the decision-making process at that time. The authors share their memories of the event and the assessments of its implication for the future development of arms control and the relations between Moscow and Washington.

*The official website of the International Luxembourg Forum: [www.luxembourgforum.org](http://www.luxembourgforum.org)*

## PREFACE. REYKJAVIK – AND ITS MEANING TODAY

*William Perry*<sup>1</sup>

Thirty years ago, in Reykjavik, the presidents of the two leading nuclear powers seriously discussed eliminating their nuclear weapons. In the end, they were not able to reach agreement, but it is instructive to consider why they would even discuss such a radical idea. They did so because they both realized that their nuclear weapons could bring about an end to our civilization. The danger was not that either of our countries would launch a surprise attack against the other, as was feared during the Cold War, but that a nuclear war would start not by design, but by accident or by miscalculation.

Our two countries came very close to a nuclear war by miscalculation during the Cuban Missile Crisis. President Kennedy estimated that there was one chance in three that the crisis would erupt into a nuclear war that would have ended our civilization, but he made that estimate not knowing that the Soviets had already installed tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba with authorization to launch delegated to the Soviet military commander there. If President Kennedy had authorized the invasion of Cuba, as was recommended by all of his military leaders (who did not know about the tactical nuclear weapons), the invading

troops would have been destroyed on the beachheads by tactical nuclear weapons, and a general nuclear war would likely have resulted.

Also, each of our countries had experienced false alarms in their systems designed to alert the president that a missile attack was underway. The false alarms in 1978 in the US and in 1982 in the Soviet Union were particularly persuasive, and if intelligent and thoughtful officers on watch those two nights had not sensed a problem with their warning data, they would have sent the alert to their president, who would have had fewer than ten minutes to decide whether to launch his ICBMs before the presumed missile attack had destroyed them in their silos.

So those close calls were very likely on the minds of the two leaders when they discussed eliminating our nuclear arsenals.

They were unable to reach that fateful decision at Reykjavik, although they did initiate other actions that led to significantly lowering the numbers of nuclear weapons.

Twenty years later, four Americans: Shultz, Kissinger, Nunn, and Perry reflected on Reykjavik and concluded that it was time to revisit that decision. The numbers of nuclear weapons had been greatly reduced since Reykjavik, but there were still almost 20,000 of them, enough to destroy the world many times over. The four wrote an oped in the Wall Street journal calling for actions that could greatly reduce nuclear dangers, and ultimately to eliminate the weapons.

For a few years there was a very positive international response to that oped. During that heady period, the US and Russia signed the New Start Treaty, more than 50 national leaders met at a Nuclear Security Summit designed to reduce the danger that a terror group could obtain fissile material that would enable them to build an improvised nuclear bomb, and President Obama gave a dramatic speech in Prague committing the US "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

But after a few years the progress stopped and then began to reverse. There was no follow on to the New Start Treaty, as had been planned; worse, both Russia and the US began rebuilding their Cold

<sup>1</sup> William Perry – Professor, Stanford University; Member of the Supervisory Board of the International Luxembourg Forum (former Secretary of the US Department of Defense), Ph.D. (United States).

War nuclear arsenals. These developments were coincident with, and no doubt a result of, a serious deterioration in US/Russia relations, to the point of hostility. We seemed to be on the brink of a new kind of Cold War and a new Cold War-like nuclear arms competition.

But the nuclear dangers that had motivated our leaders at Reykjavik have not gone away. We still face the prospect of an accidental nuclear war, or a nuclear war by miscalculation. Additionally, we now face two new dangers of a nuclear catastrophe that did not exist during the Cold War: nuclear terrorism, or a regional nuclear war.

Indeed, considering those two new dangers, the likelihood of some sort of a nuclear catastrophe today is actually greater than it was during the Cold War.

So it is imperative for the future of our civilization that we get back to the spirit of Reykjavik and begin again to take serious actions to lower the danger of a nuclear catastrophe, leading in time to an elimination of these terrible weapons of mass destruction. And it is clear that this will not happen until the US and Russia moderate their rhetoric and find some way to work together again on these fateful issues. Even if our two countries disagree on many other issues, we should be able to agree that we have an overriding imperative to cooperate on those nuclear issues that threaten our very survival. The fate of civilization hangs in the balance, and it is up to our two great nations, who are the world's leaders in nuclear weapons, to take the lead in eliminating the existential danger posed by these terrible weapons. That is the spirit of Reykjavik, and it is even more vital today than it was thirty years ago.

William J. Perry

Stanford University, 26 October, 2016

## 1. THIRTY YEARS SINCE REYKJAVIK

*Anatoly Adamishin<sup>2</sup>*

Gorbachev's perestroika policy defined the background to the meeting of the heads of state of the USSR and the United States, Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan, respectively on October 11-12, 1986 in the capital of Iceland, halfway between Washington and Moscow. One and a half years before this event, he had taken lead of a country where, as he had said, "a disproportionately large part of the national income was spent on arms. These are the highest military expenses in the world. We had bankrupted the country, kept its people undernourished, and ruined its agriculture. But we were riding high on missiles. This was called a class approach. What kind of socialism is that?!"

Later, the following statistic was referred to at a Politburo meeting: "We were spending two and a half times more per capita on defense than the United States." For example, Admiral Timur Gaidar, father of the subsequent prime minister took up same position: "Our tail is stuck in Afghanistan. We've got our nose in Poland. And in the middle we have chaos in the economy."

The meeting in Reykjavik fit Gorbachev's aspiration, or, more

<sup>2</sup> Anatoly Adamishin — President Emeritus, Association for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR and Russian Federation (former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Russian Minister for cooperation with CIS countries, Vice-President of the AFK "Systema", Russia).

precisely, his conscious strategy, of stopping the country's decent into the abyss. It was the burden of military expenses that was pulling the country in this direction. So it was necessary to seek a common language with America. And Gorbachev was the first to dare seeking a truce with the class enemy.

The shortest way there was to speak directly with the U.S. President. Shevardnadze had been Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs for only a year, but he manifested a high level of diplomatic mastery when he was in the United States for a session of the UN General Assembly. He made it over a number of tricky hurdles and literally dragged Reagan out to Reykjavik.

In Moscow it had earlier been understood that the United States was winning the military, technological, and economic sides of the arms race. We were constantly compelled to catch up with them, wearing out our own economy in the process. It was the US administration's strategic objective not to let the USSR out of this rut. Gorbachev was the first who decided seriously to break this tendency.

In public Ronald Reagan used the argument that the US arms buildup had the purpose of making the Soviets more cooperative: "The Russians must understand that in an extended competition American technology will win out." In private, he expressed himself less elegantly: "We will bankrupt them to death."

His confidence was bolstered by the fact that the widely advertised strategy toward the USSR, "first force, then dialogue," was justifying itself. The flywheel of military programs ostensibly aimed at overcoming the lag behind the USSR under Jimmy Carter had been activated. Dialogue with Soviet leaders resumed in fall 1984 when Ronald Reagan first hosted Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Gromyko in Washington. Before that, there had been no such contacts over the four years since our troops were deployed to Afghanistan.

It was essential that Ronald Reagan had been eying Mikhail Gorbachev for a long time. Margaret Thatcher was the first to call the American president's attention to him before he became General

Secretary. Incidentally, Margaret Thatcher remained loyal to Gorbachev to the end.

Secretary of State George Schultz demonstrated considerable far-sightedness. In my view, without him we would not have had "Reagan — Number Two", the peacemaker.

When George Schultz met Andrey Gromyko in Geneva in January 1985 (in the time of General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko), George Schultz told the Soviet Minister that the administration would like to invite Mikhail Gorbachev to Washington D.C. for, among other things, a meeting with Ronald Reagan. Gromyko reacted negatively, and the American halted the conversation.

Having sent Bush and Schultz to Chernenko's funeral in March 1985, Ronald Reagan transmitted through them his proposal to meet with the new General Secretary "as soon as possible." Mikhail Gorbachev agreed, but the first high-level meeting in November 1985 in Geneva (following a six-year break) had more the character of a mutual calibration of weapons. It little changed afterwards. As Secretary of State George Schultz had noted, things were stagnant. This was when we began demanding a new meeting.

Skipping ahead, it is necessary to speak that the expectation of getting through to Ronald Reagan turned out to be accurate. Eventually, Mikhail Gorbachev was able to turn him away from strangling the "evil empire" to the rhetoric of cooperation in saving peoples from a nuclear catastrophe, to an end to the arms race — the most important thing for us.

The peculiarity of the meeting in Reykjavik that distinguished it from pre-Perestroika summits was that it had not been orchestrated in advance. It was held without a preliminarily agreed agenda or final communiqué. Neither were there any associated social events. This reflected the character and preferences of both central figures, and it was tested in Geneva.

Thus, the conversations were to a large extent improvised and were emotionally tense. This was probably the first time the "top-down"

method was implemented, i.e. a renunciation of extensive preparations by experts (of course, this was only a partial renunciation). It was a new type of political dialogue which was maintained, among other things, through an exchange of personal letters. It was a political-strategic approach, rather than a military-technical one. It was not so much a review of results as it was a perspective for the future.

The lesson is that such a summit format is apparently the most promising.

The meeting began with a one-to-one talk. Gorbachev and Reagan confirmed their common goal of liquidating all nuclear weapons.

When the two ministers joined them, Mikhail Gorbachev was the first to lay his cards on the table. He set forth dynamically and in detail new proposals for intermediate-range and short-range nuclear missiles (entailing a complete liquidation of Soviet and American missiles in Europe) and for strategic weapons (entailing a reduction by half). In conclusion, Mikhail Gorbachev gave Ronald Reagan a draft of the corresponding orders that the heads of state would submit to their ministers for execution.

The Americans did not know what Mikhail Gorbachev would come with. It should be noted that George Schultz wrote that the CIA's predictions had turned out to be rather approximate. Now they could scarcely conceal their excitement over the unprecedented concessions. "This is the best the Soviets have offered us over the past twenty-five years," was the opinion of negotiations veteran George Schultz regarding the work of Paul Nitze. They were also undaunted by the fact that they faced a night of difficult work. Among other things, they would need a new "chant," i.e. a new conversational reference card for the president.

Mikhail Gorbachev himself emphasized that he had made a number of substantial conciliatory steps toward the United States. He was demanding only one thing in return: as Secretary of State George Schultz put it, the scalp, i.e. the notorious Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The Soviet leader would not agree to the creation of such a system in outer space that would be able to destroy our nuclear potential.

The plan was to finish off SDI technically by prohibiting studies and tests connected with it outside of any laboratories (not to let them into outer space). There was also a proposal to undertake mutual obligations not to exit from the Soviet-American Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) during an agreed-upon period. Ronald Reagan effectively agreed to this. All that was left was to determine the periods of effectiveness.

In my point of view, there was one card which Mikhail Gorbachev did not lay on the table. His proposals really were a huge step forward from previous positions. But can we consider that which was vital for the country in its existing state to be such great concessions? (to present one's own interest as a concession is not bad as a negotiating tactic! — *auth.*)

Concerning himself with the reduction of military expenses that were unsustainable for the country, Mikhail Gorbachev wanted to kill two birds with one stone:

- a) to obtain a reduction of strategic nuclear weapons;
- b) to make the US outer space defense system difficult to carry out, if not impossible, for the foreseeable future.

Ronald Reagan could not agree to the latter, and this is what laid, so to speak, the operational part of the Reykjavik summit to rest. In the US president's understanding, it would have meant a repudiation of his obsession: not to leave Americans defenseless in the face of a nuclear apocalypse, but at the same time to make the world nuclear-free.

The Americans were distorting the facts. About seven years later George Schultz admitted that they were not even close to having anything like SDI, and he had little faith in it. But they kept it afloat ("our president will never give it up") as a means of pressuring us.

The scenario could seem truly frightening. The United States first deliver a decapitating nuclear strike, and whatever we have left to retaliate is intercepted by SDI.

We should admit that the American blackmail — intimidation by means of the SDI bugbear — was effective for them in terms of our

behavior. This is why an accurate analysis is acutely needed, and for this it should not be tasked just to one agency.

Ronald Reagan said that the parties would be obligated to share with each other the results of outer space missile defense studies if they are successful. He said that the defense system would be deployed only after all ballistic missiles would be destroyed, such that a first strike would be impossible, etc. "You won't even supply us with dairy equipment," responded Mikhail Gorbachev. "I don't believe that you will share SDI."

Intense discussions on this subject took practically the entire second day.

"Either only laboratories (i.e. a prohibition on work outside of them), or goodbye," said Mikhail Gorbachev eventually. Ronald Reagan began collecting his papers, leaving Reykjavik over "one lousy word."

At first glance, it was an unambiguous failure. Gorbachev and Reagan both went home without having agreed on anything. Furthermore, journalists heard the words of Mikhail Gorbachev to the American president as the two were departing, "You and I will not see each other again." He had implied, "before we leave Reykjavik," but those who heard his words understood them in the broad sense. It was the end, a complete failure.

The most important thing that happened in Reykjavik was left off-screen. A religious person would call it an epiphany. A pragmatist would call it a flight of political thought, a view beyond the horizon. It could happen that at some point in time during the multi-hour discussion the Americans realized that it was possible to come to a major agreement with the Russians. Representatives of the two enemy camps were peacefully discussing security problems to which it would seem there was no approach. So were we really to continue to be at odds after this? Mikhail Gorbachev had realized this somewhat earlier, but the conversation with Ronald Reagan was a revelation for him as well. The American president had turned out to be ready for a substantial move forward, even though he had tripped up on SDI.

"Devastation is not in water closets; it is in people's heads," said Mikhail Bulgakov. The effect of Reykjavik was primarily psychological: it removed a substantial dose of ideological confrontation from people's heads. But, understandably, there was a practical result as well. The summit had shown, albeit in broad strokes, the kinds of agreements for which the two great powers were ready, as well as the kinds of agreements for which they were not ready.

After Reykjavik, relations between the USSR and the United States finally went into motion. There had been a start to cooperation on disarmament which encompassed nuclear, chemical, and conventional weapons; as well as cooperation in the resolution of regional conflicts; and, last but not least, in the area of human rights. The leaders at Reykjavik had agreed to include this topic in the Soviet-American dialogue at the same level as the other topics mentioned above. Subsequent practice showed that it would have been difficult to achieve progress with the Americans in other areas without a serious approach to humanitarian issues.

Over the next five years, preeminently important agreements were prepared and signed in the key area to which Reykjavik had almost entirely been devoted: nuclear security. And there was not only in that area.

Mikhail Gorbachev was correct not to turn SDI into a barrier for agreement in other areas. And one bird killed (more precisely, two at once: the liquidation of short- and intermediate-range missiles and a reduction of strategic nuclear weapons) is exactly what is in the country's core interests.

For the first time in history, the real destruction of nuclear arsenals began. As for SDI, as Mikhail Gorbachev had once written, an asymmetric and "frightening, simply horrifying" response was devised. It was never put into action, just as the giant nuclear potentials of the two countries, fortunately, were never tested in practice.

The experience of overcoming the political and military-technical difficulties which arose on the way to reducing two nuclear system



classes (i.e. short- and intermediate-range missiles) to zero later came in very useful. It advanced the preparation of the START I treaty, the execution of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, and also the Vienna talks on conventional weapons. The treaty went a long way toward preventing the entry of a new stage in the arms race, including in outer space. It signified a palpably changed atmosphere in our relations with the Americans and with the Western Europeans, especially with West Germany: the Pershing missiles were removed from the latter country. A dangerous, head-on confrontation had been liquidated. This had a special significance for those caught within the narrow confines of Europe.

We may name a number of fundamentally new tenets which prevailed during Perestroika and became the ideology of Reykjavik as well:

- the Soviet Union had no intention of going to war. It was against excess arms and was ready to reduce them, even unilaterally, and it had proved this in its deeds;
- the country's security should be provided for primarily through political means while maintaining a suitable defense potential;
- the most important thing was not equality, but reasonable sufficiency, of which an asymmetric response is a subspecies;
- strict verification was required for compliance with the agreements. This includes on-site inspections: "trust but verify!"

It is necessary to add that a serious defect was corrected during Perestroika: the USSR's foreign and defense policies had been going in different directions. In case military plans would turn out to be incongruent with foreign policy, the former had precedence.

In my view, the historic significance of Reykjavik is that it was an important link in the cohesive policy which Mikhail Gorbachev conceived and carried out, although its advantages did not immediately become apparent. His policy was to exit the Cold War with the United States and its allies. It had been proven in practice that, despite the perniciousness of America's drive to world domination, a confrontation with America was not inevitable. During his brief tenure as General

Secretary, Konstantin Chernenko had directed to the US vice president the impressive phrase, "We are not doomed to be inborn enemies." This was said at the height of the ideological conflict. It is all the more applicable today. A reasonable agreement is possible with the Americans given a rational policy on our part.

The years go by, and we forget how labor-intensive tasks were by Mikhail Gorbachev and his team.

No less than the fundamental principles of foreign policy had to be changed. As Mikhail Gorbachev received it in the spring of 1985, its ideology differed little from what Leonid Brezhnev had inherited from Nikita Khrushchev, as well as what Nikita Khrushchev, in his turn, had inherited from Iosif Stalin. The struggle of two social systems had been the be-all and end-all of it.

Stalin's directive, "America is our enemy number one," had been in force for nearly forty years. As early as 1948, Iosif Stalin had instructed the members of the Politburo, "The world is divided into two enemy camps. Their respective approaches are absolutely irreconcilable. If one of the camps does not capitulate, then, sooner or later, an armed conflict between them is inevitable."

As once General Secretary Yuriy Andropov said, "It's about finding an answer to the land question: Who buries whom?" It was understood that he had in mind the struggle of socialism and capitalism.

The opposite side provided on many occasions fuel for the suspicion that peaceful coexistence was merely a tactical maneuver for it as well. God's chosen country, the unique America — this alone said enough! But there were also much more targeted statements. For example, in 2007 Reagan's adviser Richard Pipes noted that he had been right when he "taught" Ronald Reagan that the two systems were separated by an insuperable historical and ideological dividing line. There is no convergence between them, and there can be none. One of them must get out of the road.

The country's leaders raised the military race with the United States to the rank of the class struggle, and they passed it on to one

another like a baton for forty years. Making it permanent was apparently the greatest strategic error of the troika of Andropov, Gromyko, and Ustinov during the late Brezhnev period and during the first couple of years after Leonid Brezhnev.

At every high-level Soviet-American meeting it was said that nuclear weapons were inapplicable as a means of waging war. It was understood that much lesser quantities of nuclear weapons than what had been accumulated and was still accumulating were needed to function as a deterrent. But when they returned home, they would launch the next military preparations with an unwavering hand.

But the enemy had not been only in the West. For example, First Deputy Minister Korniyenko methodically explained to a foreign official that we cannot rule out the possibility of a need to counter not only the United States and NATO, but China as well. In his view, we cannot ignore the fact that there are not two, but five countries with nuclear potentials. None of them would sign a document saying that they wouldn't use it. It was entirely possible that a situation could arise in which the Soviet arsenal would have to counter all four of the others.

In preparing for a war on all fronts, we were like Pushkin's Tsar Dadon who needed to "maintain a multitudinous army." So Mikhail Gorbachev immediately began changing the course of our cumbersome and unwieldy dreadnought.

As Nikita Khrushchev had done with his thaw and the early Leonid Brezhnev had done with his détente, the General Secretary put the emphasis on relations with the United States. That is how Reykjavik came about as well. This was still the axis on which international stability balanced. Figuratively speaking, the pliers of the arms race were unclenched on the basis of a radical improvement in Soviet-US relations. Work for the complete normalization of relations with China was begun and successfully carried out to completion. This is one of Gorbachev's merits which is sometimes forgotten.

A fundamentally different approach became effective with the socialist countries on the basis of a complete repudiation of the Brezhnev

doctrine and an acknowledgement that the armed intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 "to save socialism" was mistaken.

Relations with "socialist and progressive" regimes, which had hitherto involved the expenditure of considerable resources, were recalibrated with state interests. And cooperation with Western Europe quickly expanded on a new basis.

A serious search was undertaken for a way out of the Afghan drama. The resolution of "low-intensity" conflicts such as Angola was also undertaken seriously.

For the first time, the concept of human rights was referenced without quotation marks and without the qualifier "so-called."

What needed to be changed was not just policy itself, but who was to determine it and how it was to be carried out. From my point of view, the military was responsible for the security of the USSR. It worked without fail in the Brezhnev period. And even during Perestroika, Eduard Shevardnadze had initially repeated it like a mantra. On numerous occasions, mid-level officials had become privy to information about how the highest-ranking military leaders were issuing ultimatums to the country's political leadership. So, for example, Sergey Akhromeyev, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, once behaved this way with Gorbachev on the question of intermediate-range missiles. Objecting to the complete liquidation of the SS-20, Marshal Akhromeyev declared bluntly that in that case he would renounce responsibility for the country's security.

Having received a carte blanche, the military quite logically saw the provision of security as consisting in the largest possible quantity of weapons. Political methods for maintaining security did not count among their immediate duties. As a result, in the early 1980s, the Soviet military-industrial complex devoured 20-25 percent of GDP. No one ever named the exact numbers. Five to eight million people worked in the defense industry. It was a state within a state.

The Soviet military-industrial complex could be proud of its greatest achievements. But they were obtained at too high a price. The fact that

the military and military-industrial complex had the decisive say in such an important area of state policy as defense goes a long way in explaining why it had only been possible to agree with the United States about "ceilings" for certain arms systems during the twenty-year period before Perestroika, and why those ceilings had been so extraordinarily high.

In particular, the military's resistance made it impossible to take advantage of opportunities in the arms race which came up under Reagan's predecessor Carter. This once again led to a loss of time. It is also true that the heartburn over human rights, which Jimmy Carter had preached so vigorously, played its own role as well.

After Afghanistan, the stagnation on nuclear issues became complete. More generally, this affected disarmament issues as a whole. On January 16, 1985, one of our chief experts in the area, Viktor Israelyan, reported to a senior leadership meeting of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that not a single agreement had been developed at the Disarmament Conference over a period of many years.

"Our unshakable, scientific, mathematically calculated, rock-hard basis is equality," Andrey Gromyko had instructed us at the meeting. The scientific character of that basis was reduced to simple arithmetic: to have at least as many weapons as all potential opponents.

The term "strategic parity" was even more scientific. But its meaning was never explained. It turns out that we just didn't know what it was. This became apparent only during Perestroika.

In Gorbachev's words, "Nobody in the Defense Council could explain it to me. This is a question of military policy, and not statistics. Strategic parity consists in having a reliable guarantee of the country's defense. And an opponent will not attack us because he would receive an unacceptable retaliatory strike. If we foresee such a result, then that means we have parity. But if we are counting, 'They have one rifle; we have one rifle,' then we will have to stop building socialism. They are spending 6 trillion dollars on arms. So, are we to spend the same amount? We are taking everything away from the people. And we will turn the country into a military encampment."

Parity for us was a must, a mantra. On numerous occasions, the Americans fraudulently took advantage of our firm insistence on it in order to demand equality on those specific positions where we were ahead, while simultaneously safeguarding their own superiority with which it was difficult for us to catch up.

Due to the structural differences between our armed forces and the American armed forces, it was difficult to define equality. And it was even more difficult to achieve it. This turned talks into a multi-year, exhausting tug-of-war. Moreover, progress depended to a large extent on the overall level of tension. Thus, work on the SALT II treaty was halted for years after 1975 Soviet involvement in Angola. The talks were completed only in 1979, ten years after the beginning.

But the treaty signed by Leonid Brezhnev and Jimmy Carter was not ratified by the American side as a result of the deployment of our troops to Afghanistan. Afterwards, and up until Perestroika began, i.e. for six years in a row, we exchanged nothing with the Americans but foul language. Meanwhile, the arms race was gaining momentum.

From their first days in office, Mikhail Gorbachev and his team set out to correct imbalances — strategic, political, and organizational — which had come about in the area of defense. The agreement to begin Soviet-American talks on nuclear arms (including both strategic nuclear weapons and short- and intermediate-range missiles) and weapons in outer space as part of a single package was achieved under Chernenko's leadership. However, it was emblematic that the first round of the talks began in Geneva on March 12, 1985, the following day after the special plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at which the new General Secretary was elected. Mikhail Gorbachev soon afterwards unbundled the package by putting short- and intermediate-range missiles into a separate category.

However, we must admit that military programs continued for some time essentially unhindered, including the expensive programs related to our counteraction to SDI. Mikhail Gorbachev demonstrated in every

possible way that he was not afraid of SDI, but was acting carefully (the question remains of whether our engineering offices exaggerated the danger of SDI in their competition to obtain what is now known as government contracts).

The worried Mikhail Gorbachev began pressuring the military-industrial complex. He appointed Lev Zaykov to replace Victor Grishin as Central Committee Secretary for Defense Affairs. Lev Zaykov took command of the so-called "big five," including representatives of the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the KGB, and the Council of Ministers. Relying on an inter-agency working group (i.e. the "small five"), the big five began preparing proposals for all problems of arms reduction.

Thus began the dismantling of the military's monopoly over defense policy issues. The mechanism for collective decision-making began functioning on the consensus principle. Meeting participants told me about an atmosphere prevailing in the working group — one characterized by disinhibition and the possibility to speak one's own opinion. Specialists had voting rights. As a result, the military and enterprise directors who had resisted reductions the most took up a more constructive position. In this context, Mikhail Gorbachev was true to himself. He tried to convince the others rather than attacking them head-on. The negative side of this approach was the inevitable loss of time.

Much needed to be changed within the country. But it was after just three months, in July 1985, when a turnover took place in the captain's bridge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After 28 years of uninterrupted occupancy, Andrey Gromyko retired from it. It was done elegantly and with respect for the person who had helped Mikhail Gorbachev become General Secretary. Andrey Gromyko became Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, formally the head of state.

Nobody either in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or outside of it was able to guess the name of Gromyko's successor, Eduard Shevardnadze, who had been summoned from Tbilisi. He would work honestly and productively in service of Perestroika.

The new minister, in his turn, replaced three quarters of the executive leadership at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under his lead, tongues were untied, and discussions began. Advice was sought from external experts. There was a growing sense that we were working together for the common good of the country.

Mikhail Gorbachev immediately placed under his own control the talks with the United States on short- and intermediate-range missiles, one of the chief topics of the forthcoming summit in Reykjavik. And it was worth it. The American Pershing and Tomahawk missiles deployed in Europe represented a formidable danger. Essentially, they were a nuclear pistol held against our heads. Our Pioneer missiles (SS-20) could not reach the territory of the United States. As early as April 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev enacted a temporary moratorium on the deployment of Soviet intermediate-range missiles and called upon the United States to do the same. Ronald Reagan immediately called this a "propaganda ploy." In July, we enacted a unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions. On this issue, the Americans also refused to follow us, although we periodically extended the moratorium up until January 1987.

Counteraction came not only from without. Mikhail Gorbachev had to overcome the tenacious resistance of the Ministry of Defense and the military-industrial complex and their co-ideologues who occupied high positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So on January 8, 1986, I wrote in my diary, "Yesterday morning we apparently managed to come to an agreement with the military on the basic parameters of the upcoming colossal step on intermediate-range missiles. An unexpected turn had suddenly come about. In the evening, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were called once again to the General Staff — and not vice versa, by the way — where they were presented with a completely new version: the liquidation of nuclear weapons by the new millennium and the removal of all specifics. They say that a messenger from the Ministry of Defense flew out to the General Secretary's short-term vacation place with this version and obtained his consent for it. They claim

to have been working on this for a year. This was followed by near-hysterics: "We won't let 1960 repeat itself. To this day we haven't overcome the consequences of the unilateral disarmament that took place under Khrushchev." If anything happens, the military will lead a high-level fight. They're the ones who are responsible for the country's security."

Mikhail Gorbachev liked the idea. It was in the spirit of his impressive steps to the public. Furthermore, they had convinced him that it was absolutely true that it would be advantageous to us not just for propaganda purposes. If it was to be implemented, then the USSR with its powerful arsenal of conventional weapons would retain certain strategic advantages.

Mikhail Gorbachev immediately sent a message to Ronald Reagan. The Americans didn't know how to react. Every one of their senior leaders considered Reagan's idea of a nuclear-free world to be a complete utopia, but they could not talk their president out of it. Mikhail Gorbachev added further fuel to the fire. Eventually, they (as we) emphasized the resolution of practical problems.

But what was it all about? There was no need to hurry with intermediate-range missiles and remove them from the larger context. The program prescribed that they would be completely destroyed during the first stage, i.e. within 5-8 years. At the same time, the nuclear arms of both the USSR and the United States capable of reaching the other country's territory were to be reduced by half.

But it was only thirty years later how the proposal to liquidate nuclear weapons completely was born. Ostensible brain-boxes at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs devised it after Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985 in case an impressive propaganda initiative would be needed. As they say, these pundits had transmitted the material on command. They had been told that their mission would end at that. In January 1986, the idea resurfaced as a project of the Ministry of Defense.

Mikhail Gorbachev had recognized the diversion. His resolution made it possible to fight for a reduction of intermediate-range missiles within the framework of this malarkey.

In a conflict that lasted nearly a month, Mikhail Gorbachev ended up winning, although not without compromises. There remained a plan, a well-intentioned wish, and specific things in the first stage, including liquidation of the SS-20. The latter came with immense difficulty, only at the very end, and only through the personal merit of the General Secretary.

Despite the General Secretary's pressure-breakthrough attitude, the Geneva talks on intermediate-range missiles could not be brought to completion. Mikhail Gorbachev complained, "We got sucked into discussion of various options. They consider security to be a matter of arithmetic." It sometimes seemed to me that we were negotiating not with the Americans, but with ourselves. The proposals we kept tabling one after the other were mainly driven by what we had managed to talk the military into each time. To the outside world, this might have looked like a string of concessions.

It is little known that throughout the process of work on the treaty, the "hawks" in the United States were constantly putting spokes in the wheels. Schultz writes that he had more problems with the American delegation in Geneva than with the Soviet one. When the treaty was ready, they were busy trying to talk Ronald Reagan out of signing it. This included such figures as Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger.

In discussing our positions for Reykjavik at the Politburo meeting on October 8, 1986 (by the way, it was at this meeting that Andrey Gromyko admitted that the SS-20 deployment was a "gross error in our European policy"), Mikhail Gorbachev insisted on the zero option for Europe. This was the only possibility to remove the Pershing missiles and the cruise missiles which were directly aimed at the Soviet Union. To this end, we chose to compromise and not to count British and French nuclear forces, as well as the United States' forward-based nuclear systems (we wrote, "for the time being," although it was clear to us that they would actually remain there forever). That is why Schultz and Nitze were so glad.

During subsequent talks, however, the Americans began working their way backward from their previous zero position. They just could

not give up the obvious advantages that the Pershing missiles gave them. They offered to leave each side at least 33 missiles to be located on its own territory; not to destroy missiles, but to reequip them; etc. In the end, the sides had agreed on two zeros: zero in Europe and zero in Asia.

My diary entry for November 26, 1987 says, "Out of the blue, I stumbled onto a historic moment: the meeting of Shevardnadze and Schultz in Geneva when the last problems with intermediate-range missiles were overcome."

Eduard Shevardnadze brought with him Chief of General Staff Sergey Akhromeyev — it was a sorry sight to behold as the Marshall searched for solutions and at times experienced unconcealed suffering. Ultimately, the two of them together resolved one final sticking point.

At the end, Schultz proposed to go downstairs and announce to the journalists who had been on constant duty at the entrance (on this occasion, the entrance to the American mission) that the "job had been done." He nobly offered our minister to do this. The latter spoke in his slightly bombastic manner. Schultz added a businesslike air, saying, "It is symbolic that we are going upstairs and continuing work on the START treaty."

Mikhail Gorbachev did great that he decided to finish off intermediate-range missiles with Ronald Reagan. Contrary to what many people had advised, it would have been a loss of time and effectiveness to wait for the newly elected Bush."

It is possible that the signing of the treaty in December 1987 with Ronald Reagan, who was nearing the end of his second and final term in office, was what saved the treaty, which itself was a child of Reykjavik. Bush's subsequent policy toward the USSR compels such an inference as it was much more restrained, which is not to say worse.

In conclusion, we may express hope that the current leaders of Russia and the United States will summon a similarly high awareness of responsibility that Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan had: namely, they will recognize the need to prevent a nuclear deadlock between

the superpowers — as well as any non-nuclear deadlock which would be at least as destructive. And it is time to take practical measures: an arms race which in certain aspects is more dangerous than the one at the time of Reykjavik is already underway. And there are no talks on weapons reductions, and none are foreseen.

## 2. REYKJAVIK: LESSONS FROM THE PAST, CONCLUSIONS FOR THE FUTURE

*Yury Nazarkin*<sup>3</sup>

To appreciate the significance of the Reykjavik summit one has to remember the historical context in which it took place.

The 1980's started off as one of the most dismal chapters of the Cold War. Soviet troops entered Afghanistan. President Reagan proclaimed the Soviet Union the Evil Empire. The Soviet Union began deploying new SS-20 missiles in Europe, to which the US responded by deploying "Pershing-2's". President Reagan announced the launching of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI or Star Wars Program). Soviet-American arms control talks had either broken down or been suspended altogether.

What fanned the flames was the disaster with the South Korean airline shot down by Soviet anti-missile defense. Even the sports world became an arena for confrontation: Washington boycotted the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, while Moscow reciprocated with a boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

Does that not remind you of what is going on in the here and now? Even down to the detail? Confrontational rhetoric, dialogue on ice, tit-

<sup>3</sup> Yury Nazarkin – Professor of the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR and Russian Federation (former USSR Representative at the Conference on Disarmament, Head of the USSR delegation at the USSR-US Nuclear and Space Talks (START-1), Special Envoy, Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council in 1993-1995, Russia).

for-tat sanctions... The Turks down a Russian plane, sports scandals erupt with anti-Russian overtones?

Coming back to the 30-year-old narrative, though, the sense arose that something had to give amidst the fraught sequence of events, once Mikhail Gorbachev arrived in power as the new Soviet leader and Ronald Reagan was re-elected to a second term. The two first met in Geneva in November 1985, an encounter that produced nothing in the way of tangible results, but for which both sides had come to the table with specific proposals. The inertia of the Cold War was to prove overpowering.

The main bone of contention was the SDI phantom. Reagan was brimful of enthusiasm for the creation of an "impenetrable anti-missile shield", while Gorbachev remained equally adamant that such a shield would only incite the US to use it as cover for inflicting a first nuclear strike on the Soviet Union. His argument was further bolstered by the fact that the ABM Treaty was already up and running.

Nevertheless, the Geneva meeting did enable the two leaders to get to know one another, and understandably to form their own conclusions, while publicly acknowledging that they could do business with one another.

Eleven months later in Reykjavik a fresh attempt was made to work together, though the intervening months had been anything but trouble-free.

Gorbachev's statement of January 15, 1986, on disarmament issues was taken as a Soviet "propaganda" ploy, which was not altogether untrue, in that he was proposing nuclear arms be completely eliminated over the next 15 years. That was unrealistic, both in political as well as technical terms. However, objectively, one would have to concede that his statement also contained other, more practical proposals for real negotiation that had been obscured by the full nuclear disarmament pitch.

President Reagan continued to talk up his SDI. The war continued in Afghanistan. The political horizon was clouded by "spy scandals"

(e.g., Zakharov-Daniloff). The Chernobyl disaster with its horrific consequences wholly dominated the Soviet leadership's attention and set the whole world on edge.

Soviet-American talks on nuclear arms, defense, and outer space ("Nuclear and Space Talks"), which had begun in Geneva in March 1985<sup>4</sup>, hit an impasse.

In spite of the gloomy political atmosphere, the meeting in Reykjavik happened. Both delegations boasted "high-level" military experts, including Marshal S. Akhromeyev, USSR General Chief of Staff, and P. Nitze, the US Administration's key figure on arms control.

The Reykjavik meeting was to focus on nuclear issues — strategic arms and intermediate-range missiles — as well as nuclear testing. Those matters were discussed both in direct talks between the two leaders and in the working group co-chaired by S. Akhromeyev and P. Nitze. Strategic arms reduction issues and their association with anti-ballistic missile defense were central.

Since I headed the Soviet delegation at the talks on nuclear arms, defense, and outer space that culminated with the signing of the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), my intention here is to concentrate on the strategic arms-related issues that came up in Reykjavik, both with regard to offensive and defensive weapons.

Before I do so, though, I want to point out that it was the Reykjavik summit that facilitated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty: the Soviet side agreed that British and French nuclear forces should not feature, that the treaty should include shorter-range missiles (500 – 1000 km), and was flexible on a number of other aspects, all of which removed some of the contentious points and enabled the 1987 INF Treaty to be concluded.

I now address my own points.

<sup>4</sup> In January 1985 at the Geneva meeting A. Gromyko and G. Shultz reached agreement to have bilateral talks resume on nuclear arms, defense, and space. It was arranged these would proceed along three lines: strategic offensive weapons, intermediate-range missiles, and defense and outer space. Delegations on both sides were united, though each consisted of three teams according to the designated topic.

Ambassador Dobrynin, who took part in the Reykjavik meeting, later recalled: "The meeting itself was highly dramatic. For the first time in history of our relations there appeared to be the possibility of an agreement on the substantial reduction of strategic nuclear arms... Gorbachev and Reagan had ended their long and heated negotiations at midnight without agreement and left the conference building together, walking in silence. They stopped to bid each other goodbye as they reached the President's car. I happened to be nearby and served as impromptu interpreter. A short conversation followed in the cold Icelandic night. Gorbachev, his voice ringing with bitterness he could hardly hide, said, "Mr. President, you have missed the unique chance of going down in history as a great President who paved the way for nuclear disarmament." Reagan replied despondently, "That applies to both of us."<sup>5</sup>

Neither leader could come to terms so long as they disagreed on anti-missile defense, just as had been the case 11 months previously in Geneva. No joint documents were signed. I will go into more detail about how that matter was dealt with in Reykjavik and what transpired afterwards at the Geneva talks. Essentially, that was the real crux of the Soviet-American dialogue, as it remains to this day. Still, the Reykjavik meeting marked an important milestone in that dialogue.

There are a few other issues I wish to address first, though, which are related to strategic offensive weapons.

An enormous amount of work was carried out in Reykjavik, not just by the two leaders, but by the working group as well. Each side kept their own record of proceedings. At subsequent talks, both at Ministerial level and between the Geneva-based delegations, the parties then relied on those unofficial transcripts. They later came to be declassified and released for publication. To a large extent, they did match; but there were also discrepancies due to varying interpretations

<sup>5</sup> Original quote in English s taken from Dobrynin A. In *Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to American Six Cold War Presidents*. Times Books, a division of Random House. New York. 1995. P. 621.



and understandings. That did little, of course, to make things easier at the talks. Where the records did overlap, however, was where the shape of the future treaty could be agreed.

So, just what items were considered in Reykjavik and how were they subsequently examined at the talks?

## Basic ceilings

Both parties had agreed to establish limits at 1,600 delivery vehicles and 6,000 nuclear warheads. Those limits were not challenged at later talks in Geneva and came to provide the initial basis of START.

## Sub-ceilings for ballistic missile warheads (ICBMs and SLBMs)

At the outset, the Americans proposed banning all ballistic missiles, while leaving nuclear-armed heavy bombers to one side. (The US had a big advantage on that component of the strategic triad). That was unacceptable for the Soviets. Back in Reykjavik, there had been agreement to establish sub-ceilings for ballistic missile warheads, and the Americans had even cited an aggregate figure of 4,500. Later they were to settle on 4,900 warheads, which is what was incorporated in the Treaty.

## Heavy missiles<sup>6</sup>

The US had no such missiles, but the Soviet Union could claim to have 308 ICBMs deployed (SS-18s) with the corresponding launch systems. Each could take 10 warheads at 500-550 kiloton each. Because of their substantial throw-weight (7,600 kg), moreover, those missiles could carry the means of thwarting ABM systems (i.e. decoy "warheads"

<sup>6</sup> It was stipulated at the Geneva talks that ICBMs and SLBMs with a launch weight of more than 106,000 kg and a throw-weight of more than 4,350 kg fell into this category.

and other deceptive or dazzle devices). The Americans were thus especially concerned about those missiles and sought every means of limiting them to the maximum extent. In Reykjavik the Soviets had agreed to substantially limit their SS-18 heavy missiles. No exact limit was set, but inasmuch as the original Soviet proposals had been for a 50% reduction in all strategic offensive weapons, they then gave their assent to the same level for heavy missiles, even though other vehicles were subject to lesser reductions. Later on, the Geneva talks were to enshrine that figure in the Treaty. Even so, because the Americans were so very sensitive on that count, other SS-18-related items had to be ironed out as well: e.g., their possible relocation.

## Heavy bombers

The Soviet Union had a distinct handicap where this component of the triad was concerned, primarily because of the lack of refueling bases. Thus, to the same extent that the Americans had been worried about Soviet heavy missiles, the Soviets were particularly minded to have the heavy bomber issue resolved. The item remained on the strategic arms talks' agenda until the very end. In Reykjavik it was determined that the main criterion in defining a "heavy bomber" should be that it was equipped to deliver long-range air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs). That was subsequently supplemented to specify a minimum range of 8,000 km. There was another key element the Parties concurred on in Reykjavik: all gravity bombs and "air-to-surface" missiles with a range less than 600 km (SRAMs) aboard a given bomber should count as one out of a total limit of 6,000 (with each bomber qualifying as one out of a total permissible 1,600 units). I believe that constituted the Soviets' greatest concession: given the Americans' air superiority, they thereby gained a considerable advantage in addition to the 6,000 unit cap on munitions.

## Air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM)

The Parties agreed these should be limited, although not as to how. The US was insisting they be counted as equivalent to bombs and "air-to-surface" missiles with a range less than 600 km (SRAMs), or, in other words, as one unit aboard the aircraft. Naturally, there was objection from the Soviet side. The dispute at the subsequent talks proved to be prolonged, intense and highly dramatic, with the two main points at stake being: (1) a definition of long-range ALCM, and (2) the counting rules to be followed by each side.

(1) From the very start of the negotiating process, including Reykjavik, the Soviets had taken long-range ALCMs to mean the same thing as in the SALT-II treaty, where what qualified as a heavy bomber was, *inter alia*, one that was equipped with cruise missiles capable of a range in excess of 600 km. Both sides in Reykjavik had used the concepts "heavy bomber" and "long-range ALCM". The Americans had not questioned the SALT II definition. However, they then went onto insist that long-range for an ALCM should be 1,500 km, though they later came down to 1,000 km. Never were the two parties more dramatically at odds over the 600 vs. 1,000 km difference than at the Moscow Ministerial meeting in May 1990. George Baker, who was not in Reykjavik, citing American experts who had been, asserted that no agreement had ever been arrived at that long-range ALCMs should be capable of a range in excess of 600 km. Marshal S. Akhromeyev and Deputy Foreign Minister V. Karpov, who had participated directly in the Reykjavik talks, claimed the opposite. Following a protracted and very heated debate, Secretary-of-State Baker conceded 800 km as his last say on the matter. Minister E. Shevardnadze and Marshal Akhromeyev were intractable: they would not add a single kilometer to the 600 km figure agreed earlier. Marshal Akhromeyev explained that their position was based on top Soviet ABM capabilities: i.e. 600 km for interceptor fighter planes and 400 km for ground-based air defenses. Why the Americans were digging their heels in was clear too:

development of a new "Tacit Rainbow" cruise missile capable of an 800 km range was already in the flight test phase. It looked like the wrangle over 200 km would stymie the talks altogether. The climax came the next morning, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, just hours before George Baker was to take off for Washington. He gave a written assurance that the Tacit Rainbow ALCM would not be equipped with nuclear warheads, and that if the Soviets could accept that assurance, he would agree to the 600 km threshold for long-range air-launched cruise missiles. The Soviet side assented. Very soon afterwards it came to light that the US had shut down the Tacit Rainbow project. Incidentally, that was not the only time such trials and tribulations and occasionally sleepless nights at the negotiating table turned out to have been all for nothing, due to some technical development resulting in shifts in military project priorities.

(2) It was obvious — and the Americans admitted as much — that where the strategic triad was concerned the US had a clear advantage in the air, given their refueling bases in proximity to Soviet territory. The USSR had no such option. Therefore, American heavy bombers could carry more ALCMs than Soviet bombers could. The problem was thrashed out at the talks (though not right away and not without huge difficulty), taking that distinction into account. With a few additional conditions applying, 8 long-range nuclear ALCMs were attributed to the Soviet Union per heavy bomber, and 10 for the US.<sup>7</sup>

## Sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs)

The US had an advantage in this type of weapons as well, which also proved a real headache for the Soviets. The Americans agreed to limit them in Reykjavik, albeit separately, outside the bounds of the treaty and beyond the strategic triad framework. The Soviet side went

<sup>7</sup> Art. III, 4e-f, START.

along with that approach, although they insisted the limitations be legally binding. It was a tough nut to crack at the talks. In fact, I personally had to suffer through some fairly tough moments because of it. I discussed the SLCM issue in confidential consultations with Richard Burt in Washington – (a “thinking out loud” format). We may not have come to any agreement then, but I did get a distinct sense of how we might go about solving the problem. First, though, I needed to report back to Moscow on the consultations and formulate proposals for new instructions. Sadly, (in the meantime) there was a leak to the press on the American side – (to *The New York Times*). Worse, the correspondent who revealed the nature of the consultations sent out the message that the Soviets had allegedly accepted the American proposal. Needless to say, there was some explaining to do in Moscow. Ultimately, when the ministers met in Moscow in 1990, it was agreed that the parties would exchange notifications on long-range SLCM deployments (i.e. in excess of 600 km.) on an annual basis, and that numbers should not exceed 880 missiles a year. The very “thinking aloud” that I had had to squirm over earlier supplied the actual basis of that decision.

## Verification

Both parties agreed in Reykjavik that verification should be effective and provide every assurance of treaty compliance. No specific measures were discussed, needless to say, but subsequent talks in Geneva did draw up and approve a detailed system of verification. It comprised national technical measures (together with a ban on concealment of sites), numerous types of on-site inspections, permanent monitoring of final assembly facilities for mobile missiles (one for each party); full access to telemetric data for every ICBM and SLBM test launch, and confidence-building measures facilitating effective verification.

## The ABM problem

As mentioned earlier, the Reykjavik meeting was torpedoed by the ABM problem, due to the diametrically opposed views held by the two parties. There is an argument for examining that in more detail, as it remains the chief stumbling block in the arms-control dialogue.

In Reykjavik, the Soviet delegation announced their readiness to reduce strategic offensive weapons and to destroy medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe, on the proviso that both sides commit to staying in the ABM Treaty for at least the next ten years.<sup>8</sup> At first the Americans were prepared to go along with a five-year pledge of non-withdrawal, renewable for another five years, provided the entire Soviet strategic ballistic missile arsenal was eliminated (with the exception of heavy bombers). That proved unacceptable to the Soviet Union (what with their advantage in ICBMs and the Americans' edge in heavy bombers.) Some time afterwards the Americans lifted their demand for complete elimination of Soviet ballistic missiles, but at the same time would not commit to stay in the ABM Treaty for more than 7 years. In addition, there was no agreed arrangement for what should happen upon expiry of the non-withdrawal period. The Soviets assumed that, following strategic offensive weapons reduction, talks should begin on a new approach to the ABMT from the new strategic perspective (resulting from offensive weapons reduction). The US was pushing for the full non-negotiable right to withdraw from the ABM Treaty.

In point of fact, though, the differences were far more profound. The US had its own (“broad”) interpretation of the ABM Treaty, which allowed for ABM research and testing, including in outer space, aerospace systems -e.g. laser, beam weapons, etc. -being an important feature of SDI. Washington wanted SDI to continue. The Soviet Union was opposed and determined that ABM research and testing be confined to the lab. More to the point, the Soviet leadership was anxious about

<sup>8</sup> The ABMT provides in Art. XV for the right of each Party to withdraw from the Treaty (subject to six month advance notice) should it be decided that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of the Treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests.

weapons in space that could be used not just for defensive purposes (as part of the SDI), but to launch strikes on satellites as well.

As a result of the 1987 Washington Summit, the following language was adopted: "Taking into account the preparation of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms, the leaders of the two countries also instructed their delegations in Geneva to work out an agreement that would commit the sides to observe the ABM Treaty signed in 1972 while developing their research, development and testing as required, which are permitted by the ABM Treaty, and not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, for a specified period of time." That was a masterpiece of cosmetic, "paper" compromise, which resolved nothing yet approached some semblance of an agreement. Each side read what they wanted into it. The Soviet Union persisted in believing the ABMT prohibited research, development, and testing outside the laboratory; the Reagan administration continued to insist on the "broad" interpretation which condoned just such activities outside the lab. The "agreed non-withdrawal period" remained the subject of further negotiation and continued to frustrate efforts to draft START.

I don't know who came up with that non-withdrawal formula or suggested it to Gorbachev. (I was not involved in the START talks then). I observed the process from the sideline and was dumbfounded at the idea and its legal fragility. What it amounted to was the conclusion of a treaty for non-withdrawal from another treaty, which was tantamount to circumscribing a sovereign right to withdrawal. So when I was appointed head of the delegation on the nuclear arms, defense, and outer space talks, I tried to get that impediment removed at the START negotiations.

The talks themselves were still at a deadlock, at least until the end of Reagan's Presidency. Some useful work was done, but essentially that was just pinning down the differences between the Parties on specific aspects of the Treaty and on finalizing some of the technical detail. The disagreement over the ABM Treaty non-withdrawal period, however, was what prevented the signing of the START Treaty, so the negotiations had no prospects.

Reagan's successor, George W. Bush, declared time out for half a year to gain a general overview of the START treaty situation. He appointed a new Chief Negotiator: Richard Burt, former ambassador to the FRG and earlier Assistant Secretary-of-State for European and Canadian Affairs. He turned out to be a broad-minded man and a creative thinker.

The Soviets also used the break to review and modify their position. That was when I was made head of delegation (April 1989).

The main shift in our position, which was what freed up the logjam in talks, came in September 1989 at a meeting of Ministers in Wyoming when we dropped the demand to peg START to a strict legal obligation to observe the ten-year ABM Treaty non-withdrawal period. It was declared from our side that the Soviet Union was prepared to sign START without prior agreement on ABMs if both Parties complied with the ABM Treaty as signed in 1972, which ruled out any "broad" interpretations. The Soviet Union further clarified that before START was signed they would unilaterally set out their own position on the matter.<sup>9</sup> As such, a legal commitment was replaced by a political one.

START talks could continue, although varying interpretations would persist. Despite President Bush's refocusing of the thrust of SDI to concentrate on a far more modest ABM agenda in January 1991 — "Global Protection from Limited Strikes" — i.e. GPALS, the US continued to operate on the basis of a "broad" interpretation of the ABMT.<sup>10</sup>

The START talks came to a successful close on July 31, 1991, with the signing of the Treaty in Moscow.

Ambassador A. Antonov (currently Russian Deputy Defense Minister) who headed the Russian delegation from 2009 to 2010 in the New START

<sup>9</sup> Just such a communication was delivered in June 1991: the Soviet Union confirmed its right to withdraw from the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms in the event of breach or substantial violation. That notwithstanding, Russia never exercised the right after the US withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002.

<sup>10</sup> In his State of the Union Address on 29 January 1991 President Bush stated: "Now, with remarkable technological advances like the Patriot missile, we can defend against ballistic missile attacks aimed at innocent civilians. Looking forward, I have directed that the SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] program be refocused on providing protection from limited ballistic missile strikes, whatever their source. Let us pursue an SDI program that can deal with any future threat to the United States, to our forces overseas, and to our friends and allies."

negotiations wrote in 2012: "START I marked the veritable pinnacle of the negotiating process on strategic offensive arms in the Soviet era. No other agreement can be said to have entailed such thorough and such detailed handling of so many issues related to strategic offensive weapons limitation. On the one hand, that reflects just how much the USSR and the US distrusted one another in the late 1980's; on the other hand, that demonstrates just how patient and how meticulous the Treaty drafters were."<sup>11</sup>

Antonov had every reason to make such an assessment, as the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was drawn up essentially on the basis of the old one, and the old one had withstood the test of time. It remained in force for 15 years, just as it was meant to. Russia never withdrew from it after the US pulled out of the ABM Treaty, even though a proviso had been lodged to that effect in 1991. The New START calls for further reductions in strategic offensive weapons and contains a simpler and, consequently, less costly verification system.

Needless to say, the Reykjavik summit, despite the Parties' ultimate inability to come to terms, did make a significant contribution to the eventual drawing up of START (and indeed of the INF Treaty), because the partial understandings that were shared there served in later negotiations.

Following Reykjavik, Gorbachev was to proclaim, both in public statements and in Politburo meetings (for which records have since been de-classified), that the meeting had marked a break-through and the high point of Soviet-American dialogue. Reagan was somewhat more tempered, if not skeptical, in his estimation. My thinking is that now, 30 years on from Reykjavik, is the right time for a more objective assessment of the meeting and its significance.

These are my conclusions (they largely have to do with START):

- Both supreme leaders based their judgment of the event on their own aims and plans. Gorbachev strove to put an end to the Cold War. Reagan was in thrall to the SDI phantom and wanted to take the program further.

<sup>11</sup> Antonov A. *Arms Control: the History, Current Status, and Prospects*. Moscow. 2012. P. 33.

- Both exaggerated the technical capabilities and actual feasibility of SDI, though, understandably, each from their own, totally opposite perspective.
- Political and technological advances over the last thirty years have demonstrated that many a vexed problem could have been avoided; assuming one could have foreseen those advances and changes to come. But was it possible to foresee those? I think not. Nonetheless, now might be the time to try and derive some insights from the past, first and foremost, in order to establish dialogue between our two countries.

The Soviet-American dialogue on strategic arms began in 1964 on an American initiative. Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency William Foster, acting on the instructions of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, approached Ambassador Dobrynin in Washington in the strictest confidence about the idea of talks for the mutual prohibition of ABM systems. Back then, however, the Soviet leadership considered defense "moral", and offensives "amoral", to quote Premier Kosygin. It was to take several years before a compromise could be struck and negotiations could commence on ABM limitation in combination with limitation of offensive strategic weapons. Then, as we know, the Parties "swapped" positions: the US started to come out against ABM limitations, and the Soviet Union insisted on compliance with the ABM Treaty. The fact remains, however, that the dialogue started off by coupling both defensive and offensive strategic weapons.

SDI transformed into GPALS, to be followed by the "Phased Adaptive Approach". However much programs and positions may have changed, though, the interplay between defensive and offensive strategic weapons has remained at the heart of the dialogue.

To be sure, the principal reason for the current halt (or freeze?) in the dialogue is the general political climate and a clash between Russia's and the US's fundamental interests. All the same, previous arms control talks never took place in a vacuum. There was Vietnam, there was Czechoslovakia, and there was Afghanistan — and much more besides.

There was a Cold War. And yet the dialogue went on: despite the stoppages, despite the complications, it still went on. Reykjavik may not have managed to produce agreement on the basic issue, but overall it did lay the foundation stone for renewed dialogue.

Of course, the need for another break-through meeting is felt especially keenly now. I don't know how future historians will label the present period of confrontation: the "Neo-Cold War" or something along those lines? Whatever they call it, it's plain that the current standoff could take us over the line.

Coming back to the arms control issue, though, this is what I see. New START expires in 5 years. There is not much time left. What next? An extension? A new treaty? The groundwork should begin now. The root of the problem is rearing its head again, as so many times in the past: the ABM problem and a possibly inaccurate assessment of the strategic balance between the two sides.

The Americans talk about the Iranian and the North Korean threats, although that scarcely comes across as very convincing to the Russian side, especially where missile defense in Europe is concerned. There are suspicions that interceptors based near the Russian border could be used against ground-based targets inside that territory as well. It has also been construed that the AEGIS system could be enabled to intercept strategic intercontinental missiles as well. I am positive that were we to be generously frank with one another, we could do much to dispel suspicion, whereas mutual suspicion is the prelude to an arms race.

Is it not time for each side to properly weigh up one another's intentions and capabilities? Not just in the weapons arena, but in the larger geopolitical dimension? But this would require shared interests and a summit meeting. Such a format requires preparation, including at the non-governmental level. There, I believe, is where the Luxembourg Forum stands to play a significant role.

### 3. REYKJAVIK: A PERSONAL VIEW

*Pavel Palazhchenko*<sup>12</sup>

"My Reykjavik" began on a summer day in my mother's apartment in Monino, about 30 km from Moscow, where I was spending part of my annual leave. I received a call from Alexander Bessmertnykh, head of the USA and Canada desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asking me to come to Moscow on some urgent business. A car was sent to pick me up, and a couple of hours later I was in the Smolenskaya Square building.

My assignment was to translate Mikhail Gorbachev's letter to President Reagan, proposing an informal summit to discuss bilateral relations, particularly nuclear arms reductions. The tone of the letter struck me as somewhat unusual. There was not only a sense of urgency but, what is more, a clear sense of unhappiness with the way arms control negotiations were proceeding in Geneva. It was obvious to me for some time that Gorbachev was annoyed at the slow pace of the negotiations and at the ability of the bureaucracies in both countries to entangle the talks in a web of abstruse technical details. He sometimes seemed to be losing his patience, though he appeared to have no difficulty grasping the technical issues.

<sup>12</sup> Pavel Palazhchenko — Adviser for International and Media Relations at the Gorbachev Foundation in Moscow (former USSR foreign ministry official, interpreter at US-Soviet summit meetings, 1985-1991, Russia).

Actually, I well understood Gorbachev's impatience. My own experience with arms control talks included many months in Geneva from 1981 to 1983, interpreting at the INF talks, with their many rounds of negotiations going nowhere and the parties just repeating their well-known positions. The START talks, handled by another delegation working in the same quarters, were not much better. It was frustrating to see the expertise of negotiators like Yuli Kvitsinsky, Victor Karpov, Paul Nitze, Maynard Glitman and others being wasted on going round in circles. They often seemed frustrated, too. As Gorbachev would mention to me later, in his post-presidential years he was getting word from Geneva that lots of liquor was being drunk, at cocktail parties and privately.

Gorbachev's letter to Reagan proposed a "small, informal get-together with as few people present as possible," which later turned out to be not quite the case. Though not as elaborate as a state visit, a summit is always "a big deal," with a great deal of preparation and tactical maneuvering involved. Surprises are also practically unavoidable in the run-up to any summit meeting.

The big surprise — a real bombshell that could ruin plans for the meeting and poison the relationship for some time to come — came a few days before Foreign Minister Shevardnadze annual visit to the United States to attend the session of the United Nations General Assembly. A meeting in Washington with President Reagan and talks with Secretary of State Shultz were scheduled, and we had word from Washington that the idea of an informal summit 'midway from Moscow to Washington' (in London or Reykjavik, Gorbachev suggested) would not be rejected, though the Americans had previously insisted on a full-scale summit "without preconditions."

However, on the eve of Shevardnadze's departure for New York, a Soviet official at UN Secretariat, Nikolay Zakharov, was arrested in New York on charges of spying. It was not done quietly, in a way that would have made it possible to expel the man and avoid complications. The arrest was covered in the U.S. media in a big way, which was bound

to arouse anger and suspicion in Moscow. In an obvious retaliation, Nicholas Daniloff, the well-known reporter for U.S. News and World Report, was arrested in Moscow.

As the Soviet delegation was leaving on a special flight to New York there was every indication that the incident might develop into a full-scale confrontation. The mood among the diplomats on the plane was rather pessimistic. Everybody seemed to believe that it could doom the effort to arrange the Gorbachev-Reagan summit and embitter the relationship for a long time to come. The reporters' first question to Shevardnadze as he left his plane in New York was about the Zakharov-Daniloff affair. Shevardnadze handled it diplomatically but his concern was obvious.

The talks in New York with Secretary Shultz went better than most of us had expected. By that time, the two men had established a rapport that allowed them to discuss quietly and without rancor even the matters that obviously upset both of them. But the underlying tension was unmistakable. Shultz indicated that the idea of an informal summit might be acceptable but only if the Daniloff matter were cleared up first. He strongly insisted that Daniloff's arrest had no justification and that there could be no bargaining.

The meeting in Washington with President Reagan also went better than expected, and I said so when Shevardnadze asked me about my impression. It was a real one-on-one, with only the interpreters present. I felt it was only natural and logical that Reagan reiterated the American position on the espionage matter, but he did not put it very too and his remarks on other matters seemed rather constructive. He did not reject the idea of a meeting with Gorbachev.

A complete record of the conversation with the President was sent to Moscow. Shevardnadze had to weigh his words very carefully, because he had to look firm in both capitals — for different reasons, of course. Shultz was in a similar predicament. Both men had a limited range of options, and both wanted to find a way out. So bargaining was inevitable, despite the fact that both had no taste for it.

Discussions on the Zakharov-Daniloff affair went parallel to the talks on arms control and regional issues. Much of the work was done by Bessmertnykh and Roz Ridgeway, Shultz's deputy for European and Soviet affairs, but Shevardnadze and Shultz also had to spend an inordinate amount of time on the espionage issue, particularly in the final stages, when the name of Yuri Orlov came into the picture. Orlov, a physicist and a friend of Dr. Andrei Sakharov, had been jailed and sent into internal exile in the 1970s. Bringing him into the discussion and the final resolution of the issue was important for the U.S. side as part of the effort to make sure that the release of Zakharov and then Daniloff does not look like a 'spy swap.' I think Shevardnadze understood that and played along. Of course, in a few months' time all remaining Soviet political prisoners and exiles were to be released.

In the end, Zakharov was let go after a court hearing in New York at which the judge stated that he believed the man was guilty but was dismissing the case at the request of the administration. Daniloff was released at about the same time, and Orlov a few days later.

I did not have much sleep those days. The record of every conversation between Shevardnadze and Shultz had to be made immediately, to be cabled to Moscow. It often takes twice as much time to produce a full record than the talk lasts. But the effort was worth it: we were returning to Moscow with a date sent for the Reykjavik meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan.

I am discussing these "preliminaries" in some detail because contemporary context matters. Things can go terribly wrong when each side thinks it is right. There was still a huge deficit of trust between the Soviet Union and the United States at the time. "Trust but verify" is a nice Russian proverb that President Reagan liked to cite, and a useful guide in relations between great powers. I think both parts of it are equally important. It was only in the final months of the Reagan administration that a certain degree of trust was built, and Reykjavik was an important milestone in that process.

Reykjavik does not look very hospitable in mid-October. And Hofdi House, a small residence in which the talks were held, could hardly accommodate the delegations that came along. The two delegations were given small rooms on both sides of the main living room in which the principals were meeting, but space was so limited that some of the work had to be done in corridors and on staircases. Quite a few things at the meeting did not go as expected, as often happens during historic events. What one can say, though, is that the two men did make an honest effort to turn things around, and it was indeed history in the making.

Gorbachev and Reagan started off one-on-one, with Shultz and Shevardnadze in an adjoining room discussing the overall relationship and the accumulated range of issues. In about half an hour word came from the room where the two leaders were talking that the foreign minister and the secretary of state were being invited to join them. When they did the two leaders were in an amicable mood but Reagan seemed somewhat confused by the details of arms control. The talks continued in a two-on-two format until the dramatic finale.

Gorbachev had started by proposing to Reagan a simple deal on strategic arms: a 50 percent cut in all categories, including land-based heavy missiles. This was a big step to accommodate the U.S. position, since previously the Soviet Union had insisted on the so-called "freedom to mix" within the overall ceilings on the number of missiles and warheads. Of course, it was a far cry from the U.S. demand for a ban on heavy land-based missiles but an important shift nevertheless (eventually, in the START treaty signed by Gorbachev and George Bush, the matter was resolved on the basis of Gorbachev's proposal). Gorbachev also proposed that the two sides limit their strategic defense programs to research conducted "in laboratories." Since President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative called for testing and deployment, not just research, it was clear that the different positions on missile defense could become an obstacle to agreement.

We now know that the idea of a "global missile shield" as envisioned by Ronald Reagan never came to fruition, but at the time it was



not clear how realistic that prospect was. There was also concern on the Soviet side that space weapons, for example laser weapons, could be used to strike land-based targets. That later turned out to be misplaced, and in Reykjavik I heard physicist Yevgeny Velikhov, a member of the Soviet delegation, say that this was technically extremely difficult and impossible from the cost-benefit standpoint. Though the importance of SDI was probably exaggerated, for the Soviet side, particularly the military, missile defense was the most sensitive issue, and Gorbachev had to tread very carefully.

Reagan spent some time explaining his arguments for SDI, emphasizing that he did not want it be seen as a threat to the Soviet Union and that its goal was to make nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete." Gorbachev replied that if both sides shared the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons it made no sense to "start a new arms race in space." To that Reagan replied with a relatively new line: that SDI was needed as kind of "gas mask," the ultimate protection against some "madman" even in a nuclear weapons-free world. He also said that the United States would be prepared to share missile defense technology with the Soviet Union. "I may believe you, Mr. President," Gorbachev replied, "but would you successors repeat the offer?"

By the end of the first day Reagan and Gorbachev had decided to ask their experts to consider the issues in light of their discussions. Gorbachev went back to the Soviet ship "Georg Ots", where he and his team were staying. He met with his team and asked me to read through my notes of the discussion with Reagan. I did so while everyone listened, and he commented from time to time on certain points.

The next morning, the negotiating teams reported that they had agreed on the general scheme of a fifty percent strategic arms reduction, which was more complicated than Gorbachev had proposed but still fairly simple and not overly technical. Zero INF missiles in Europe (later amended to global zero), proposed by Gorbachev, was immediately accepted by Reagan. It was missile defense, including the future of the ABM Treaty following a proposed ten-year non-withdrawal

period, that proved to be the main and indeed the only stumbling block to agreement in principle on all issues.

During the afternoon session on the second day of the talks, when Reagan said that he could not accept confining SDI research and testing to the laboratory, Gorbachev asked him why he would not consider it in combination with the elimination of all nuclear weapons, say, within ten years. To my surprise, Reagan answered that he would not be against the destruction of all nuclear weapons, including tactical and battlefield ones. "I would be happy if we agreed on that," he said, though probably still assuming that missile defenses were not incompatible with that position.

This seemed to be an improvisation, and I often wondered why Shultz did not try to gently "restrain" the President. A few years later, when George Shultz and Eduard Shevardnadze met informally in New York and reminisced about Reykjavik, the former secretary of state said: "When our leaders, each in his own way, began to speak of a world without nuclear weapons, the experts thought they were wrong and that this was a goal that could never be achieved. But the experts did not understand that Reagan and Gorbachev were on to something: both of them felt what people wanted in a profound way."

In the end, Reagan refused to accept any limit on SDI. He insisted that following a ten-year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty the United States would be free to start deployment. For Gorbachev, accepting that would amount to giving a green light to global missile defense. This he could not afford. The agreements on strategic offensive arms and INF missiles were left in abeyance because of that disagreement.

As Reagan and Gorbachev were leaving Hofdi House, the reporters shouted a couple of questions but Reagan's dejected face told the story. Shultz gave a gloomy press conference right afterward, saying that promising agreements had been discussed but fell through because Gorbachev had insisted on limiting SDI. But at his press conference held thirty minutes later Gorbachev took a completely different

line. He called the Reykjavik talks a breakthrough rather than a failure, because agreements had been reached on many issues and because for the first time the leaders of the two nuclear superpowers were discussing the possibility of destroying all nuclear weapons. "We'll now go back to our capitals," he said. "Let the President think. Let the U.S. Congress think. We too will think it over. And I am sure we must find a way to go forward."

The next morning, the Soviet delegation was leaving for Moscow. Shevardnadze invited me to sit in his car and I briefly talked to him. The foreign minister seemed upset over the fact that at the end of the Hofdi House talks Gorbachev said that since there was no agreement on missile defense the three areas of negotiations — START, ABM and INF — would have to remain tied together in a single package, i.e. no agreement until there is agreement on all three areas. The link between strategic offensive and defensive arms was obvious, but it would seem that INF could be taken out of the package in the interests of both sides, for a variety of reasons. As Gorbachev later recalled, the Directives approved by the Politburo for the Reykjavik meeting allowed him to decide "on the spot" whether the package be untied, and he thought it best for the time being not to do so. Soon afterwards, however, he agreed that an early agreement on INF was preferable, and the treaty was signed in Washington a year later, in December 1987. The treaty, which for the first time in history eliminated two categories of nuclear weapons, has been criticized by high-ranking officials of President Putin's administration but there has not been any serious talk of withdrawal from it: an admission that it is clearly in Russia's best interest.

So, in Reykjavik both men — Reagan and Gorbachev — stood their ground on the most contentious issue. It seemed at first that the arms control process was off track. But, despite a round of 'megaphone diplomacy' that lasted for a couple of weeks and the skeptical, to put it mildly, initial reaction of people like Henry Kissinger, Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterrand and others, the legacy of Reykjavik proved to be

lasting. The Reykjavik agreements on INF and START shaped strategic planning and arms reductions for years and decades to come. Though the idea of a simplified format of strategic arms reductions proved difficult to achieve (the START Treaty, finally signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush in 1991, contained hundreds of pages of protocols), it was substantially implemented in the New START Treaty signed by Presidents Obama and Medvedev in 2010, a much "leaner and cleaner" document reflecting the concept of "verification-lite." And, more importantly, though under current circumstances, when trust has collapsed between Russia and the United States, the idea of further arms reductions and of moving toward a nuclear weapons-free world may seem totally unrealistic, history may yet prove Reagan and Gorbachev right.

## 4. BETTER WAIT THAN NEVER: TRANSITIONING FROM BILATERAL TO MULTILATERAL STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTIONS

*Michael Krepon*<sup>13</sup>

### Introduction

The most extraordinary period in the history of nuclear arms reduction began at the Reykjavik Summit thirty years ago. Reykjavik set in motion the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the 1991 and 1993 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties that slashed force structure and stockpiles. It is worth returning to this period to consider the conditions that fostered success of this magnitude.

Extraordinary accomplishment was possible because leaders in the United States and Soviet Union saw themselves as change agents. They were unorthodox in their leadership styles and thinking. Mikhail Gorbachev was cut from new cloth. Margaret Thatcher understood this right away, but Ronald Reagan figured this out once he and Gorbachev spent time together. Gorbachev succeeded in his stated intention of taking away the enemy image of the Soviet Union.

The United States had never experienced anything America had never seen anything like Ronald Reagan — an anti-Communist and anti-nuclear president. Neither the Left nor the Right could believe

this was possible — until it became unmistakable at Reykjavik. The Right and some traditional arms controllers reacted by being appalled at the cavalier way that Reagan approached issues of nuclear deterrence and alliance management — as were U.S. allies operating under the nuclear umbrella.

Gorbachev and Reagan were equally dismissive of nuclear orthodoxy. They were both appalled by the size of their nuclear arsenals. They didn't want to dwell on targeting strategies or escalation ladders. They were not in thrall to the precepts of nuclear deterrence.

My sense is that, deep down, other U.S. and Soviet leaders felt the same way: that war-fighting plans were to be kept in locked safes, and that a nuclear war must never be fought and could never be won. But Gorbachev and Reagan said it out loud. They walked the talk. They acted on these core beliefs in ways that none of their predecessors and successors did.

These days feel very, very distant now. The United States and the Russian Federation are at loggerheads on many issues — including deeper, bilateral reductions in force levels. Moscow now holds the view that we are at the end of the road for bilateral reductions, and that others must now become engaged.

Transitioning from bilateral to multilateral strategic arms reductions will be a slow, difficult process. Conditions are far from conducive for success. Indeed, conditions are not even conducive for the next step in bilateral strategic arms reductions between the United States and the Russian Federation, even though both countries have good reasons to save money on excess force structure. Continued bilateral reductions by the two states possessing four-digit-sized nuclear arsenals is a necessary predicate to engagement with states with three-digit-sized stockpiles. If the bilateral process of strategic arms reductions breaks down, transitioning to a multilateral process becomes even harder. Trying to transition to a multilateral process of strategic arms reductions when the bilateral process is troubled and when states possessing three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals refuse to engage invites

<sup>13</sup> Michael Krepon — Co-founder of the Henry L. Stimson Center (former President and CEO, Henry L. Stimson Center; Legislative Assistant of the Capitol Hill, Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, United States).

failure. There is wisdom in the aphorism “better late than never.” Rather than rushing to failure, the best way to proceed is to work to repair US-Russian relations sufficiently to secure another round of bilateral strategic arms reductions, as envisioned under the 2010 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

## Engaging the Second Tier

Any transition from bilateral US-Russian strategic arms reductions to the engagement of states with three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals will be long and arduous. States that possess three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals — China, France, Great Britain, Pakistan and perhaps India — oppose joining such negotiations. Chinese officials, in particular, have long insisted that the United States and Russia must reduce down to their level before engaging in a strategic arms reduction process. For example, in a White Paper released in 2010, Beijing announced:

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons. China maintains that countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament. They should further drastically reduce their nuclear arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally-binding manner, so as to create the necessary conditions for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. When conditions are appropriate, other nuclear-weapon states should also join in multi-lateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. To attain the ultimate goal of complete and thorough nuclear disarmament, the international community should develop, at an appropriate time, a viable, long-term plan with different phases, including the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> China's National Defense in 2010. The People's Republic of China. Beijing. March 2011. Available at: [http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/1\\_1a.pdf?\\_ = 1316627912](http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/1_1a.pdf?_ = 1316627912) (accessed 9 October 2016).

The likelihood of bringing China into a process of strategic arms reductions would be even further reduced if India and Pakistan remain free to increase their nuclear capabilities. China seems intent to have greater nuclear capabilities than India, and Pakistan seems intent to have approximately the same, if not better nuclear capabilities as India. India is concerned with Chinese and Pakistani collusion on nuclear and missile programs.

The introduction of multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) by China is likely to produce cascading effects in India and Pakistan. The scale of MIRVing is likely to be modest in all three countries, but it would add impetus to a competition marked by the flight-testing of several new ballistic and cruise missile programs. The combined total increase in warheads by China, India and Pakistan over the next ten years — without accounting for MIRVs — is likely to grow by around 250, given current trends. Fifteen years from now, if current trends continue, the combined stockpiles of China, Pakistan and India could grow by about 375 warheads — again, assuming the continuation of current trends. Modest induction of MIRVed long-range missiles by China could increase these totals by perhaps 100 warheads over the next decade and a half.<sup>15</sup>

China and India are in the process of carrying out sea trials of a new class of ballistic missile-carrying submarines; all three countries can place warheads at sea on other platforms. All three states are flight-testing longer-range, land-based ballistic missiles. China and India are flight-testing missile defense interceptors, as well. These projected increases in nuclear capabilities would still place China, India and Pakistan far below US and Russian strategic forces since the two rising powers in Asia are moving at a relaxed pace relative to their economic

<sup>15</sup> See Krepon M. *The Lure and Pitfalls of MIRVs: From the First to the Second Nuclear Age*. Travis Wheeler and Shane Mason, eds. Stimson Center. Washington, DC. May 2016. Available at: <https://www.stimson.org/content/lure-and-pitfalls-mirvs-first-second-nuclear-age> (accessed 9 October 2016); Wheeler T. *China's MIRVs: Separating Fact From Fiction*. *The Diplomat*, May 18, 2016. Available at: <http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/chinas-mirvs-separating-factfrom-fiction/> (accessed 9 October 2016).

means. This pace is, however, likely to increase in the years ahead. Pakistan, on the other hand, is competing hard and, in some respects, is out-competing India, such as in new warhead production.<sup>16</sup>

Circumstances are not conducive for China, India and Pakistan to stop in place and accept a moratorium on strategic modernization, just as circumstances in the United States and the Soviet Union were not amenable to “stopping where we are” when both were contemplating MIRVed missiles and national ballistic missile defense systems.

The triangular, interactive nuclear competition among China, India and Pakistan is far less amenable to formal arms control arrangements than was the case, after extremely hard effort, between the nuclear superpowers. There is no meaningful strategic dialogue on nuclear issues, let alone negotiations, between China and India. A “composite dialogue” format exists within which India and Pakistan could discuss nuclear issues, but every time New Delhi seeks to improve prospects for dialogue, its efforts have been met by attacks on sensitive targets within India by cadres from groups that have found safe havens within Pakistan. The composite dialogue process remains on hold.

Prospects for dialogue in the near term, in which confidence-building and nuclear risk-reduction measures might be considered and agreed upon, are not good. And even if prospects improve in the near term, they are most unlikely to lead to moratoria on new missile induction or deployment. This interactive, triangular competition – in which the strongest and weakest countries maintain a strategic partnership against the middle power – is not amenable to formalized constraints. China barely deigns to discuss nuclear issues with India, India will not accept ratios that place it subservient to China or equal to Pakistan, and Pakistan will not accept ratios that place it subservient to India.

If Russia demands that China be included in subsequent strategic arms reduction talks and negotiations, then Russia will add all of these

seemingly intractable issues to those already bedeviling US-Russian relations. India and Pakistan will adopt the same approach as China, waiting for the states with larger arsenals to drop down to their levels and linking negotiations to the complete abolition of nuclear weapons.

If states with three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals in Asia are deemed necessary for inclusion in future strategic arms reductions, states with three-digit-sized arsenals in Europe would presumably be included, as well. France appears to be opposed to its inclusion, at least until US and Russian force levels are significantly reduced. France would likely be opposed to any effort that is linked to nuclear abolition – the condition that India and Pakistan would insist upon. Great Britain faces the greatest uncertainty among these seven states regarding the future of its nuclear deterrent and will likely act in close concert with the United States, in any event.

Another complication is Israel's nuclear arsenal, which might now be sized similarly to India's. Israel is usually excluded from conceptualizations of multilateral strategic arms reductions because of the presumption that the more attention its nuclear capabilities receive the more difficulties that will arise for the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But if states with four-digit-sized nuclear arsenals demand that states with three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals become part of a strategic arms reduction process, then it would be hard to ignore Israel.

Success in expanding upon an existing bilateral strategic arms reduction process to begin seven power talks – adding France, Great Britain, China, Pakistan and India (or eight power talks, if Israel is included) – would face extremely severe obstacles. Would the smaller nuclear powers be required initially to accept proportional reductions or accept moratoria on stockpile growth? Would reductions be in stockpile size or deployed forces? If moratoria were to be a starting point, how would they be monitored? If proportionate reductions are deemed necessary, what ratios might the parties agree upon from which drawdowns would occur? Would, for example, China, India and Pakistan agree to a hierarchy of nuclear weapon-related capabilities? Would India accept

16 See Dalton T., Krepon M. A Normal Nuclear Pakistan. Stimson Center. Washington, DC. August 2015. Available at: <http://www.stimson.org/content/normal-nuclear-pakistan-0> (accessed 9 October 2016).

a lesser status than China? Would Pakistan accept a lesser status than India? Would India demand compensation for the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan? Would all three states agree to forego deployments of multiple-warhead missiles? Would a declaration of the size of Israel's nuclear stockpile help or hinder efforts to establish a nuclear weapons-free and weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East? What impact might this have on the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

This list of difficult questions could be expanded. For example, would intrusive inspections be equally acceptable? Would states agree that short-range systems and their warheads be included in ceilings and subsequent drawdowns? Some states possess short-range systems; others do not. Some consider short-range systems to be strategic arms; others do not. Listing these questions — as well as others that could be easily brought forward — underlines how formidable the task of multilateral negotiations on reducing strategic offensive arms would be.

## A Cautionary History

The only example of multilateral "strategic" arms control we have to draw upon is the intra-war naval arms limitation treaties on capital ships involving the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy. The 1922 Washington Naval Treaty and the 1930 London Naval Treaty placed tonnage and numerical constraints on battleships, cruisers and aircraft carriers. These naval surface combatants constituted the strategic forces of that era — war-fighting capabilities that could transit long distances (albeit slowly) and appear offshore with big guns to influence outcomes.

It took heroic and creative diplomatic efforts by US Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes to persuade Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy to accept hierarchical ratios in the Washington Naval Treaty of 5-5-3-1.75-1.75 for tonnage on capital ships. These ratios were acceptable primarily because of severe budget constraints and public exhaustion with the enterprise of fighting and preparing to fight wars.

US Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson took up the challenge of revising and extending these limitations in the London Naval Treaty. The Treaty's most notable additions related to surface combatants of lesser tonnage, which were to be constructed along new 10-10-7 ratios among the United States, Great Britain and Japan. The London Naval Treaty also attempted to place constraints on submarine warfare while maintaining the status quo in the Pacific.

The process of multilateral treaty constraints on surface combatants lasted for fourteen years, until 1936 — the expiration date of the extended Washington Naval Treaty and the London Naval Treaty. The Government of Japan publicly announced at the end of 1934 that it did not intend to abide by treaty limitations past the 1936 deadline.

What does this thumbnail sketch of multinational naval arms control treaties have to tell us? First, multilateral accords cannot survive the national ambitions of signatories intent on changing the status quo that treaties seek to codify. Japan's militaristic leaders were intent on changing the status quo in the Pacific. Nor were naval limitations on submarine warfare consistent with the ambitions of a non-signatory, Germany, which was intent on upending a status quo in Europe based on the humiliating settlement imposed on Germany after its defeat in World War I. Even before Japanese and German ambitions became incontrovertible, they were evident in circumventions and outright violations of treaty provisions.

Wrenching consequences followed, resulting in World War II within the European and Pacific theaters. The United States and the Soviet Union joined in common cause to fight this war against Nazi Germany. After victory, they faced off in a Cold War across a divided Europe. For a brief period, conditions were conducive for significant strategic arms reductions and the retrieval of Soviet nuclear arms and delivery vehicles left behind in newly independent states after the break-up of the USSR. This phase of US-Russian relations was transitory and is now viewed as disastrous by the leadership of the Russian Federation. Bilateral relations are once again at a low point, with numerous subjects of contention.

The dramatic changes in relations between Washington and Moscow from one decade to the next suggest that bold plans for bilateral — let alone multilateral — strategic arms reductions be approached with caution. A long-term process of strategic arms reduction requires not just the absence of friction, but also sustained partnership among major powers. These conditions are not now in place with respect to relations between the United States and Russia, the United States and China, China and Russia, China and India, India and Pakistan, and Pakistan and the United States.

Indeed, in the near term, it will be difficult enough for the United States and Russia to improve relations sufficiently to proceed with the next step of strategic arms reduction under provisions allowed by the 2010 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty — even when these armaments appear to be in excess of military requirements and an unnecessary burden on defense budgets. Many roadblocks have been placed in front of taking this next step. And even if conditions change to facilitate further bilateral reductions, bringing other states with three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals into this process — whether to accept a moratorium on further increases or to accept proportional reductions in their strategic forces — seems most unlikely, as noted above.

## Necessary Conditions for Success

A successful process of multilateral, strategic constraints and reductions requires a longer timeline than the fourteen-year regime of naval limitations between 1922 and 1936. The absence of war between major powers is a necessary but insufficient condition for success. Another is the absence of intent to change the status quo in ways that adversely affect participating states. A long-term process governing nuclear arms control and reductions requires substantive and positive working relations among all the participants, the absence of issues that could lead to friction and crises, confidence among all states that reductions serve national security interests, and confidence that obligations will be properly implemented.

In other words, at the outset and throughout the duration of a long-term process of multilateral strategic arms reductions all participating states would need to be content with their obligations, whether they are moratoria or reducing their holdings of nuclear weapons. Any actions that corrode confidence among the parties that national security interests would be served would diminish prospects for success. The more unhappiness there is with the process, the more likely it is that the process will unravel.

Even more challenging, a long-term process of strategic arms reductions would eventually require changes in the status quo, as those in the first tier draw down toward second-tier arsenals, and as second-tier arsenals draw down toward much lower numbers. To succeed, all participating states would need to feel increasingly secure as they reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons and adapt to a new status quo.

Another complicating factor is that nuclear employment strategies vary among states possessing four- and three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals. The four-digit-sized nuclear powers have adopted “counterforce” targeting strategies that place at risk strategic and conventional military capabilities, along with targets within or nearby cities, such as with command and control nodes and war-supporting industry. China and India have, to date, been largely content with “countervalue” targeting strategies that seek to deter through the ability to inflict assured destruction of cities. As Chinese and Indian nuclear-related capabilities and stockpiles grow, the growth of target lists is likely to follow — to include more counterforce targeting. The stewards of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal have already articulated counterforce rationales for their shortest- and longest-range missiles.

If a long-term process of reductions is to be sustained over time, states with four-digit-sized nuclear arsenals would be obliged to scale back counterforce targeting, while states with three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals would be obliged either to forego or minimize counterforce targeting. For the top-tier, the challenge would be to accept constraints on warheads and launchers that are insufficient to cover targets previously deemed to be necessary — a change that would be reinforced as

reductions proceed. Second-tier states with three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals would be obliged to maintain limitations and then reductions in stockpile sizes that are insufficient to adopt counterforce targeting.

National and theater missile defenses pose another complication for a long-term process of both bilateral and multilateral strategic arms reductions. For states with a large landmass, like the United States, Russia, China and India, it is possible to distinguish between national and theater missile defenses as long as one is able to accurately assess the numbers and locations of missile defense interceptors, their effective ranges, and ancillary capabilities. These capabilities are also inherently limited by both their cost and their opportunity cost of deploying them in significant number. Missile defense systems have long been plagued by technical challenges, as it remains far easier for states with advanced technical capabilities to penetrate missile defenses than it is for defenders to block penetration. The advent of cruise missiles poses even more challenges and requires even greater expenditures for states seeking national or theater missile defenses.

Nonetheless, the long history of efforts by some to field and improve missile defenses has been accompanied by the concerns of others that technical challenges could be overcome. States with concerns over the effectiveness of their nuclear deterrents assert that deep cuts could only occur if missile defenses were strictly constrained. The offense-defense dynamic has so far been, in a way, self-regulating. Hence, if Russia strongly believes that further reductions cannot be undertaken because of present and prospective national and theater missile defenses, then the bilateral process of reductions will stall out.

After withdrawing from the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, it is unlikely that a future US administration will agree to formally constrain numbers and types of missile defenses. In the absence of the ABM Treaty, the United States has not pursued unlimited theater and national missile defenses. Instead, US decisions have reflected perceived missile threats to the United States and its friends and allies, as well as domestic political, budgetary and technical circumstances. The demarcation

agreement between theater and national ballistic missile defenses that was considered between the Kremlin and the Clinton Administration could have been useful in alleviating Moscow's current concerns, but reviving this agreement, like the ABM Treaty, is likely to be met with strong opposition on Capitol Hill. Nonetheless, it might well be worth resuming meaningful discussions about the capabilities inherent in US theater missile defenses and the extent to which they affect the viability of Russia's nuclear deterrent.

Sustaining a long-term process of strategic arms reductions would also require alleviating concerns whether precision conventional strike capabilities might nullify national nuclear deterrents. The advent of increased precision conventional strike capabilities is a given because these capabilities, unlike nuclear weapons, have demonstrated military utility. For this reason, among others, conventional arms control — especially relating to new technologies — is even harder to achieve than strategic arms control.

As with missile defenses, the advent of improved precision strike conventional capabilities is likely to be self-regulating — both with respect to the capabilities deemed necessary for national security and with respect to the effect these capabilities have on the willingness of any party to proceed with deeper cuts in strategic offensive arms. As with missile defenses, trying to formally link and constrain conventional capabilities with treaty-based strategic arms reductions is likely to result in the end of treaty-based reductions.

In addition to these formidable obstacles, all participating states would need to agree on the desired end-state, or goal of a long-term process of reducing strategic offensive arms. Is the desired end state abolition, or is it proportional reductions at low levels, leaving a hierarchy in place? Agreement on this central point might be very difficult to reach. States in the top tier would resist coming down to the second tier. States with three-digit-sized arsenals would continue to insist on an evening-out process over time. A long process of proportionate reductions would bring all participating states closer together — if political



and security conditions permit the process to proceed. As numbers become lower and as differentials are reduced, all state parties would become even more sensitive to potentially disruptive conditions.

Put another way, “linkage” — the sensitivity of an arms control and reductions process to events outside the scope of constraints — will be as unavoidable in multilateral strategic arms reductions as it was (and is) in bilateral negotiations between Washington and Moscow. Relations between the United States and the Russian Federation must improve for deeper cuts to happen — and for multilateral negotiations to proceed.

All relevant states in multilateral compacts must be willing to take actions that, at a minimum, do not defeat the objectives and purposes of the compacts reached. One possible path forward at the outset would be for states with the largest arsenals to reduce while states with smaller arsenals observe moratoria or accept limits to increased capabilities. Over time, obligations to reduce would be extended to those states observing moratoria or growing slowly. Questions of timing and the extent of reductions, the nature of moratoria or the extent of additional capabilities would be the subject of difficult negotiations. As noted above, success would depend on the maintenance of cooperative relations between the parties, a high degree of trust in the negotiating process, acceptance of a mutually accepted end state, and progressively increased confidence in shared obligations as the process moves forward.

## The Way Forward

The complications discussed above are extremely demanding and prospects for success appear remote. If so, why invite these complications — or at least try to address them — before doing so is absolutely necessary? Maintaining a bilateral strategic arms reduction process between the United States and the Russian Federation will be hard enough. If this bilateral process unravels, a multilateral process to include three-digit-sized arsenals is inconceivable.

As long as the differential between the strategic offensive nuclear forces of the United States and the Russian Federation on the one hand, and the second tier of states possessing nuclear weapons on the other remains quite substantial, and as long as there is no evidence that second-tier states intend to catch up to the United States and the Russian Federation, the least onerous path forward — at least over the next decade — would be to continue the process of bilateral strategic arms reductions, a process that could be accommodated by extending the 2010 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty until at least 2026.

Bilateral relations between the United States and the Russian Federation are very troubled at present, for reasons that do not require detailed enumeration. Moscow has expressed concerns about NATO expansion, US national and theater missile defenses as well as precision strike conventional capabilities, among other issues. Washington has expressed concerns about Russian actions around its periphery and compliance with treaty obligations, among other issues. Domestic constituencies in both countries are likely to take issue with extending START and agreeing to deeper cuts without addressing issues that lie outside the scope of this treaty. But if either side demands satisfaction on issues that have not been amenable to resolution for many years — and in some cases many decades — START might not be extended and further treaty-based bilateral reductions would go by the wayside.

It is preferable, at least in my view, to implement another round of bilateral reductions and to sustain START for another decade as conversations begin with states possessing three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals as to how they can facilitate a long-term process of multilateral strategic arms reductions. We will not be in a position to explore these possibilities if the process of treaty-based reductions in strategic offensive arms between the United States and Russia falls apart.

To insist on moving from bilateral to multilateral negotiations before circumstances permit is to invite failure at both the bilateral and multilateral levels. A long-term process of strategic arms reductions in the top tier alongside constraints followed by gradual reductions

among all states with three-digit-sized nuclear arsenals would be necessary for success. Conversely, a long-term process of strategic arms reductions in the top tier alongside substantial increases in strategic arms in the second tier is not sustainable. The top tier would have no interest in incentivizing the second tier to catch up with them.

## Conclusion

Conditions are not conducive to a formal process of multilateral strategic arms reductions. Given the difficulties and complications involved in multilateral strategic arms reductions, and given the wide disparity between the first and second tier states, it makes little sense to demand outcomes that are not achievable. If a long-term process of bilateral strategic arms reductions proceeds, engaging the second tier would be essential. But we are far from this stage. Nonetheless, success in bilateral strategic arms reductions is unlikely if second-tier states remain mere onlookers as states with four-digit-sized nuclear arsenals reduce. They, too, would have responsibilities to avoid actions that defeat the objectives and purposes of a long-term process of strategic arms reductions.

To demand a shift from bilateral to multilateral strategic arms reductions at this stage, when relations between the United States and the Russian Federation are poor, and when there is a great distance between the nuclear capabilities of states with four- and three-digit-sized arsenals — is to invite failure in bilateral, treaty-based reductions and in transitioning to multilateral reductions.

