

CYRUS VANCE

HARD CHOICES

CRITICAL YEARS
IN AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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SALT II
AND U.S./USSR

U.S.-SOVIET TENSIONS

DURING 1978, I was increasingly involved in the struggle to halt the growing polarization of U.S.-Soviet relations. Despite repeated top-level decisions not to link Africa and other Third World issues to our bilateral relationship with the Soviets or to the SALT negotiations, political pressures were building for the president to appear tougher. Although Carter refused to slow down the negotiations, some of his advisers were less concerned about progress in SALT than in sending signals to the Soviets that their international activities were damaging U.S.-Soviet relations and that the administration was responding firmly.

The next SALT session with Brezhnev and Gromyko was planned for April 20-22 in Moscow. Early in April, I stressed to Dobrynin the political importance of making progress. He replied that the Soviets viewed this trip as crucially important. The Soviets had reacted badly to the president's March speech at Wake Forest University when he had warned them to show greater restraint. In Moscow, the Soviets were taking stock of U.S.-Soviet relations. I hoped to use the April talks to pave the way to resolving the remaining issues in the SALT negotiations. Warnke and I wanted to map out a negotiating strategy that would lead to a summit on SALT, perhaps as early as the summer. Before I left for Moscow, Warnke described our positions to Dobrynin and probed for areas of Soviet movement.

Despite our efforts and some Soviet flexibility, the Moscow talks did not produce a major breakthrough. The escalating public rhetoric and the talk about linkage were having a political impact on the negotiating

climate, as well as on the willingness of the administration to consider adjustments in U.S. positions in return for Soviet concessions. However, important progress was made. The Soviets agreed to our proposal of 1,200 for the MIRVed missile launcher ceiling, while we accepted their proposed 2,250 strategic nuclear delivery vehicle ceiling. We also made some progress on limiting new types of ICBMs. Most important, especially in light of the recent ERW shock to NATO, we settled the noncircumvention issue on our terms. The Soviets dropped their demand for a prohibition on the right to transfer systems and technology limited by the treaty in favor of our general clause prohibiting circumvention of the obligations of the treaty "through any other state or states."

Ironically, the April Soviet acceptance of a reduction of the Vladivostok ceiling and the new ceiling on MIRVed missiles was characterized by SALT opponents as a U.S. compromise, which was nonsense. To reach 2,250, the Soviets would have to eliminate over 250 systems; we would not have to eliminate any American systems. The same was true of the 1,200 figure: we would not have to dismantle any U.S. systems to stay within that number, and the 1,320 combined ceiling on the MIRVed missiles and ALCM-carrying heavy bombers gave us 120 "free" bombers so equipped. In contrast, the Soviets, without a comparable cruise missile program, would be unable to make use of the 1,320 combined ceiling and would be limited to 1,200 MIRVed missile launchers.

Despite such a favorable outcome, several Republican senators issued a statement on May 3 attacking the administration for "a frightening pattern of giving up key U.S. weapons systems for nothing in return." They claimed the emerging agreement represented a retreat from the March comprehensive proposal, and described as U.S. concessions what in fact were Soviet moves toward our own positions. I did not want to write off any senators, but the president was probably right when he told me that many Republicans, as well as Democratic Senator Henry Jackson, were going to oppose the treaty no matter what was in it.

My own soundings of pro-SALT senators revealed mixed feelings. Many hoped that a SALT ratification fight could be postponed until after the November congressional elections. This was not a good sign. It suggested that these potential supporters would feel compelled to take a hard line on U.S.-Soviet relations, and by extension, on the SALT negotiations, for their own political survival. A few, however, believed that the sooner we could get the treaty before the Congress, the sooner the gloves would come off and the pro-SALT forces could take the offensive. I was convinced that this latter view was right.

On May 25, after saying he did not favor a direct linkage between SALT and other issues in U.S.-Soviet relations, the president said that Soviet human rights abuses and their involvement in Africa were harming the chances that a SALT agreement would be ratified. Moscow seemed unable or unwilling to grasp the political message the president

was sending, or the responsibility it bore for domestic hostility toward the Soviets.

I was troubled by the continuing erosion of U.S.-Soviet relations and the prospect of a further deterioration in the coming months. I felt that I must go directly to the president. I sent him a long letter outside the regular bureaucratic channels, warning him that an intense mood of hostility toward the Soviet Union was building in the United States. This mood, I believed, arose at least in part from domestic impatience with the complexity and intractability of international problems. It was heightened by the high level of Soviet involvement in Africa and perceptions that the United States had become militarily weaker and less resolute and that the administration seemed divided and uncertain. I recommended strongly that we prepare and circulate clear guidelines on our policies and that all members of the administration use them to dispel these perceptions.

I observed that the Soviets too seemed to be increasingly disturbed by the direction of the U.S.-USSR relationship. They were displaying a deepening mood of harshness and frustration at what they saw as our inconsistency and unwillingness to deal with them as equals. They purported to believe their actions in Africa were within the bounds of acceptable competition; they felt our human rights efforts were aimed at overthrowing their system; they saw our behavior as unpredictable; and they were growing uncertain whether we still wanted a SALT Treaty. I believed that the hostility could lead to new Soviet hard-line actions to which we would be compelled to respond, imperiling our relations at a critical period when a leadership change in Moscow seemed possible in the near future. The increase in U.S.-Soviet tensions might set the tone and direction of U.S.-Soviet relations for a long time to come.

I urged the president not to accept the counsel of those who wanted to intensify the tensions for domestic political reasons or for transitory foreign policy gains. I conceded that there might be a favorable political boost in doing so in the short term, but pointed out that in the long run, the president's natural center constituency would react negatively to an intensified arms race, renewal of cold war tensions, and a diversion of resources from domestic social programs.

I suggested that the administration needed to take several steps to maintain a coherent strategy:

1. As Harold Brown was recommending, we should undertake a prudent increase in our defense spending and continue our efforts to strengthen NATO to preserve the military balance.
2. As a complement, we should conclude the SALT II Treaty to stabilize the strategic competition. I was convinced that with proper preparation and a major effort by the entire administration, the agreement would be ratified.

3. We should review the application of our human rights policies toward the Soviet Union. It was clear there was a critical point beyond which our public pressure was causing the Soviets to crack down harder on Soviet dissidents.

4. We should be careful how we managed the U.S.-PRC-USSR triangular relationship and should avoid trying to play China off against the Soviets.

5. We should accept the fact of competition with the Soviets, and we should not link Soviet behavior in the Third World to issues in which we had so fundamental an interest as SALT.

6. With respect to Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa, we should strive to deter further Soviet and Cuban adventures, using our many instruments of influence: diplomatic pressure; strengthened ties with Third World states; and increased economic and military aid to key countries.

7. In our public statements, we should project a sense of confidence and consistency, and give greater emphasis to our strengths. We held most of the cards in the East-West competition.

I recommended finally that the president give a major speech on U.S.-Soviet relations in which he would realistically describe our policy for regulating a basically competitive relationship with the Soviet Union.

I believe my advice coincided with the president's inclinations. He had said consistently and from the beginning of his administration that one of his first priorities was to improve U.S.-Soviet relations. Although he had skirted close at times, Carter had resisted the politically easy way out of linking the SALT negotiations to overall U.S.-Soviet relations or to Soviet actions in Africa. But the political pressures on him to be harder on the Soviets were intense and growing more so.

The president agreed to give a major address. He planned to deliver it at the Naval Academy commendement on June 7. I sent him a draft of a speech that emphasized the complex nature of the U.S.-Soviet relationship and the need for lowering political tensions on a reciprocal basis. Brzezinski also gave him a more confrontational draft. Carter drew from both, splitting the difference between the two poles of advice he was receiving. The end result was a stitched-together speech. Instead of combating the growing perception of an administration rent by internal divisions, the image of an inconsistent and uncertain government was underlined.

Our next talks with Gromyko took place in late May, when our relations with the Soviets were at their lowest point in several years. Gromyko and I had serious talks in New York on SALT issues, followed by stiff exchanges over African affairs. Gromyko met with the president and his senior advisers in Washington on May 27. Again, we concentrated on SALT. Almost unnoticed by the public, the Soviets made one of their most important concessions in SALT II: Gromyko agreed to accept a

freeze on the number of warheads that could be deployed on existing types of ICBMs. This meant that the Soviets could deploy no more than ten warheads on each SS-18 ICBM during the term of the SALT II Treaty, rather than the twenty to thirty warheads the missile was capable of lifting. This so-called "fractionation" freeze would also apply to the SS-17 and SS-19 intercontinental missiles.

Gromyko and Carter, however, had acerbic exchanges over Africa and human rights. The president underlined Soviet and Cuban involvement in Shaba and the Horn and pointed to the fact that our information indicated Soviet personnel were directing military operations. Gromyko rejected them as "myth." The president, he said, was being given "fantastic" information. Carter was furious; he felt he was being deceived by Gromyko.

I met again with Gromyko in New York on May 31. We discussed at length the reasons for the deterioration in U.S.-Soviet relations. Gromyko began by asking about the "explosion" of anti-Soviet rhetoric in the United States and said that what Moscow feared was a return to a cold war atmosphere. I told him there were three reasons for the downturn: the Soviet arms buildup, Soviet and Cuban actions in Africa, and human rights abuses in the Soviet Union. I also said that we did not seek a return to cold war tensions, and that the most important way to get back on the track was to make progress in SALT.

Gromyko's response, particularly on Africa, was unyielding. He rejected our claims of Cuban involvement in Shaba, and adding a new entry on the list of U.S.-Soviet irritants, he strongly protested Brzezinski's briefing of the Chinese on SALT when he had been in Peking earlier that month.

In July, Gromyko and I met again, this time in Geneva. Once more, our discussions were clouded by Soviet human rights abuses. On May 30 we had canceled the proposed visit to Moscow of Joseph Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare, to protest the harsh sentence given to Yuri Orlov. Since then the Soviets had put the dissident Anatoly Shcharansky on trial and had arrested two American journalists and a businessman on trumped-up charges. I protested these actions vigorously. To underline our seriousness, the president had ordered the cancellation of visits to Moscow by two U.S. scientific delegations. Senator Jackson urged me to postpone my trip to Geneva to show our disapproval. Carter, though, had agreed with me that the Geneva SALT talks should not be delayed.

In spite of the tense mood, the foreign minister and I managed to make some further progress on the excruciatingly technical issue of limiting improvement of modernization of strategic missiles. In May, Gromyko had indicated the Soviets might accept either a flight-test and deployment ban on all new ICBMs or a ban on new ICBMs, except that each side could have one new ICBM but armed only with a single war-

head. These proposals were unacceptable. Both would have blocked our new MX program and the second would have permitted the Soviets to deploy the new single-warhead ICBM they had on the drawing boards. But now in July, Gromyko revised the proposal to ban flight-testing and deployment of all new ICBMs for the treaty period, except that each side could have one exception, MIRVed or non-MIRVed, as it chose. Again the Soviets had moved toward our position.

After further interagency analysis, we decided that the United States could accept a ban on flight-testing and deployment of new ICBMs with a single exception for each side. This would allow us to go ahead with the MX as our answer to the problem of ICBM survivability, while blocking all but one of the next generation of Soviet ICBMs. We decided to give up on trying to negotiate a similar ban on new sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with one exemption for each side. The Soviets wanted to make the Trident I SLBM, which was on the verge of deployment, our excepted missile, while theirs would be one that had still not even been flight-tested. This would have permitted them to continue their most advanced SLBM program, while ours, the Trident II, would have been prohibited. We could not agree.

The ICBM vulnerability issue arose again in the summer of 1978, this time because of our desire to ensure that the Soviets would have no basis in SALT to challenge the "multiple aim point" (MAP) basing modes we were considering for the MX. The Defense Department was analyzing various basing systems for the MX missile which depended in part on deceptive movement of the missile and canister launcher among a large number of shelters. As an aid to our ability to monitor Soviet compliance, we had insisted on a verification rule prohibiting "deliberate concealment" activities that would make satellite observation more difficult. In addition, the emerging SALT II agreement continued the SALT I ban on the construction of new fixed missile launchers. Thus, unless we established in advance that the mobile basing schemes we had under study were consistent with the provisions of the treaty, the Soviets might have a basis to raise a legal challenge.

When Paul Warnke met with Ambassador Dobrynin in July, he had said that the mobile basing schemes the United States was considering for MX were not precluded by SALT. However, in Geneva, the chief Soviet negotiator, Ambassador Vladimir Semenov, made an ambiguous statement that suggested Soviet reservations about our position. It was decided that I should restate our position in Moscow. To demonstrate that this was not a negotiating issue, Harold Brown also made a speech in late July to the American Legion Convention, stressing that the proposed treaty would allow mobile ICBM basing schemes of the kinds we were studying.

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As was his custom, Gromyko would be coming to the United States in September to attend the fall session of the UN General Assembly and he planned to visit Washington to meet with the president. I hoped that with proper preparation we might be able to repeat the progress made during Gromyko's previous visit. Carter hoped so too, and he authorized me to present a comprehensive negotiating package. This package, which Warnke described to the Soviets in a quick trip to Moscow on September 7-8, contained proposals to resolve virtually all the remaining major issues. Warnke told the Soviets we were ready for what negotiators call the "endgame," the final stage of negotiations in which the last remaining issues are resolved. He found Moscow skeptical.

The key elements of the package were: each side could test and deploy one new type of ICBM, MIRVed or non-MIRVed, during the term of the treaty (thus protecting the nascent MX program); no limits would be placed on SLBM testing and deployment (this would permit us to go ahead with the Trident II missile if we chose); there would be a freeze on the number of warheads carried on each type of existing MIRVed ICBM (which would prevent the Soviets from loading more warheads on their SS-17s, 18s, and 19s); and there would be a limit of ten warheads on the one new ICBM permitted under the new treaty (the maximum number we planned for the MX missile). The package also contained a limit of fourteen warheads on SLBMs (the maximum that Trident II could carry); a ban on mobile heavy missiles (in which we had no interest); and a number of highly technical constraints and definitions relating to cruise missiles. As to the Backfire bomber, Warnke was to make clear the political importance of a satisfactory resolution of two key issues: adequate Soviet assurances concerning the limits on its capabilities, and the rate of its production.

Our proposal for a ban on the testing and deployment of mobile launchers of heavy ICBMs was significant. There had been criticisms by SALT opponents during the hearings in the summer of 1977 that we had allowed the Soviets a unilateral right to heavy missiles. Up to September 1978, there was no prohibition against the deployment of heavy missiles on mobile launchers—only on the construction of new fixed silos for heavy missiles. Thus, had we wished, we could have retained the right under the SALT II agreement to test and deploy a heavy missile on mobile launchers. We asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff whether they wished us to protect this option in the negotiations. Their answer was that they had no interest in a mobile heavy missile for U.S. forces, but they wished us to close off this loophole to prevent the Soviets from exercising it.

On the eve of Gromyko's visit, there were modest grounds for hope that the erosion in U.S.-Soviet relations could be halted. African issues had receded, and the Soviets had taken several steps that suggested they wished to reduce the strain between us. The U.S. businessman who had

been jailed was released; Jewish emigration levels rose to the highest number in five years; recent trials of Soviet dissidents ended in relatively light sentences; and restrictions on U.S. newsmen in Moscow were eased. The Soviets also indicated through various channels that they expected and would not object to our establishment of diplomatic relations with China, so long as normalization was not portrayed as a move against the Soviet Union.

The administration had also taken some positive steps. We had approved a long-stalled license for high-technology oil drilling equipment, permitted the resumption of Soviet trade visits to the United States, and had indicated that Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal would go to Moscow in December.

Gromyko and I met in New York on September 27 and 28. I told him that I was speaking on behalf of the president and myself, and that we wanted to use his visit to the United States to resolve the remaining major issues. I reminded him that he knew what our proposal was from Warnke's visit to Moscow earlier in the month. Meeting privately, with only our interpreters present, I asked him to be prepared to remain in Washington after his meeting with the president so we could make full use of this negotiating opportunity.

We reviewed the state of negotiations on the outstanding issues. It was clear that the Soviets were still disturbed by our stance on cruise missile limits. In particular, the Soviets were upset by our proposal that an allowance be made for the fact that cruise missiles follow an evasive and circuitous flight path from the launching site to the target. The allowance was so large that it would have rendered the 2,500-km range limit on air-launched cruise missiles and the 600-km limit on ground-launched cruise missiles and sea-launched cruise missiles valueless. Gromyko offered to drop the 2,500-km range limit on ACLMs if we would agree to a strict (i.e., straightline) range limit on ground (GLCM) and sea-launched (SLCM) cruise missiles.

I concluded from these preliminary discussions that Gromyko might be flexible on the remaining issues if we would meet his government's concerns on ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles. I recognized that agreeing to tighter constraints on GLCMs and SLCMs in the protocol could raise problems with our allies, but I felt they would be manageable since we had made clear to both the Soviets and our allies that any cruise missile limitations would expire with the termination date of the protocol. We had also assured our allies that upon the signing of the SALT II agreement we would make a statement to the Soviets that we would not accept further limitations on U.S. systems designed primarily for deployment in Europe—including GLCMs—without appropriate limits on comparable Soviet theater nuclear weapons systems. I therefore concluded that we could agree to the proposed Soviet GLCM and SLCM range definitions without jeopardizing our allies' security interests.

On September 28 I sent a personal message to the president from New York saying that Gromyko's proposals confirmed my assessment that the Soviets were ready to resolve most of the remaining problems and complete a SALT II agreement. I asked the president to authorize me to develop a counterproposal he could put to Gromyko in Washington. "The actual conclusion of the SALT II agreement," I wrote, "will do more to build support for SALT II in the country and reduce the political divisions on this issue within Washington than a negotiation which would continue to drag on inconclusively, and thus raise doubts among the American people and with the Soviet leadership about the importance we attach to SALT." The president approved my recommendation.

The meeting between Gromyko and Carter produced some movement. The USSR agreed to drop the range limit on air-launched cruise missiles, permitting us to test and deploy them at unlimited ranges. (Later the Soviets dropped the 2,500-km limit on testing of ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles as well.) In return, we accepted a strict definition of the 600-km range limit on GLCMs and SLCMs in the protocol of the treaty. However, the Soviets would not give us the assurance against upgrading the Backfire bomber that we had proposed and refused to specify its exact production rate. As a counter, Carter told Gromyko that the United States reserved the right to deploy an aircraft comparable to the Backfire during the term of the SALT II Treaty.

To our disappointment, Gromyko did not remain in the United States to follow up on these talks as he had the previous fall. He returned immediately to Moscow.

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In late October, I went to Moscow. I told Gromyko bluntly that the Soviets had missed an opportunity to conclude a SALT Treaty. I said that the Russians did not seem to understand that Carter had made a serious attempt at the last meeting in Washington to make an agreement possible, particularly with our movement on cruise missiles. Cruise missile limits were politically and militarily difficult for us, but we had tried to meet Soviet concerns and had gone as far as we could, consistent with our security interests and those of our NATO allies. The Soviets should have understood the importance of this move, as well as our proposal of a comprehensive negotiating package.

The October Moscow talks produced little movement and resulted in a setback on the so-called "telemetry encryption" issue. The Soviets encoded some of the electronic signals from their missile tests. These signals contain information about the characteristics and performance of the missile. Our ability to collect some (but not all) of these signals or "telemetry" would be necessary for monitoring Soviet compliance with certain provisions of the treaty. Therefore, we had sought to ban encryp-

Semenov-Warnke understanding, pointing out that we were not seeking to ban all encoded telemetry, but only encrypted telemetry that impeded verification. Semenov, who was sitting across the table, interrupted and renege on his understanding with Warnke. I can only assume that he had been repudiated by his superiors in Moscow. Gromyko sharply denied that telemetry had anything to do with the treaty.

The problem was that Moscow did not understand what we were proposing. Despite repeated attempts to explain that we were proposing a ban only encryption of telemetry that impeded verification, the Soviets evidently believed we were attempting to get them to agree to a vaguely worded understanding that would allow us to challenge any Soviet telemetry encryption. They had concluded that this was what we were in fact after, and Semenov was made to recant. The negotiating record was now clouded, and the telemetry encryption issue was wide open again.

The next morning, while I met with Brezhnev and Gromyko, Warnke met with Deputy Foreign Minister Korynenko to underscore the critical importance of this issue to us and to put back together the earlier understanding. The discussion showed that what the Soviets wanted was an understanding that telemetry encryption was permitted *unless* it impeded verification. Both sides were groping toward the same end, except that the Soviets wanted to emphasize the permissibility of encryption, whereas we were trying to stress its restriction. It was a question now of finding precise language to bridge these two positions satisfactorily.

Before I left Moscow, I met with Brezhnev and conveyed to him Carter's personal wish for an early summit meeting. Brezhnev said that as much as he wanted to talk with the president, a summit was not possible until Gromyko and I had settled all the remaining issues on SALT.

Despite the slow progress in the September and October meetings and the continual discovery of additional technical issues, I still believed that there was a chance we could resolve most of the remaining "big" issues by the end of the year and hold a summit early in 1979. According to Dobrynin, the Soviet leadership also thought this would be possible. In Washington, we began to do some general contingency planning for a summit.

In the midst of preparations for the next SALT meeting, scheduled for late December 1978 and while I was in the Middle East, the president called me in Jerusalem. He told me that negotiations with the Chinese had been successfully concluded. He planned to make an announcement shortly that we had reached agreement with Peking to normalize relations and to receive a visit from Vice-Premier Deng at the end of January. Before I had left for the Middle East, we had agreed that if the negotiations in Peking were successful—as we were confident they would be—the announcement would be made on January 1, that is, one week after my discussions with Gromyko in Geneva.

I asked the President if it would be possible to hold up the announce-

tion of telemetry which impeded our ability to verify Soviet compliance with the SALT II agreement. The issue was intertwined with the highly sensitive area (for both sides) of intelligence collection on Soviet strategic forces. Given the traditional Russian obsession with secrecy, it was psychologically and politically painful for them to agree to accept our monitoring of Soviet missile tests.

Whatever Soviet military practices might be, the United States could not accept any ambiguity regarding our right to monitor missile telemetry, which was essential if we were to verify that the Soviets were living up to their obligations. There was too much mistrust of the Soviet Union to rely on Soviet good faith. We could not defend a treaty in the Senate that depended on unverifiable Soviet compliance with an important element of the treaty. There had to be a binding agreement that the ban on deliberate concealment contained in the SALT I agreement applied to the encoding of telemetry that was relevant to the SALT II Treaty. Before I arrived in Moscow, Paul Warnke had worked out in Geneva such an understanding with Vladimir Semenov, his opposite number as the chief SALT negotiator.

Stansfield Turner, director of the CIA, was dissatisfied with the understanding Warnke had reached with Semenov. He was afraid the Soviets were agreeing to what some called "an empty set"; that is, that they were merely saying that they would not encrypt telemetry relevant to the agreement, but that they did not actually concede that any telemetry related to provisions of the treaty. Turner preferred an outright ban on all telemetry encryption. But we could not tell the Soviets precisely what kinds of telemetry encryption actually interfered with our ability to monitor compliance with various SALT limitations. To do so would reveal too much about our intelligence capabilities.

On the other hand, I personally was convinced that a total ban was unfeasible and in some respects undesirable. The Soviets were correct in arguing that telemetry related to missile tests included considerable data not relevant to SALT limitations, and there was no prospect, in my judgment, that the Soviet military would provide information on its strategic forces that did not relate to SALT provisions. There was also the possibility that we ourselves might wish to encrypt non-SALT-related telemetry at some future date.

Because of the concern about the understanding worked out between Semenov and Warnke, it was decided that I should raise the telemetry encryption issue directly with Gromyko. I was reluctant to do this, partly because I believed Warnke had established a satisfactory negotiating record for challenging in the Standing Consultative Commission (a permanent SALT mechanism set up in SALT I precisely to deal with such compliance issues) any subsequent encrypted telemetry we believed impeded our ability to verify compliance.

I raised the matter at my next meeting with Gromyko. I reviewed the

ment until January 1, as we had planned. While the Soviets anticipated that we would be normalizing our relations with China soon, I thought it sensible to avoid this extra distraction in Geneva. It was certain to upset the Soviets. The president replied that he was concerned that the negotiations might become unraveled and said that he would go ahead with the announcement within the next forty-eight hours. I said I would return to Washington immediately to be present for the announcement.

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On December 15 the normalization announcement was made. With mixed feelings of hope and concern, we left for Geneva on December 20. Gromyko and I met between December 21 and 23 in Geneva. On the first day, our discussions centered on the outstanding major issues, especially telemetry encryption. I offered a draft of a common understanding that we believed reflected the essence of both sides' positions, but which began with language stressing the impermissibility of telemetry encryption whenever it got in the way of verification. Gromyko countered with language that stressed the right of each party to use telemetry encryption "provided that" it did not deliberately interfere with verification.

Gromyko wanted to remand the two proposals to the expert level for resolution. I opposed this because I was concerned that the issue would then drag on indefinitely. I wanted to crack this nut then and there. I told him I wanted to reflect on the issue overnight and would return to it the next day.

Later in the afternoon, when Gromyko raised for the first time in the negotiations the question of including remote pilotless vehicles (drones) in the treaty, my colleagues and I became uneasy. This was clearly a red herring, as these slow-flying reconnaissance vehicles were not a potential military threat. The very fact that they had not been mentioned before indicated the triviality of the matter. On the way back to the hotel from the meeting, Ralph Earle, Paul Warnke's successor, noted presciently that the incident might mark the beginning of an effort to drag out the negotiations.

December 22 was difficult. Gromyko's businesslike demeanor had changed; he was testy and showed none of his customary sardonic wit. He began our 10 A.M. session in the U.S. delegation building by reviewing in exhaustive detail a host of issues we had considered secondary and technical, best handled at the expert level. Then, when we had gathered again in the afternoon at the Soviet mission, Gromyko turned to the reason for his stiffness. It was China. As the Soviet leaders had been telling us for some time, he remarked, Moscow was not opposed to the establishment of full diplomatic relations between China and the United States. They were angered, however, by a reference in the U.S.-PRC joint communiqué to mutual opposition to "hegemony." ("Hegemony"

is a Chinese code word for describing Soviet global ambitions.) He was also angry about the announcement of normalization "at this time," just as he and I were about to conclude a SALT Treaty and arrange a U.S.-Soviet summit. The foreign minister asked me to tell the president that, "In the view of the Soviet leadership all this resembled some sort of political game on the broadest possible scale."

I replied that the president had repeatedly told the Soviet leadership that one of his central goals was to improve relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. I reiterated the president's personal assurance that normalization with the PRC was not aimed at the Soviet Union or anyone else. We did not intend to change our policy of refusing to sell weapons to either China or the Soviet Union, and we would be even-handed regarding the transfer of nonmilitary technology to the Soviet Union or China. For the moment, this ended the discussion of China.

Gromyko's lecture on China was not unexpected, but the emphasis he put on how normalization was taking place was troubling. The Soviets felt that the timing and the characterization of normalization were deliberately provocative and intended to be publicly perceived as such. On SALT III, we made some progress and appeared to be on the verge of resolving the telemetry encryption issue. At noon that day, Ralph Earle had given Ambassador Victor P. Karpov, chief of the Soviet delegation, suggested compromise language on telemetry encryption. I asked Gromyko for his reaction to our language. After a brief recess he said that with the addition of a phrase emphasizing the right to encrypt telemetry whenever it did not impede verification, the Soviets could accept the new language we had proposed.

I sent the text of the proposed understanding back to Washington that night with a request that I be authorized to resolve the issue on the basis of the compromise language. I felt we were about to break the back of the single biggest issue remaining.

Reports from Washington reflected optimism. Preparations were being made for a possible announcement the next evening that agreement had been reached on all significant remaining SALT issues, and that a Carter-Brezhnev summit would take place early in 1979. In our own contacts with reporters in Geneva we tried to curb any excessive optimism, but press reports from Washington reflected high-level backing that agreement was near.

The morning of December 23, I received from Washington the response to my request for further instructions on the issue of telemetry. It was relayed to me by Brzezinski at the meeting site in the Soviet Embassy on an open telephone line. Apparently a heated debate had gone on through much of the night, with Turner finally and reluctantly agreeing to the compromise language—though with a stipulation. I was instructed to inform Gromyko that telemetry encryption as practiced in certain recent Soviet missile tests would violate the ban on deliberate

concealment. Still, because it might reveal too much about our own intelligence capabilities, I could not explain what it was that was objectionable. Moreover, I was instructed to inform Gromyko that the president would reiterate this statement to Brezhnev at the summit. We were now demanding that the Soviets accept a compromise that would give us the right to challenge telemetry encryption under the treaty. We were also insisting that the Soviets concede, even before the treaty was in force, that past encryption practices would be in violation of it. Gromyko refused to respond to my statement.

By the time the Geneva talks ended we were close enough that I could tell the press we had agreed in principle to a summit. But because the Soviets had raised the secondary issues on December 22, and because of my statement on telemetry encryption on the twenty-third, we were far enough apart for Gromyko to state that there were still too many issues to resolve to set a date. Once again agreement had eluded us.

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The Geneva talks, because there had been reason to believe beforehand that we were close to agreement, raise difficult questions. Why did Gromyko toughen the Soviet position in Geneva, and why did it take another six months of almost weekly negotiating sessions with Dobrynin in Washington to settle the remaining issues?

I think that those of us at the political levels on both sides failed to appreciate how difficult and politically sensitive the so-called secondary issues would be, particularly in the incredibly complex area of cruise missiles.

Also, because of the erosion of U.S.-Soviet relations and the looming domestic political struggle over the SALT Treaty, virtually every remaining issue, however technical or abstruse, had to be considered by the Special Coordinating Committee and often by the president himself. Adjustments in the U.S. position had to be weighed in terms of how we could defend it against claims that what was in fact a rational negotiating compromise was a political "concession," made for the sake of getting a treaty.

The sudden surge of Soviet inflexibility in the winter of 1978-79 was due primarily to developments relating to China. It was not the substance of normalization, but the manner and timing of the announcement. The use of anti-Soviet code words such as "hegemony" in the language of the U.S./PRC communiqué, as well as some of the backgrounding of the press, stimulated visceral Soviet fears of a de facto U.S.-PRC alliance.

Soviet suspicions were exacerbated by stories in the Washington press at the beginning of the December Geneva talks which reported Gromyko had suggested we were planning a Carter-Brezhnev summit in mid-January—that is to say, about two weeks before Deng was to make a historic

visit to the United States. It was unlikely that the Soviets would agree to a U.S.-Soviet summit that would be upstaged, and they were predictably upset that we seemed to be taking for granted that Brezhnev would allow himself to be fitted into our schedule. Almost certainly, one of the main reasons Gromyko uncharacteristically raised the secondary issues at Geneva was to make sure that the negotiations would go on long enough to cause a considerable delay between Deng's visit and Brezhnev's attendance at a summit.

I do not believe that the completion of normalization of relations with China and the concluding of a SALT Treaty at about the same time was unwise or unfeasible, from either an international or domestic political standpoint. To the contrary, I believe that accomplishing these two fundamental objectives in close juxtaposition could have greatly strengthened both foreign and domestic perceptions that the administration was managing a balanced and stable triangular relationship among the United States, the PRC, and the Soviet Union. The problem arose from announcing normalization on the eve of a critical SALT meeting and the backgrounding which accompanied it.

NORMALIZATION WITH CHINA: COMPLETING THE PROCESS

For the first few months of 1978, Harold, Zbig, and I focused on defining administration policy on the transfer to China of advanced "dual-use" equipment and technology which could have either civilian or military uses. We also continued to discuss what the U.S. attitude should be regarding the sale of arms by our allies to China.

Because many allied weapons systems contained American parts or technology, and because the major Western powers had agreed to cooperate through a Western consultative committee ("COCOM") in controlling the sale of weapons and defense-related technology to Communist countries, our approval would be sought in the case of virtually any significant proposed Western transfer. The long-standing prohibition on the sale of U.S. arms to the PRC had been reaffirmed by the president in 1977. However, the question of whether we would encourage, tolerate, or discourage allied weapons transfers to China remained unsettled at the highest levels of the administration, and debate on it intensified as U.S.-Soviet relations worsened. The same was true of the gray area of dual-use technology. Discussions of these issues were carried on in great secrecy, with the assistance of only a few key aides.

The issue of allied arms sales to the PRC had become active in early 1978. The British and the French were contemplating sales to Peking and were probing our attitude. Because of increasing disagreement

within the administration over how to respond to Soviet activities in Third World countries, the allies had become uncertain about our position, and suspected that we might be prepared to relax American opposition to such sales.

My view was that we should be neutral, and certainly we should not encourage allied arms sales. The declared administration policy opposed the transfer of U.S. military equipment to China. However, my argument did not prevail with the president. In January 1978, in a meeting with President Giscard d'Estaing, Carter said that while we would not try to influence French decisions, we would not be concerned if they went ahead. I was worried that the French, as well as the British and other allies, would interpret the president's remarks as signaling a "benevolent" attitude on allied arms sales to the PRC. The allies wanted our support against what would be a sharp Soviet reaction to any major weapons sales to China, as well as criticism from within their own countries for exacerbating East-West tensions.

We were then in the midst of a highly sensitive review of administration policy on the sale of dual-use equipment and technology to the PRC. I was concerned that we continue the existing policy, begun by the previous administration, of evenhandedness in considering requests for sophisticated dual-use equipment or technology. Under this policy, we applied both to China and Russia equally strict restraints on the transfer of any high-technology items that could be used for military purposes.

Brown and Brzezinski wanted, in varying degrees, a stronger security component in the evolving relationship with Peking. I thought we should continue to consider requests for transfers on a case-by-case basis, and avoid any tilt toward China. If we abandoned or relaxed our policy of evenhandedness, we would jeopardize our long-term interests in developing more stable and predictable relationships with both Moscow and Peking.

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At the beginning of 1978, along with the discussions of U.S. policy on arms sales and technology transfers, we had begun work on a strategy for normalizing relations with China. In March the president told me that he wanted either the vice-president or Brzezinski to go to Peking soon, and that I should go to Moscow. Since at least the end of 1977, Zbig had been seeking permission to go to China. I was opposed to the trip on several grounds, the most important of which was my concern that such a highly publicized trip would bring into sharp relief the question of who spoke for the administration on foreign policy. As I have said, I felt very strongly that there could only be two spokesmen, the president and the secretary of state. I was also concerned that Zbig might get into the issue of normalization before we had finished formulating a

detailed position and had consulted Congress adequately. Timing was crucial, and the issue was filled with nuance and complexities that it would have been premature to address.

Zbig, very anxious to make the trip, agreed to limit himself to a statement confirming that Leonard Woodcock would begin making our normalization proposal in the month of June and that the president "was serious" about normalization.

Mondale, who hoped to go to China himself, also opposed Zbig's trip. But Carter overruled us and sent Brzezinski to Peking. (Later, in August 1979, Mondale was to make one of the most important and successful trips ever made by an American official to China.)

With the ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties in March and April, I concluded that it was time to set the normalization process in motion. In early May, I sent a memorandum to the president outlining a negotiating plan that would lead to agreement with the Chinese by the end of the year. Since this memorandum was to form the basis of the administration's normalization strategy, I had asked Brown and Brzezinski to join me in sending it to the president. The president, then, could be assured that his three principal foreign policy and national security aides were in agreement on what might well be one of the most politically difficult steps he could take.

• Because of the importance of the May 10 memorandum for the events that follow, I will summarize the key points:

• *U.S. terms for normalization.* We were prepared to "close down our embassy in Taipei, terminate the U.S.-ROC [Republic of China] mutual defense treaty, and withdraw our remaining military personnel and installation." We would insist on continuing selective arms sales to Taiwan for defensive purposes, terminate all official relations with Taiwan, and remove all U.S. government representation; we would insist that we retain economic, cultural, and other unofficial ties with Taipei, and would also publicly reaffirm the American interest in a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue.

• *Negotiating scenario.* We proposed to the president that if he decided to move ahead, Brzezinski would tell the Chinese during his trip to Peking that Ambassador Leonard Woodcock, the chief of our liaison office in Peking, would begin in June a series of presentations that would outline the formal American position. If the Chinese responded favorably, Woodcock would begin negotiations during the summer. In addition to presenting the U.S. terms for normalization, Woodcock would also discuss the mode and timing of a joint communiqué establishing diplomatic ties, the necessary legislation for implementing the arrangement, and the visit of a very high Chinese official to Washington at or shortly after the announcement of normalization.

- *Balancing SALT.* We did not believe normalization should be delayed until the SALT II Treaty was concluded. In fact, as far as Congress was concerned, our judgment was that normalization could strengthen our hand in securing ratification of SALT II. However, we did not want SALT and normalization to come to Congress at the same time, for this would greatly overload the political circuits and strain the administration's ability to guide these two great issues safely through public and congressional debate. At that time we considered it too early to foresee which would be concluded first.

- *Impact on Asia.* Although recognizing that the move would be a shock to Taiwan, we believed Taipei had the political and economic strength to adjust. We expected that the long-term impact of normalization on the political and economic situation in the region, as well as the military balance, would be beneficial.

We concluded by recommending a prompt effort to complete the normalization process, although we warned that because of our firm position on Taiwan, success in the negotiations could not be guaranteed.

The president approved our negotiating strategy and told Brzezinski and me to bring into the Washington end of the negotiations one aide each. I chose Dick Holbrooke and, as with all other matters, I kept Warren Christopher fully informed. Zbig chose Michel Oksenberg, his China expert on the NSC staff. Later Vice-President Mondale joined the small group. This tight compartmentalization was successful in preventing leaks.

Although Brzezinski followed his instructions in the private talks with the Chinese in May, he made provocative remarks in public about Soviet international actions. In general, he allowed his trip to be characterized as a deliberate countermove by the United States at a time of worsening relations with Moscow over the Horn of Africa and other issues. This disturbed me. Along with my most senior and experienced advisers, I was convinced that loose talk about "playing the China card," always a dangerous ploy, was a particularly risky move at a time when we were at a sensitive point in the SALT negotiations. Further, we were also at that time seeking a measure of Soviet cooperation and restraint in protecting Somalia from the consequences of its invasion of the Ogaden.

On June 13, I sent Woodcock's detailed negotiating instructions to the president for approval. I recommended to him that SALT and the normalization process be handled so that Congress would act on normalization first in early 1979. I stressed the fundamental importance of advance consultations with Japan and Taiwan and with the top congressional leadership before it was announced.

In July, Woodcock began the secret negotiations with the Chinese. To lessen the risk of leaks, all messages to and from Woodcock were sent in special communications channels controlled by the White House rather than through the usual State Department facilities. Ironically, as it turned out, the idea of using the special White House channel was Holbrooke's and mine. We had agreed that a single copy of all traffic through this channel would be sent immediately to my office in a sealed envelope; it would be brought at once to my attention or, in my absence, to Warren Christopher, and in his absence, to Dick Holbrooke.

The decision to use Woodcock as negotiator instead of undertaking highly publicized shuttle diplomacy proved a sound one. Shuttle diplomacy would have received so much attention, every nuance being examined for signs of progress or setback, that it would have inevitably invited strong opposition to normalization before the Chinese had had a chance to react. The Chinese decision-making process is a methodical, careful one, which requires extensive consultations among the leadership after each proposal. Trips by senior American officials, bathed in the glare of publicity, would not have left the Chinese enough time to go through the difficult process of adjusting their positions.

In Woodcock we had an outstanding ambassador. Although he had no previous international experience until Carter had asked him to head a special mission to Hanoi to discuss American servicemen missing in action, Woodcock drew on his extensive experience as the president of the United Automobile Workers of America and proved an instinctive and brilliant diplomat. He had a photographic memory, discretion, and a verbal precision critical in these negotiations. We all came to rely on his wisdom. I have long been in favor of using ambassadors in place to conduct negotiations whenever possible, rather than relying on pyrotechnics and acrobatics. In this case, Woodcock proved to be the ideal ambassador/negotiator.

Woodcock completed the preliminary negotiations by late October, and in early November we sent the Chinese the draft of a joint communiqué announcing the establishment of diplomatic relations. The Chinese asked for clarification of several points. At virtually the same time, on November 6, we announced that we would offer to sell F-5E interceptor aircraft and munitions to Taiwan, but would not approve Taipei's request for more advanced aircraft that could attack the mainland. This was a clear demonstration to both Taipei and Peking that we meant what we said about supplying defensive weapons to Taiwan.

We felt that the Chinese were prepared to face the "realities" on the Taiwan question. At the same time, the president decided that we would not object to a French sale to China of a nuclear reactor that contained significant U.S. technology, subject to satisfactory assurances on peaceful uses and controls over the retransfer of technology to other countries. Positive signals on both sides were thus exchanged.

On December 4, Woodcock met Chinese foreign ministry officials again to respond to questions Peking had raised about our position. At that meeting, the Chinese said that Deng wished to meet Woodcock soon. When I received this message I had a feeling in my bones the Chinese had decided to meet our essential terms. A historic breakthrough was near. We authorized Woodcock to propose January 1 for the joint announcement of normalization. As I have indicated, I had wanted the announcement of normalization to come after my Geneva meeting with Gromyko.

On December 13 Woodcock had a decisive meeting with Deng. Vice-Premier Deng indicated that the PRC was prepared to conclude the negotiations on terms acceptable to us. The deal was set, almost to the letter of our May memorandum to the president.

When Woodcock's report of the critical December 13 meeting arrived, I was in the Middle East. I had gone there reluctantly, at the president's request, to try to push the Israelis and Egyptians into meeting the December 17 goal that had been set at Camp David for the conclusion of a peace treaty. Holbrooke had urged me to remain in Washington during the critical final days of the Woodcock negotiations, but I could not refuse the president's personal request to try to keep the Middle-East process on schedule.

Before I left, I had a final meeting in my office with Christopher, Holbrooke, Brzezinski, and Oksenberg to go over Woodcock's instructions for the crucial December 13 meeting. During that session, we also had an intense debate about whether we were at this point required under a sense of the Senate resolution, which had just passed by an overwhelming vote, to consult with Congress in secret about the negotiations in Peking. Supported by Christopher and Holbrooke, I argued that although the Senate resolution was not legally binding, we would be risking a political backlash if we did not consult Congress, given the advanced stage of the negotiations. Brzezinski and Oksenberg argued the contrary, and the president subsequently sided with them. I regret to this day the failure to talk to Congress. I believe the leadership would have respected our confidence. In any case, the risk of offending the Congress exceeded the risk of leaks in this delicate process. The backlash that did come affected the debate during the long process of enacting the necessary implementing legislation.

I was not at that point overly concerned about leaving Washington, for I assumed then that there would be more than two weeks to take critical preparatory steps after I got back. It was then that the president called me in Jerusalem to say we had an agreement, and to my surprise told me that he wanted to move the date of the announcement up to December 15.

This news came as a shock. At a critical moment, Brzezinski had blacked Christopher and Holbrooke out of the decision making for about

six hours, and they had been unable to inform me of what was taking place.

I arrived in Washington the afternoon of December 15 just in time to rush to the White House for the announcement. As we had feared, several key members of Congress, including critically important ones, such as Frank Church, John Glenn, Jacob Javits, Howard Baker, and Clem Zablocki, were irritated by the lack of consultations and by the fact that they had been called to the White House one hour before the announcement to be informed, not consulted.

However, everyone was caught up in the drama of the event. The day was chaotic, as we attempted to manage the proceedings on short notice. But the muddle typical of such occasions was unimportant. A historic step was being taken for which we had been preparing the groundwork for two years. It will remain one of the enduring achievements of the Carter years.



CYRUS VANCE

HARD CHOICES

CRITICAL YEARS
IN AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY

16

THE SALT DEBATE

THE SALT II RATIFICATION DEBATE

On June 22, 1979, four days after President Carter and Brezhnev signed the SALT II Treaty in Vienna, it was submitted to the Senate for advice and consent to ratification.* Like all treaties, it would need the approval of two-thirds of the senators present and voting. As in the case of the Panama treaties in 1977, voting for SALT presented substantial political risks to many senators who might otherwise have hailed it as the greatest foreign policy achievement of Carter's presidency. It had become the catalyst of a broadening conservative challenge to détente.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee opened hearings on July 9 led by Chairman Frank Church and the ranking Republican member, Jacob Javits. The hearings launched a great national debate that focused not only on the terms of the treaty, but on a much broader range of issues: the nature of the U.S.-Soviet relationship; the role of nuclear arms control in U.S. foreign policy; trends in the military balance; the adequacy of our defense capabilities, programs, and spending; the will of the West to protect its interests; and finally, the nature and scope of U.S. national interests.

I have no doubt that the Salt II Treaty was and is in the national interests of the United States and its allies. Nor do I believe that failure to ratify the treaty was due to "fatal flaws" in the treaty. Even those who led the attack against the treaty and its so-called flaws chose to abide by

* The SALT II Treaty (with a termination date of December 31, 1988) was submitted to the Senate together with the Protocol, lasting until December 31, 1981, 98 Agreed Statements and Common Understandings relating to the provisions of the treaty and its protocol, a Joint Statement of Principles and Basic Guidelines for SALT III, a Memorandum of Understanding on an agreed data base on strategic offensive arms, and an exchange of statements by presidents Carter and Brezhnev on the Backfire bomber.

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its terms once they assumed office. The record of the congressional hearings shows that opponents of the treaty failed to prove their case. Ratification was blocked because the opponents were successful in creating political linkage between the treaty and the problem of restraining Moscow's attempts to expand its influence.

In condemning linkage as applied to arms control, I want to make clear that I do not suggest that all linkage is unsound. To the contrary, I believe that linkage in other areas, such as economic linkage for specific trade policy purposes, is philosophically correct and sensible. If we have items of trade that are important to the Soviets, this can give us valuable leverage in restraining their activities. This leverage will not override their national security interests, but it can be helpful in giving the Soviets incentives to act with greater restraint abroad, as well as facilitating trade agreements. Linkage in the case of nuclear arms control rests on a different base. There the agreement itself advances our own security and thus outweighs any advantage that might come from denying the other party the benefits of the bargain.

The driving force behind much of the opposition to SALT II came from the ideological Right, which supported reflexively almost any argument against the treaty, however unsound. For some, the fact that the treaty was with the Soviet Union was enough to make it suspect. More damaging, however, was the linkage argument and the fact that it was advanced by some former officials, such as Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig. I was especially saddened by Henry's position, since he had contributed much to achieving the SALT II agreement. Even as they guardedly supported the treaty as contributing to American interests, they legitimized the fallacy that the United States could use the treaty to punish the Soviet Union for actions in areas that were unrelated to the strategic balance. Many of the critics seemed to forget that three administrations had negotiated the treaty, and had done so out of a cold assessment of American security interests, and not as a reward for good behavior on the part of Moscow.

The arguments for linkage that were advanced during the debate gave some senators in the center, who were fearful of the rising conservative tide, an intellectually defensible ground for withholding their support until Moscow "got the message" that it could not have the SALT II Treaty unless it acted with greater restraint in the global competition. It seems self-evident that a nation will enter into an arms control agreement only when the agreement enhances its security, and not as a reward for good behavior on the part of the other nation—particularly when the behavior could rapidly change after the agreement is signed. But this logic, unfortunately, is less than persuasive in the atmosphere of an approaching political campaign.

Another difficulty was the merely lukewarm support of some liberal and moderate senators, who might have been SALT's natural supporters.

They were disappointed that the cuts were not greater, and they spoke of SALT II as little more than a license to continue the arms race. Understandably, they were also concerned at signs that both sides intended to proceed under the treaty with a new generation of nuclear missiles, including such technologically advanced systems as the MX, Trident II, and cruise missiles, each of which would mark an escalation in the qualitative competition. But they were experienced individuals and should have recognized that arms control is a long and difficult process, which can often move forward only in modest steps. Arms control is not for the short-winded or the faint of heart. I understood that their statements were only an opening position, which they hoped to use in extracting commitments from the administration about the objectives of SALT III. But they failed to reckon with the fact that their words would be taken up by hard-line opponents and used to block ratification.

Another important factor in the SALT debate was the political standing of the Carter administration. In the second half of 1979 our political strength was less than during the Panama treaties debate. For a variety of reasons, our strength had eroded. Our foreign policy accomplishments were marred by a perception of an inconsistent and divided administration. In those crucial months of 1979, the SALT II Treaty faced an uphill political struggle.

On the positive side, however, the treaty had much in its favor. First, SALT enjoyed a powerful base of popular support which could be mobilized. Second, the treaty was supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had actively participated in its negotiation. Third, the treaty was endorsed by our NATO allies, whose security interests it directly affected. Finally, the treaty was a substantial improvement over the SALT I Interim Agreement. It was a carefully balanced package whose net effect was to impose useful limits on Soviet forces while leaving the United States free to pursue the strategic options that the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered essential.

I believed that when it came time to vote, we could get the required 67 votes.

On July 9, the Senate Foreign Relations, Armed Services, and Intelligence committees began extensive hearings which lasted throughout the summer. Scores of witnesses, proponents and opponents, official and private, testified. The hearing record for the Foreign Relations Committee alone totaled six volumes.

Significantly, in the first phase of hearings, few serious critics contended that the treaty should be rejected outright—a tacit acknowledgment of the strong public support for the SALT process. Opponents initially centered their arguments primarily on four alleged flaws or deficiencies in the agreement, which they said needed to be rectified either through amendments to the treaty or through conditions placed in the Resolution of Ratification. The critics claimed:

The negotiating compromises were weighted in favor of the Soviet Union, particularly in permitting it to retain its 308 launchers of heavy land-based missiles, while banning them for the United States, and in not counting the Backfire medium bomber under the 2,250 aggregate ceiling. This was not true, as the evidence presented to the Senate demonstrated.

• Soviet compliance with the treaty could not be verified by our intelligence resources, and the ambiguous language of some provisions gave Moscow too much latitude to interpret the treaty in ways harmful to the United States. Again, this was not so. The treaty was adequately verifiable.

• The treaty and its protocol contained provisions that could impede American defense cooperation with our NATO allies and set an adverse precedent for negotiations on cruise missiles in SALT III. This was also false, as was demonstrated by the unanimous support of our NATO allies.

• We had failed to negotiate sufficiently deep cuts, especially in land-based missiles with multiple warheads (MIRVed ICBMs). From the conservatives' viewpoint this, together with the Soviets' 308 heavy missiles, would eventually give Moscow a dangerous superiority in the most accurate and powerful strategic weapon in each side's arsenal. To some liberals, the modesty of the reductions signified that the treaty was not arms control but merely a codification of the arms race. Although all of us would have liked deeper cuts we had gone as far as we could at the time.

A contention heard more and more frequently once it became clear that attacks on the treaty were not hitting home was that the United States had failed to keep pace with the Soviet Union in both nuclear and conventional forces because it had been lulled into complacency by the SALT negotiations. It was suggested that we faced a strategic "window of vulnerability" which would not be closed until new ICBMs, such as the MX, could be deployed in the late 1980s. The charge that the SALT process had caused complacency in Congress and among the electorate was coupled with the argument that SALT II should be held in "abeyance" until Congress remedied the alleged inadequacies and committed the United States to sharp increases in the defense budget. Related to this was the false claim that the Carter administration had deliberately held back major strategic programs, such as the MX, Trident II, and cruise missiles, in order to facilitate the SALT negotiations.

As with the Panama treaties, a principal element of the opponents' strategy was to press for radical changes in the SALT agreement that would require Soviet acquiescence or a renegotiation of basic terms of the treaty. Such changes would either kill the treaty or require its reopening. Reopening the treaty to seek greater concessions for the United States would expose us to reopening by the Soviet Union of vital issues that had already been resolved in our favor.

The case for the SALT Treaty was made in a series of appearances in July before the Senate Foreign Relations and other committees. Harold Brown, General David Jones, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Stansfield Turner, Ralph Earle, and I were the principal witnesses. Our goal was to explain why the treaty advanced our security, and correct the fallacies and misinterpretations about SALT that had arisen since 1977. It was important for us to show that even though the agreement was an intricate web of mutual adjustments, the United States would be more secure with the treaty than without it. We sought to dispel the notion that the Senate's choice was between an ideal, unattainable agreement and the treaty that had been negotiated, as its opponents were trying to do. Further, it was necessary to counter the argument that because the final agreement was not as far-reaching as the March 1977 comprehensive proposal I had taken to Moscow, it represented a concession to the Soviet Union, and less than real arms control. In March 1977 we had attempted to make a quantum leap forward and the Soviet Union had shown itself unready to take such a huge step. Yet, critics ever since had tried to make our comprehensive proposal the standard against which any agreement must be measured.

We believed the best way to answer questions about the treaty was to explain what it did and did not do, and what the strategic situation would be with and without it.

First, unlike SALT I, the SALT II Treaty established equal ceilings on strategic missiles and bombers for both sides—2,400 at the outset, to be lowered to 2,250 by December 31, 1981. The Soviets would have to destroy some 250 operational weapons systems to reach the 2,250 aggregate ceiling; without SALT, they could deploy at least 3,000 missiles and bombers by 1985. On the other hand, the United States would not have to destroy any operational weapons to get under the 2,250 ceiling. The treaty also held both sides to 1,200 MIRVed ICBMs, and within that total each side was limited to 820 land-based MIRVs.

If the SALT Treaty were not approved, we estimated the Soviets could field by 1985 as many as 1,800 MIRVed missiles, including more than 920 land-based ones. The 1,320 combined ceiling on heavy bombers carrying air-launched cruise missiles and MIRVed missiles was of no practical value to the Soviet Union because of the mix of their forces. The United States, however, with its advanced air-launched cruise missile program, would be able to deploy 120 ALCM-armed heavy bombers before having to decide whether to reduce any MIRVed missiles to stay under that ceiling.

We carried over from SALT I the freeze on the construction of new launchers for heavy land-based missiles. This prevented the Soviets from deploying more than their existing 308 heavy missiles. As Harold Brown and I testified, we decided to drop our demand for reductions in heavy missiles after concluding that a limit of 820 on MIRVed ICBMs would

do just as much to alleviate our ICBM vulnerability problem. Moreover, that approach was negotiable. It was asking too much of SALT to expect it to bring about a reduction of heavy land-based missiles; this would have required a drastic restructuring of the Soviet strategic force, which emphasized ICBMs over the technologically more complex sea-based missiles in which we had such a marked advantage. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had been clear during the negotiations that they did not want heavy missiles. They preferred the smaller but more powerful MX missile.

Far more important for our security than a meaningless "right" to build heavy missiles which we did not want was the so-called "fractionation" limit we had negotiated. This prohibition on increasing the number of warheads on both sides' missiles meant that the Soviets could not exploit the enormous lifting power of their heavy land-based missiles by adding more than 10 warheads. With 10 set as the maximum on the SS-18, our MX would carry as many warheads as the largest Soviet missile. Without this freeze, we believed the Soviets could deploy 30 or more on each SS-18 and, as well, increase the number of warheads carried on their lighter missiles, the SS-17s and 19s. The one permitted new Soviet ICBM would also be limited to 10 warheads.

The treaty would hold the Soviets to some 10,000 to 12,000 warheads by 1985, roughly equivalent to us. Without it, they could conceivably have as many as 20,000. Of course, we could expand our warhead totals at least as much as they could, although this would be very costly. Brown estimated that by 1985, without SALT, spending for strategic forces would have to be at least \$30 billion more than would otherwise be the case. The freeze on warhead fractionation was one of the most significant achievements of SALT II and pointed the way to curbing the race in qualitative improvements of weapons.

I had expected the issue of verifying Soviet compliance to be one of our most serious problems during the ratification debate. Verification is a complex matter, involving some of the most secret and esoteric aspects of U.S. intelligence collection. It involves both political and technical judgments. The political leadership must make an assessment of the verifiability of an agreement after weighing a range of factors, including each side's monitoring capabilities, political and military incentives for the other side to attempt significant cheating, the risks of detection, and the ability to respond rapidly and effectively with compensating programs in the event the other side cheats. Verification makes use of our technical capabilities to monitor Soviet strategic activities. This is done by satellites and other intelligence means.

Although some of my colleagues worried that the absence of a total ban on telemetry encryption would damage the treaty's ratification prospects, I believed we could show that it was adequately verifiable without a total ban. The loss of the collection stations in northern Iran in February 1979 was a serious setback, both in the sense of temporarily im-

pairing our ability to check Soviet compliance with certain SALT limitations and in its impact on key senators, such as John Glenn, who had become the Senate's leading expert on monitoring. However, Harold Brown testified that although it would take more than a year to recoup all the intelligence capabilities lost in Iran, the Soviets would need far more than a year to carry out any significant clandestine testing program.

I strongly supported increased spending for our intelligence collection programs. This would improve our SALT monitoring capabilities, as well as our overall knowledge of Soviet strategic activities. One of SALT's most significant contributions to strategic stability was the measures it required of each side to facilitate the other's access to information about its strategic forces. Of particular importance were the prohibitions against deliberate concealment of strategic forces, and including by encryption of any telemetry relevant to SALT limitations and interference with reconnaissance satellites and other monitoring capabilities. Without the treaty our capability would be blunted, and our task of following Soviet strategic activities would be far more difficult.

Brown, Turner, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I were in agreement that the treaty was adequately verifiable. This did not mean that we believed U.S. intelligence could monitor Soviet compliance with every one of the treaty's limitations with 100 percent confidence. That was technically impossible and unnecessary. As Brown stated:

... there is a double bind which serves to deter Soviet cheating. To go undetected, any Soviet cheating would have to be on so small a scale that it would not be militarily significant. Cheating on such a level would hardly be worth the political risks involved. On the other hand, any cheating serious enough to affect the military balance would be detectable in sufficient time to take whatever action the situation required.

As for the short-term protocol limits on cruise missiles, we had determined at the outset that SALT must not foreclose NATO's essential options. At the time of the SALT hearings, we and our allies were moving rapidly toward a decision to strengthen NATO's long-range theater nuclear forces with ground-launched cruise missiles and the new Pershing II ballistic missile. Some of our allies were concerned that the protocol would establish a negotiating precedent for limits on cruise missiles beyond the terminal date of the protocol. I had obtained Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko's explicit concurrence that this would not be the case. During the treaty hearings the Soviets reaffirmed this position to a Senate delegation to Moscow headed by Senator Joseph Biden.

I found disturbing the charges of some opponents of the treaty that

allied endorsements of it were ingenuous and politically motivated. The allies strongly supported the SALT Treaty, and in my testimony I emphasized that failure to ratify the treaty would be extremely damaging to their confidence in us. Approval of the treaty would, I said, demonstrate to our allies that the United States could properly manage its strategic relationship with the Soviet Union.

One of the strangest aspects of the 1979 SALT debate was the ostensible consensus between liberals and conservatives in favor of deep reductions, and their joint condemnation of the treaty for having failed to attain them. Reductions were and obviously are important, but they are not the sine qua non of significant arms control.

One of the most important objectives of nuclear arms control must be improved survivability of delivery systems, both missiles and bombers. Progress in achieving greater survivability of weapons can be as important to our survival as large reductions. Failure to deal with the problem of the vulnerability of major elements of each side's deterrent forces could lead both superpowers into a hair-trigger, launch-on-warning posture that would be highly dangerous in a crisis. Thus, depending on many other variables, deep reductions may or may not contribute to strategic stability, and other objectives may be of equal or even greater importance.

The real choice for the Senate was: Are we better off with *this* treaty than with no treaty? My answer was unequivocally, yes, but let us ratify this treaty and get on with negotiating further reductions and tighter qualitative controls in the next phase (SALT III).

By the time the first cycle of hearings was finished and the Senate began its August recess, there was little doubt that the momentum favored the treaty. Every facet of the agreement, the protocol, and the principles for SALT III had been thoroughly explored and legitimate concerns answered. That proponents had prevailed over the skeptics was reflected in a shift in the thrust of the debate away from the treaty's provisions toward more subjective questions concerning the administration's ability to deal with the Soviet Union, linkage, defense budgets, and trends in the military balance. Henry Kissinger's July 31 testimony in support of the treaty but calling for increased defense spending, a new strategic doctrine emphasizing American capabilities to attack Soviet strategic forces, and a Senate condition making further SALT negotiations contingent on Soviet international restraint pointed to the main directions in the next round.

In our final appearance before the August recess, Harold Brown and I reiterated the administration's firm commitment to NATO's goal of an annual 3 percent increase after inflation in defense spending. In view of past difficulties we as well as earlier administrations had had in getting congressional approval of our full defense budget requests, I welcomed the consensus emerging from the SALT debate for a more substantial

defense effort. However, conservatives were seeking to make the SALT Treaty hostage to an administration commitment to go well beyond the agreed 3 percent level. Just before the August recess, senators Sam Nunn, Henry Jackson, and John Tower of the Armed Services Committee wrote to President Carter asking for increases of at least 4 or 5 percent.

At the beginning of August it seemed to me that the outlines of a ratification "bargain" were taking shape. The president approved the MX missile deployment in June, and by August, studies of a mobile basing scheme were far advanced. If Carter would decide to deploy the MX in a mobile basing mode, agree to an increase in the defense budget, and acquiesce in several conditions acceptable to the administration in the Resolution of Ratification, he would satisfy many of the critics. The president would have responded to their concerns about ICBM vulnerability and stilled doubts about his commitment to a strong defense. Moderates and many conservative senators would ease their political concerns through the stated conditions to the treaty. The likelihood of Senate approval of the treaty in the late fall or early winter was reasonably good, though still not certain.

There was considerable discussion about how far the administration should or could go toward meeting the demands of defense-minded senators, such as Sam Nunn, without distorting our budget priorities. In my judgment, existing strategic weapons deployments and ongoing programs were in line with the basic requirements of deterrence and essential equivalence. The vagueness of the demands for more defense spending was evidence that the critics were having difficulty identifying major strategic programs where more money could usefully be spent. I felt there was little the United States could do to accelerate the main strategic and theater nuclear programs, which were already preferentially funded. I believed additional expenditures should be made on conventional forces, and should be used primarily to upgrade combat readiness and improve equipment maintenance, hardly the stuff of which headlines are made. The president was unwilling to be stampeded into spending more for defense than the planned 3 percent. He wanted a careful analysis of where additional resources could be used, and considerable work to this end was done during and after the August recess. Carter made it clear that we would spend more where need could be demonstrated, but not simply to gain votes for SALT.

Regarding conditions to ratification, the president and all his senior advisers were unanimous that no amendments or Senate conditions equivalent to amendments to the agreement could be accepted. Despite contrary opinions that were being bruited about by some treaty critics, we had little doubt that the Soviet leadership would reject any such changes. I believed that we could accept some understandings in the Resolution of Ratification, as we had done during ratification of the

Panama treaties, when these amounted to unilateral clarifications, interpretations, or declarations of U.S. policy that would not require Soviet agreement or acknowledgment. Since they might open the floodgates to amendments, this was risky. But it could be vital in winning the votes of influential senators. It had been evident for some time that we needed virtually a full-time political strategist to direct the ratification debate. I was delighted when in June the president appointed Lloyd Cutler, a brilliant Washington attorney and a close and valued friend of mine for many years, to take on that task. If anyone could guide the treaty through the Foreign Relations Committee, and on the Senate floor, without the imposition of conditions that would kill it, it was Lloyd.

THE SOVIET BRIGADE IN CUBA

As the Senate SALT hearings progressed over the summer, another issue slowly developed within the intelligence community and then burst dramatically on the political landscape. Once again the Soviet-Cuban connection diverted attention from more important questions and hurt us. This was the belated "discovery" by the intelligence agencies of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba. When this was made public, it provoked a political storm and delayed Senate consideration of the treaty long enough for it to be overtaken and shelved as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Because of Cuban military involvement in Angola and Ethiopia and the Mig-23 flareup of late 1978, feelings about Cuba and its relations with the Soviet Union ran high in the administration. In April 1979, Brzezinski had asked the intelligence agencies to reanalyze available information about Soviet military activities on the island. In May, Brown also had begun to express concern about stepped-up Soviet military activity in the Caribbean and had urged that we consider a broad range of political, military, and diplomatic countermeasures. I was uneasy. Knowing the domestic political volatility of anything having to do with Cuba, I had little doubt that any issue involving it would be distorted. As a nation, we seemed unable to maintain a sense of perspective about Cuba, and tended to inflate Castro's influence. Ironically, we had been in direct contact with Cuban leaders for some time through highly secret channels and had made modest progress in alleviating certain bilateral problems relating to political prisoners, refugees, and better family access by Cuban-Americans.

On July 17, Florida Senator Richard Stone alluded in a public hearing on the SALT Treaty to the threat that Soviet combat troops in Cuba would pose. Later, he called on the administration to come forward with what it knew about any Soviet combat personnel based on the island. Stone wanted to know whether such forces would constitute a violation

of the understandings we had with the Soviet Union, dating from the 1962 Cuban missile crisis and after, regarding Soviet military presence in Cuba. He was evidently well informed about the intelligence community's ongoing review of information on Soviet military activities in Cuba. Stone requested and was given a detailed classified intelligence briefing on July 24. He showed particular interest in whether we had information about a Soviet brigade command structure in Cuba. That afternoon he wrote to the president referring to such a possibility.

On January 27, 1978, during consideration of the Panama treaties, Carter had written Stone that, "... it has been and will continue to be the policy of the United States to oppose any efforts, direct or indirect, by the Soviet Union to establish military bases in the Western Hemisphere." Carter's letter had been important in gaining Stone's vote for the Panama treaties. It is possible that the Florida senator, currently struggling for reelection, saw a similarly firm Carter response to his question concerning the possibility of Soviet combat forces in Cuba as a way to reduce the political liability he had incurred by that vote. On July 25, Stone met with Vice-President Mondale and strongly urged that the administration take firm action. Stone argued that Soviet combat forces in Cuba would constitute a basic violation of a 1970 refinement of the 1962 understanding. He contended that the Soviets must be challenged or they would conclude they could violate agreements with us, such as SALT, without serious risk. Mondale ordered intelligence activities directed at Cuba stepped up in the hope that we could get a clearer picture of what was involved.

What had piqued Stone's interest in July was accumulating evidence, turned up in the intensified intelligence analysis Brzezinski had ordered, that there might be a Soviet unit of approximately brigade size and structure in Cuba. However, available data were ambiguous and fragmentary. It was not yet possible to determine whether any of the several thousand Soviet military personnel who had long been in Cuba in a training capacity were organized into a "combat" force. In a report on July 26, I was informed that the most the intelligence community could conclude was that there was a Soviet ground force unit in Cuba. The intelligence analysts were not prepared to say whether it was a combat force, a training structure for Cuban forces, or a facility for Soviet development and testing of tropical combat tactics.

The facts at that point were: neither the 1962 Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding banning offensive nuclear weapons or delivery systems from Cuba nor the 1970 prohibition on Soviet submarine bases covered Soviet ground forces; Soviet military personnel had been advising and training Cuban forces since at least 1962; as far as the intelligence community could tell there had been no substantial increase in the Soviet military presence; there were reports of some Soviet combat, as distinguished from logistical or administrative, personnel; and there was evi-

dence, as yet inconclusive, that these combat troops might be organized as a brigade. On July 27, at the request of the White House, I wrote to Senator Stone that there was "no evidence of any substantial increase of the Soviet military presence in Cuba over the past several years or the presence of a Soviet military base."

At the end of July we found ourselves in a most difficult position. The Senate SALT hearings would soon be recessed for several weeks. Rumors of a Soviet brigade in Cuba were spreading, but there was doubt such a brigade existed. The intelligence experts could provide no solid information on size, composition, purpose, or even how long it might have been in Cuba. Senator Stone, a Foreign Relations Committee member with an intense interest in Cuba, had seized the issue. Stone had stated in closed-door discussions that if there was a Soviet combat unit in Cuba, the administration must deal with it resolutely.

I agreed that the presence of a Soviet combat brigade in Cuba would be a serious matter and would have to be made an issue in our bilateral relations with Moscow. On July 27, even though intelligence on the brigade was still inconclusive, I had Marshall Shulman meet with a senior Soviet embassy official to warn them that the presence of a combat unit in Cuba would inflame U.S.-Soviet relations at a critical moment in the Senate debate on the SALT II Treaty.

The brigade matter escaped the headlines through the month of August. Meanwhile, intelligence surveillance of the island was further augmented. On August 25, my staff reported that the intelligence was now sufficient to conclude that there was a Soviet motorized rifle brigade in Cuba, and that it had recently participated in field maneuvers as a combat unit. The unit, they said, consisted of some 2,000 to 3,000 men and appeared to have been in Cuba since at least 1975 or 1976. Its precise mission was still uncertain.

My judgment was that it was highly unlikely that the Soviets would agree to withdraw the brigade, if this became a public issue. Moreover, we would not be on solid ground in claiming the brigade violated the understandings on Cuba, since they did not cover Soviet ground forces. While past American administrations had frequently complained about the numerous Soviet military personnel on the island since 1962, none had made their presence an issue of compliance with the understandings. Given the intense political interest in Cuba, there was no doubt this new intelligence would be leaked very quickly. Little time remained for diplomacy to defuse the issue before it became a "crisis." Unfortunately, Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin was on leave in Russia, and I did not want to try to deal with such a sensitive question through second-level Soviet officials. I asked our ambassador in Moscow to urge Dobrynin's immediate return to Washington.

On August 28, my staff, in close consultation with the NSC, developed a plan to brief by telephone key members of Congress. We would outline

the recent intelligence and tell them that we had lodged a strong protest with the Soviets underlining our serious concern. On August 29, Under Secretary David Newsom called in the Soviet chargé d'affaires. Newsom said that we were aware of the brigade and requested an explanation of its presence. He emphasized the harm it could cause to U.S.-Soviet relations unless quickly resolved.

On August 30, as planned, the calls to the Senate and House leaders were made. We explained the facts and that we had just learned a well-known defense journal with close ties to the intelligence community had this information and might publish it within a few days. All reacted calmly, except for Senator Frank Church. Church was in Idaho, fighting for his political life against a powerful assault by strident right-wing political action groups which were focusing largely on his alleged softness on defense and his support for the SALT Treaty. Church was being embarrassed by a news clip of a trip he had made to Cuba in which he was pictured with Fidel Castro.

Church's reaction, Newsom told me, was that revelation of the existence of a Soviet brigade would "sink SALT." Church then called me and said he believed it essential that someone in authority make the information public immediately, before it was leaked in some distorted form without any explanation or clarification. I told him that we did not intend to make any statement until we had more information. He asked me what would happen if he made a statement. I told him that it would be harmful, but I acknowledged to him that he was the only one who could make the decision. My expectation was that Church would say nothing, and that there would be no public discussion.

This proved to be incorrect. That same evening, Senator Church broke the story and called on President Carter to demand that the brigade be withdrawn immediately. A few days later he added that SALT probably could not be ratified unless the Soviets agreed to remove the brigade. Thus, before we had a chance to pursue quiet diplomacy, a hard line on the brigade had been drawn. There were others who echoed his call for linking the SALT Treaty to removal of the brigade. Church postponed resumption of the SALT hearings and asked me to appear before the Foreign Relations Committee on September 5 to discuss the brigade.

From my point of view, the brigade was an important issue that demanded a satisfactory resolution, but it was not sufficiently serious to warrant a "crisis" atmosphere, and definitely not a reason to interfere with the ratification of the SALT Treaty. Nevertheless, in the political climate of late 1979, a rational separation of the brigade issue and SALT was not possible. The president and I agreed that a firm but realistic stand was necessary.

I hoped that we still might be able, through Dobrynin, to persuade Brezhnev and Gromyko to take some helpful steps, such as removing the

command structure and heavy weapons from the unit. If they would do so, we might resolve the brigade issue without fatally damaging SALT ratification.

Before leaving for Capitol Hill on September 5, I held my regularly scheduled press conference. In preparation for it, I discussed with my staff how to handle the inevitable question: "What are you going to do about the Soviet combat brigade?" To preserve negotiating flexibility while conveying seriousness, I decided to respond that we would require a change in the status quo.

When asked the question at the press conference, I replied, "I will not be satisfied with the maintenance of the status quo." My reply sounded stronger than I intended, and was widely interpreted to imply that we would demand removal of the brigade. What I meant was that changes in the armament, structure, and function of the brigade could allay our concerns about its combat capability. Later I met with the president, who agreed that the formulation I had used was consistent with our discussions. But in hindsight, I regret not having used words less open to misinterpretation.

That afternoon I went before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and testified at length on the issue of the brigade. After that appearance, the committee agreed to resume its SALT hearings while I pursued discussions of the brigade issue with the Soviets. This was welcome news. We wanted the ratification struggle concluded before the end of the year, if at all possible.

Throughout the next three weeks, I met half a dozen times with Dobrynin and twice with Gromyko to discuss unilateral Soviet measures that would alter the status quo and resolve our concerns. I was unsuccessful. At the same time, I and others in the administration pressed the intelligence community to provide answers to further questions about the brigade, particularly its exact mission and how long it had been in Cuba. There were disturbing discrepancies in what the various agencies had been reporting, and it seemed increasingly possible that the brigade had not been surreptitiously inserted into Cuba recently. Closer examination of records revealed that earlier American administrations had known of Soviet ground units in Cuba and had not regarded them as worth concentrated intelligence surveillance. In 1962 the president and his advisers had wanted the ground units removed along with the missiles and the bombers. However, they did not press the matter, and the ground units remained. The more resources the intelligence community devoted to the brigade matter, the farther back in time information about it went—even eventually all the way to 1962. Appallingly, awareness of the Soviet ground force units had faded from the institutional memories of the intelligence agencies. It was a very costly lapse in memory.

By late September it was evident that the unit in question had almost certainly been in Cuba continuously since 1962. Part of the damage done

by the brigade issue was the misleading initial impression that it had been secretly introduced into Cuba only a few years before in a new and defiant Soviet challenge to our interests in the Caribbean. Much was made of this until, by mid-September, intelligence reports made clear it had been present in Cuba well before 1975.

The newly unfolding facts did not resolve all our problems. I proposed in the talks with Dobrynin and Gromyko that the Soviets remove the brigade headquarters, heavy equipment, and weapons, and discontinue its field exercises. They refused, insisting that it had been in Cuba unchanged in its function as a training unit for over seventeen years. They said it had nothing to do with the 1962 understanding, and that the United States had no right to request any gesture from Moscow. However, on September 27, Brezhnev wrote to Carter affirming that the unit in question was a "military training center," and that the Soviet Union had "no intention of changing its status as such a center in the future." The Soviets deemed this assurance a significant undertaking, not required of them by the Cuba understandings, which we could use to close off the issue.

After a second meeting with Gromyko on September 27 in New York, I concluded that the Soviets would not do more.

Lloyd Cutler and Hedley Donovan suggested that we recommend to the president that he invite a group of senior statesmen to meet with us to appraise the evidence and either verify or question the initial conclusion of the intelligence community that the brigade was a recent strengthening of the Soviet forces in Cuba. These men could also advise us as to what we should demand of the Soviets in terms of a change in the status quo, and whether we should link further efforts on SALT ratification to a satisfactory resolution of the brigade issue.

I agreed with Lloyd and Hedley's suggestions, and we recommended this course of action to the president, who concurred. The panel of Wise Men included a broad cross-section consisting of sixteen former Republican and Democratic senior State, Defense, CIA, and White House officials.* The panel met at the White House on September 29 and 30.

After receiving briefings from a number of administration officials, including myself, the group, although not unanimously, came to the following general conclusions. First, that they were highly skeptical that the brigade had recently been moved into Cuba. They concluded that the discovery of the brigade was in fact the rediscovery of the brigade that had been there since 1962, and that in reporting the incident they had mistakenly interpreted it as a new development. Second, that the brigade posed no threat to the United States. Third, that our response

* George W. Ball, McGeorge Bundy, Clark Clifford, Roswell L. Gilpatric, W. Averell Harriman, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, Henry Kissinger, Sol Linowitz, John J. McCloy, John A. McCone, David Packard, William Rogers, Dean Rusk, James R. Schlesinger, Brent Scowcroft, and William Scranton.

should be measured and that we should accept minor changes in the status quo as satisfactory. And fourth, that we should not link SALT and the brigade issue. This advice was most helpful to the president and to me in shaping our response.

After the meeting, I recommended to the president that, in addition to announcing Brezhnev's September 27 assurances, we should also take a number of measured unilateral actions. These included increased surveillance of Cuba, increased economic and military assistance to Caribbean nations, and a larger regional U.S. military presence. I urged that these steps be announced publicly in connection with the brigade issue and not aimed at the overall U.S.-Soviet relationship. I told the president, as did Lloyd Cutler, that I favored treating the problem as a serious but isolated incident. My strong advice to the president was that we put the brigade issue behind us quickly and move on to the ratification of SALT. Letting the brigade matter drag on was doing serious damage to relations with our allies and friends, who were feeling that we had lost our sense of proportion. On October 1, the president spoke to the nation along the lines we had discussed.

After the president's address the brigade matter faded rapidly, although it lingered as a problem in the ratification debate. Politically, the administration had been seriously hurt by the episode.

THE SALT HEARINGS RESUME

The resumption of the SALT hearings was initially overshadowed by the brigade issue and my meetings with Gromyko. The positions of the first round of hearings were reversed. Some opponents now seemed more anxious to push the treaty to a vote; proponents, disturbed by the Cuba brigade stalemate, were more cautious, weighing the political risks to the treaty and to themselves. Senatorial and public interest in the hearings waned, and the once-crowded committee sessions were only sparsely attended. The debate turned sharply toward U.S.-Soviet political and military competition. Sensing a reversing of the momentum, conservatives intensified their efforts to tie the fate of the treaty to a major American military buildup.

From the start of the administration I had favored a prudent increase in defense spending and, together with Harold Brown, had pressed the president hard to agree to the 1977 NATO commitment to an annual 3 percent increase in defense spending above inflation. The NATO long-term defense program, the MX, the air-launched cruise missile and Trident submarine and missile programs, and the emerging alliance plan for theater nuclear weapons represented a comprehensive, balanced, and sustainable strategic plan. But now, in late 1979, suddenly to escalate defense spending and accelerate major weapons programs would, I felt,

fuel the perception that we did not have confidence in our plan for maintaining the military balance. Conservatives would point to it as proof that we had not been doing enough on defense. Whatever increases we agreed to would not be sufficient to satisfy them. Liberals and some moderates would see such a move as an attempt to "buy" ratification of the treaty and a surrender to conservative pressures.

The Foreign Relations Committee hearings concluded on October 10 with an appearance by Harold Brown and me in closed session. Ever since the July hearings, pressure had been intensifying to postpone a Senate vote on the treaty until after the administration had presented the fiscal 1981 defense budget. Late in September, Gerald Ford had called for deferring a vote on SALT until Congress had approved a 5 percent real increase in 1981 defense spending. With the Republican party now joining the call for more spending on the military, the treaty had little chance unless the moderates could point to an increasing defense budget to justify supporting SALT. Before Brown and I appeared before the Foreign Relations Committee the president decided to take the unprecedented step of previewing the 1981 defense budget and five-year defense plan two months ahead of schedule. The preview would show the administration was firmly committed to a 3 percent real increase in defense expenditures, even if additional funds had to be requested from Congress to reach that level. If we could manage this defense budget preview well, it would still be possible to have a Senate vote before the end of the year.

President Carter also faced an extremely difficult decision on the basing plan for the MX. The military planners had recommended a plan for moving 200 MX missiles on launcher vehicles randomly among 4,600 widely spaced concrete shelters in valleys in Nevada and Utah. In August and early September, as we listened to the briefings on the proposed basing plan, it was apparent that neither the president nor most of his senior advisers felt comfortable. Tremendously expensive, politically controversial, and technically complex, it would be difficult to explain and defend. As one observer remarked, it would be the largest construction project in human history, dwarfing the pyramids of Egypt.

The plan, however, was the best of the several options we had examined, and for many reasons it was important that the president not delay a basing decision. On September 7, Carter approved this basing system. I supported his decision. I had long felt, since the 1977 cancellation of the B-1 bomber, that ratification of the SALT II Treaty would be unlikely without a firm administration commitment to the MX program.

Reassured by Carter's commitment to preview the defense budget and the MX basing decision, on October 16 the Foreign Relations Committee began to debate a draft Resolution of Ratification. Over the next three weeks, the committee adopted more than twenty conditions to ratification, but no amendments to the treaty. One, a reservation intro-

duced by Senator Church, required that "prior to the exchange of the instruments of ratification, the President shall affirm that the United States will assure that Soviet military forces in Cuba (1) are not engaged in a combat role, and (2) will not become a threat to any country in the Caribbean or elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere." I believe that Church, a man dedicated to controlling and reducing nuclear weapons, had come to regret having linked the SALT Treaty so categorically to removal of the Soviet brigade. This reservation was an attempt to give the president flexibility to make the required affirmation based on unilateral U.S. measures, without Church's having to retreat entirely from his earlier stand.

There were many other reservations, understandings, and declarations in the committee's resolution, some of which would be bitter pills for Moscow to swallow. But in my opinion, none posed an insuperable obstacle to ratification. Several dealing with verification that were introduced by Senator Glenn were valuable clarifications, and most of the remainder were laudable reaffirmations of U.S. determination to maintain strategic equivalence, continue defense cooperation with our allies, and pursue more substantial reductions and limitations in SALT III. Sustained by an irreducible majority on the committee determined not to accept "killer amendments," senators Church and Javits skillfully deflected proposals that would have made the terms of ratification unacceptable to Moscow.

On November 9, by a vote of 9 to 6, the Foreign Relations Committee approved the Resolution of Ratification. Ten days later, the committee published a massive 551-page report on its exhaustive examination of the SALT II Treaty. This excellent report concluded that:

... ratification of the SALT II Treaty, subject to the conditions the Committee has recommended, would make a positive contribution to American security and foreign policy interests, provided that the United States also vigorously undertakes necessary measures to maintain deterrence and essential equivalence, improve theater nuclear and conventional capabilities where needed, and enhance its intelligence capabilities. Conversely, the Committee believes that rejection of the Treaty, either directly by vote of the Senate, or indirectly through Senate action requiring renegotiation of some of its terms, would be contrary to our nation's security and foreign policy interests: It would strain the coherent functioning of the NATO Alliance; it would destabilize our relationship with the Soviet Union during a period of great potential international turbulence; it could require even higher defense expenditures for strategic forces; and it could result in a significant degradation in our intelligence capabilities.

The Committee believes that the Treaty cannot be sent back to the negotiating table to seek greater concessions from the Soviet

Union without also reopening fundamental issues resolved in favor of the United States and thus running a significant risk that there will be no agreement in the near term. It is the Committee's judgment that this Treaty is better for the United States at this point than no Treaty at all. The Treaty is a compromise of interests reached over seven years of painstaking negotiations, and the Committee is persuaded that this bargain should now be sealed so that the two Parties can move promptly to the follow-on negotiations, which provide the best prospect for achieving the stringent limitations and deep reductions which were not achieved in SALT II.

The treaty reached the floor several weeks later than we had hoped, but Majority Leader Robert Byrd, who had come out strongly for the treaty on October 24, still thought a vote could come before the Christmas recess. However, as so often in its turbulent history, SALT II once again fell victim to external events.