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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 16, 1986

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 232

PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEXT NST NEGOTIATING ROUND (S)

The next round of the Nuclear and Space Talks (NST) are scheduled to begin on September 18, 1986, in Geneva. This National Security Decision Directive provides guidance to assist in completing preparations for this upcoming negotiating session. (U)

START

In the area of strategic offensive nuclear forces, I remain firmly committed to seek the immediate implementation of the principle of a fifty percent reduction, on an equitable and verifiable basis, of existing strategic arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. The central provision should be reduction of strategic ballistic missile warheads. However, if necessary, I am prepared to consider initial reductions of a less sweeping nature as an interim measure. (S)

In this context, along with specific limits on ballistic missile warheads, we should be prepared to limit long-range air-launched cruise missiles to below our current plan, and to limit the total number of ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers to a level in the range suggested by the Soviet side in June 1986. Such reductions should take into account differences among systems in a manner which enhances stability. These reductions should begin as soon as possible and be completed within an agreed period of time. (S)

INF

We should seek to deal with the question of intermediate-range nuclear missiles by agreeing on the goal of eliminating this entire class of land-based, LRINF missiles world-wide and by agreeing on immediate actions that would lead toward this goal in either one step, or, if the Soviets prefer, in a series of steps. Soviet reactions regarding intermediate range nuclear missile systems suggest to me that General Secretary Gorbachev and I were heading in the right direction last November when we endorsed the idea of an interim INF agreement. While an immediate agreement leading to the elimination of long range INF missile systems throughout the world would be the best outcome, an interim approach, on a global basis, may prove the most promising way to achieve early reductions. (S)

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Both sides have now put forward proposals whose ultimate result would be equality at zero for our two countries in long range INF missile warheads. If we can also reach agreement that such equality is possible at a level above zero, we would take a major step towards the achievement of an INF agreement. We should seek such an interim agreement without delay. It is important that reductions begin immediately and that significant progress be achieved within an agreed period of time. (S)

DEFENSE AND SPACE

The United States has no interest in seeking unilateral advantage from its program of research into the feasibility of advanced strategic defenses. To ensure that neither the United States or the Soviet Union is in a position to do so, I would like to be prepared to conclude an agreement incorporating the following limits:

(a) While it may take longer to complete such research, both sides would confine themselves, through 1991, to a program of research, development and testing, which is permitted by the ABM Treaty, to determine whether, in principle, advanced reliable systems of strategic defense are technically feasible. Such research and development could include testing necessary to establish feasibility. In the event either side wishes to conduct such testing, the other side shall have the right to observe the tests, in accord with mutually agreed procedures. (S)

(b) Following this period, or at some later future time, either the United States or the Soviet Union may determine that advanced systems of strategic defense are technically feasible. Either party may then desire to proceed beyond research, development, and testing to deployment of an advanced strategic defense system. In anticipation that this may occur, we would be prepared to sign a treaty now which would require the party that decides to proceed to deploy an advanced strategic defense system to share the benefits of such a system with the other providing there is mutual agreement to eliminate the offensive ballistic missiles of both sides. Once a plan is offered to this end, the details of the sharing arrangement and the elimination of offensive ballistic missiles would be the subject of negotiations for a period of no more than two years. (S)

(c) If, following the initial period and subsequent to two years after either side has offered a plan for such sharing and the associated mutual elimination of ballistic missiles, the United States and Soviet Union have not agreed on such a plan, either side will be free to deploy unilaterally after six months notice of such intention is given to the other side. (S)

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The Soviets continue to express concern that research on advanced defensive systems could lead to the deployment of spaceborne systems designed to inflict mass destruction on earth. This is not our intention, nor is such an outcome a necessary result of such research. Although both nations are already party to agreements in force that address this subject, to further allay Soviet concerns I wish to be prepared, in the context of the approach outlined above, to have our representatives discuss additional assurances that would further ban deployment in space of advanced weapons capable of inflicting mass destruction on the surface of the earth. (S)

Significant commitments of this type with respect to strategic defenses make sense only in conjunction with the implementation of immediate actions on both sides to begin moving toward our common goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The process must begin with radical and stabilizing reductions in the offensive nuclear arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union. (S)

#### ACTION

Instructions for the next round of NST negotiations shall be prepared based on the foregoing guidance. In addition, it is important that we ensure our progress in related areas is consistent. The following additional guidance is therefore provided: (C)

#### Nuclear Testing

In the area of nuclear testing, it is the long-standing U.S. position that a safe, reliable and effective nuclear deterrent requires testing. Thus, while a ban on such testing remains a long-term U.S. objective, I cannot see how we could move to a complete ban under present circumstances. Our immediate objective remains prompt agreement on verification procedures to permit moving forward on ratification of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty. I believe, however, that following ratification of these treaties, we should be prepared to consider further limitations on nuclear testing in parallel with actual reductions in strategic nuclear arms. (S)

In order to be prepared for such consideration, I request the Department of Energy, assisted by the Department of Defense and other agencies as appropriate, to conduct a technical review, based on the work recently completed by the Arms Control Support Group (ACSG), of how a scheme involving a decreasing numerical quota of nuclear tests could be structured to preserve flexibility to conduct essential U.S. testing and provide for an

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acceptable level of verification. At the same time, I request the Department of Defense, assisted by the Department of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, to resolve the policy issues associated with this scheme, as identified in the ACSG work, and to assess its potential impact upon the ability of the United States to meet its national security requirements. Both studies should be conducted on a close-hold basis and completed by September 8, 1986. Guidance on this point supercedes the suspense directed for such studies in NSDD 233 (distributed on a limited basis only). (S)

SALT II Numerical Limits

I remain fully committed to my May 27 decision that, in the future, the United States must base decisions regarding its strategic force structure on the nature and magnitude of the threat posed by Soviet strategic forces and not on standards contained in the SALT structure which has been undermined by Soviet noncompliance. SALT II was a flawed agreement which was never ratified, which would have expired if it had been ratified, and which continues to be seriously violated by the Soviet Union. The SALT I interim offensive agreement was unequal, has expired and is also being violated by the Soviet Union. (U)

I indicated on May 27 that I intended to continue deployment of U.S. heavy bombers with cruise missiles beyond the 131st aircraft as an appropriate response, without dismantling additional U.S. systems as compensation under the terms of the SALT II Treaty. Since the United States is retiring two Poseidon submarines this summer, we will remain technically in observance of the terms of the SALT II Treaty until that event near the end of this year. (U)

The Secretary of Defense is requested to inform me in advance of the exact timing of any action which would result in exceeding SALT II limits. (S)

SCHEDULE

In order to permit time for review and allied consultation as appropriate, specific proposals for instructions to the NST delegation, based on the foregoing guidance, should be submitted for my approval not later than September 9, 1986. (C)

*Ronald Reagan*

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