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June 14, 1983

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 98

U.S. APPROACH TO START NEGOTIATIONS - VI (X)

Three full rounds of negotiations on START are now behind us. It is my judgement that these rounds have been useful and have permitted us to cover necessary ground. However, due largely to Soviet rigidity, we have not yet made meaningful progress on the central issues. I remain firmly committed to take whatever steps are necessary to increase the likelihood of real, substantive progress towards an agreement which involves significant reductions in U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals and which promotes the national security interests of both sides. Above all, our goal is to maintain a stable nuclear balance at reduced levels of forces in order to reduce the risk of war. All of our efforts in START must be guided by this principal objective. (X)

The report of the Commission on Strategic Forces headed by General Scowcroft offers us a new opportunity for progress. It has provided a consistent and coherent framework to guide our thinking about the fundamental elements of our national security policy, deterrence, defense and arms control. But, more than that, it has provided the basis for renewed, bipartisan support for that policy. To capitalize on this critical opportunity, I have decided upon the following additional guidance. The purpose of this guidance is to change the U.S. START position to bring it more into line with the Scowcroft Commission's recommendations and to provide additional flexibility to our negotiator in pursuing basic U.S. goals in these negotiations. (X)

LIMITS ON DEPLOYED BALLISTIC MISSILES

Our primary aim and most immediate focus is to reduce the threat posed by the most destabilizing systems, namely, ballistic missiles, and especially ICBMs. To achieve that aim, measures that constrain the number and the destructive capability and potential of ballistic missile warheads remain the most valid units of account. Our proposed limit of 5,000 total ballistic missile warheads with no more than one-half of these on ICBMs remains the central element of the U.S. START position. (X)

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by S. Tilley, National Security Council

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Our current START position includes an associated constraint which limits each side to no more than 850 deployed ballistic missiles. This measure was never viewed as being as useful a constraint as the limit on total ballistic missile warheads. The Scowcroft Commission report suggested specifically that it should be reassessed since the Commission felt it not to be compatible with a desirable evolution toward small, single warhead ICBMs.

However, there are other considerations which argue for a retention of some limit on deployed missiles. The Soviets are in a better position to deploy large numbers of additional small missiles than we. Elimination of such limits would also impact upon our ability to constrain Soviet refire capability and may make the pursuit of a greater emphasis on the contribution of strategic defense more difficult. Additionally, having limits only on missile warheads, and not on the missiles carrying those warheads, would establish certain precedents that may not be in the U.S. interest with respect to the treatment of bombers and bomber armament. Also, the Soviet Union continues to show an interest in deployed missiles as a unit of account. (X)

Acting upon the Scowcroft Commission's recommendation, the U.S. will adjust our position with respect to limits on deployed ballistic missiles by relaxing its current proposal for an 850 deployed ballistic missile limit. The U.S. will propose, during the next round, a new limit on deployed ballistic missiles at a higher equal level (up to 1250), and will indicate to the Soviets that the U.S. has some flexibility with respect to agreement on the specific level. (X)

THROWWEIGHT

It remains the firm U.S. position that the destructive capability and potential of ballistic missile warheads must be addressed in START. Constraints on ballistic missile throwweight provide an appropriate mechanism for limiting this destructive capability and potential. Our current position includes a network of collateral constraints immediately applied to address this issue, leading later to the application of direct limits on throwweight. (X)

Some have complained that this network of collateral constraints (including the limits on ICBM warheads at 2500, on heavy ICBMs at 110, and on the total of heavy and medium ICBMs at 210) is designed to dictate Soviet force structure according to U.S. standards. This is not the case. I believe, as does the Scowcroft Commission, that stability can be increased by limitations on heavy ICBMs. However, the purpose of the network of collateral constraints that we have proposed is to find an appropriate way to reduce the large asymmetry in ballistic missile throwweight, and thus in the destructive capability and potential of ballistic missile warheads, that now exists between the ballistic missile forces of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. I intend this to later lead to direct and equal limits on ballistic missile throwweight. (X)

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I do not wish to alter our objectives in this area at this time. However, it is essential that our negotiator make absolutely clear the legitimate concerns we hold and the intentions behind the specific constraints that we have proposed to date. Further, the U.S. negotiator should flexibly explore with the Soviets all appropriate avenues for meeting our objectives in this area. ~~XX~~

To support this process, the START Interagency Group should conduct a short study focused at answering the following two questions:

(1) What contribution to the constraint of ballistic missile destructive capability and potential could be made by various possible restrictions imposed on ballistic missile modernization? For example, what would be the impact of limiting new or modernized ballistic missile reentry vehicles for MRVed or MIRVed missiles to less than 225 kg in weight and those developed for single RV missiles to 400 kg in weight? How quickly would the impact of such restrictions be felt on the Soviet Union? ~~XX~~

(2) If the various alternative approaches to constraining ballistic missile throwweight on both existing and future forces were applied beginning in 1984, what would be the effect on estimated U.S. and Soviet throwweight levels on a year by year basis? This analysis should be based on a comparison of current U.S. force planning against two Soviet force structures: one which represents our best estimates of current Soviet plans, and one which estimates Soviet force structures should they attempt to maximize their ballistic missile throwweight under the alternative approaches in question. ~~XX~~

This study should be completed by July 15. ~~XX~~

In addition, the detailed study on the treatment of Sea Launched Cruise Missiles initially tasked by NSDD-78 should also be finalized and provided by July 15. ~~XX~~

THE BUILD-DOWN CONCEPT

The work currently in progress exploring how the build-down concept can be best applied within the U.S. approach to strategic arms reduction must continue on a priority basis. A final version of the paper previously tasked on this subject, and suitable to support an update briefing to Congress, should be completed by July 8. ~~XX~~

This Decision Directive supplements NSDD-33, NSDD-36, NSDD-44, NSDD-53, and NSDD-78. ~~XX~~

Ronald Reagan

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