



POWER
AND
PRINCIPLE

*Memoirs of the
National Security Adviser
1977-1981*

With a new foreword by the author



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SALT without Linkage

My preference would be for strict controls or even a freeze on new types and new generations of weaponry and with a deep reduction in the strategic arms of both sides. Such a major step towards not only arms limitation but arms reduction would be welcomed by mankind as a giant step towards peace.

—President Jimmy Carter, speech to the United Nations General Assembly, March 17, 1977

Of the many foreign policy debates within the Carter Administration, that over policy toward the Soviet Union was the most prolonged and intense. Policy toward the Soviet Union raised basic questions regarding not only relations with our allies, or diplomacy toward the Middle East, but also fundamental issues concerning the nature of our defense posture and nuclear strategy. In time, the debate divided the Administration, at first ideologically and eventually personally.

This was not initially the case, since we all rejected the way the U.S.-Soviet relationship had evolved under the preceding Administration. Vance and I both felt that detente had been oversold to the American public. We believed a better agreement than the original SALT I could be obtained. However, each of us reached that conclusion for rather different reasons: Vance hoped that a new SALT agreement would pave the way for a wider U.S.-Soviet accommodation, while I saw in it an opportunity to halt or reduce the momentum of the Soviet military buildup.

The Soviets had gained broad strategic parity (having obtained in SALT I American acceptance of Soviet superiority in certain categories of strategic weaponry) and had become more daring in exploiting openings in the Third World. Soviet reliance on the Cuban military proxy in Africa was a particularly bold gambit, and it was paying off. In general, the sustained Soviet strategic and conventional buildup posed the threat that by 1985 Moscow might attain military superiority over the United States—notwithstanding Mr. Kissinger's casual dismissal in 1972 of the importance of such superiority.

Not surprisingly, in that setting the U.S. public was becoming in-

creasingly uneasy about detente. Support for it remained strong within the Democratic Party, particularly in that "liberal establishment" with which the new Secretary of State was closely connected. Moreover, the memory of Vietnam still influenced public sentiment to the point that there was little opposition to arms control or the SALT negotiations, despite growing skepticism about detente itself.

Carter would be the first to admit that he came to the White House without a detailed plan for managing U.S.-Soviet relations. He was, however, determined to move on SALT, and he firmly supported the concept of detente. At the same time, Carter was critical of the way the previous Administration had allowed the Soviet Union to exploit detente, and in campaign speeches developed by me, he had stressed that detente inevitably had to involve both cooperation and competition and that it had to be both more *comprehensive* and more *reciprocal*. These words were deliberately chosen to convey a more purposeful concept of detente, but I doubt that the new President at first could sense the special significance that these "code" words were later to acquire in some of the debates between the NSC and State. (As the months went on, Vance and his colleagues started objecting to the use of these words, and the drafting of almost every Presidential speech involved Vance crossing them out and me reinserting them.) In any case, in early 1977 Carter was determined to achieve greater stability in the U.S.-Soviet relationship primarily through progress in arms control negotiations.

This was very much the position of Cyrus Vance, who over the years had participated in various joint U.S.-Soviet arms control discussions. These informal joint gatherings of top American and Soviet personalities had made a substantial and positive contribution, and Vance became a powerful and well-informed advocate of the proposition that through progress in SALT we could both stabilize the American-Soviet relationship and generate more wide-ranging American-Soviet cooperation. Paul Warnke, a close personal friend of Vance who subsequently became the head of Carter's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, was also a forceful advocate of that view.

My View of Detente

My view was that we should redefine detente into a more purposeful and activist policy for the West. The code words "reciprocal" and "comprehensive" meant to me that we should insist on equal treatment (retaliating in kind, if necessary) and that the Soviets could not have a free ride in some parts of the world while pursuing detente where it suited them. In a book which I had prepared for publication in 1977,

but which I did not publish because of my appointment, I argued that the policy of detente—as defined by Nixon and Brezhnev—began largely as a defensive response by the two powers to a situation in which their unchecked rivalry had become simply too dangerous. By 1975, however, the policy was acquiring on the Soviet side an increasingly assertive character—stimulated largely by the Soviet perception of the wider political consequences of the “aggravated crisis of capitalism” as well as of the post-Vietnam trauma in America. For the U.S.S.R., the strategic goal of detente was to deter the United States from responding effectively to the changing political balance. Soviet spokesmen began to repeat more and more frequently that “the policy of peaceful coexistence has nothing in common with the ‘freezing’ of the social status quo, with any artificial mothballing of the revolutionary process.”* On the contrary, detente and military parity were now said to facilitate significant political change in Western Europe and elsewhere—a policy of active detente similar in many ways to the policy the United States had pursued toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the early sixties.

This policy of “decomposition” was flexible in that it left Soviet strategic choices open. At some point, when the “objective” situation became “historically ripe,” the Soviets could adopt a more revolutionary policy, exploiting such favorable preconditions for a politically decisive test of will, based on an acknowledged military edge. The policy was equally well suited to promote a prolonged process in which, stealthily, a fundamental change in the political complexion of the world would occur. Thus the Soviets subtly combined elements of cooperation and competition, not to preserve the status quo, but to transform it.

Yet this Soviet thrust toward global preeminence was less likely to lead to a Pax Sovietica than to international chaos. The Soviet Union might hope to displace America from its leading role in the international system, but it was too weak economically and too unappealing politically to itself assume that position. This, I argued, was the ultimately self-defeating element in the Soviet policy; it could exploit global anarchy, but was unlikely to be able to transform it to its own enduring advantage. The Soviet danger was of a different order than that usually stressed by staunch conservatives. And this is why I felt that the proper American response should not be a deliberate return to Cold War tensions, but a carefully calibrated policy of simultaneous competition and cooperation of its own, designed to promote a more comprehensive and more reciprocal detente—one which would engage the Soviet Union in a more constructive response to global problems.

At the same time, I argued that we should move away from what I

* See N. N. Inozemtsev in *Kommunist*, No. 18, December 1975.

considered our excessive preoccupation with the U.S.—Soviet relationship, which could only breed either excessively euphoric expectations of an American—Soviet partnership (which would inspire fears abroad of an American—Soviet condominium) or hysterical preoccupations with the U.S.—Soviet confrontation. Instead, I felt that the United States should address itself to a variety of Third World problems, either on its own or through trilateral cooperation with Western Europe and Japan. The Soviet Union should be included in that cooperation whenever it was willing, but should not be made the focal point of American interest to the detriment of the rest of the global agenda.

Finally, I felt strongly that in the U.S.—Soviet competition the appeal of America as a free society could become an important asset, and I saw in human rights an opportunity to put the Soviet Union ideologically on the defensive. Arguing that “human rights is the genuine historical inevitability of our times,” I suggested that by actively pursuing this commitment we could mobilize far greater global support and focus global attention on the glaring internal weaknesses of the Soviet system. As early as February 16, 1976, in a memo submitted jointly with Richard Gardner, I tried to summarize for Carter my general approach in the following terms:

1. The East—West detente is desirable, but it is false to argue—as Kissinger has—that the only alternative to it is a war. The detente relationship is by its very nature a mixed one. It combines elements of both competition and cooperation. That is the underlying reality of the Soviet—American relationship, conditioned by strong historical forces, and that relationship is not likely to be dramatically altered in the future.
2. It is in the U.S. interest to strive to make detente both more comprehensive and more reciprocal. Only a more comprehensive and a more reciprocal detente can enhance peace and promote change within the Communist system. The purpose of detente ought to be precisely such a twofold goal: detente should seek to avoid war, but in so doing it ought to be an instrument of peaceful change. Unless the latter takes place, we can never be certain that the former is enduring.
3. It is in the Soviet interest to keep detente limited and rather one-sided. In fact, the Soviets so interpret it quite explicitly. In a number of comments, the Soviet leaders have openly stated that the detente is meant to promote the “world revolutionary process,” and they see the American—Soviet detente not only as a means of preserving peace but also as a way of creating favorable conditions for the acquisition of power by Communist parties, especially given the so-called aggravated crisis of capitalism.

Initial Soviet Testing

The new President favored a broad improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. He attached high importance not only to SALT but to reactivating the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna (MBFR). Carter was hopeful that we could achieve a comprehensive test ban (CTB), and he pressed us to develop new initiatives, engaging the Soviets in such matters as limits on conventional arms transfers. The Secretary of State also felt strongly that we should do what we could to lift the trade restrictions that were imposed on U.S.-Soviet trade by the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Perhaps most important, the Soviet Union was seen as a possible participant in the resolution of such issues as the Middle East conflict and the racial struggle in southern Africa.

Carter set great stock in personal diplomacy. Accordingly, shortly after the inauguration I suggested to the President that he initiate private correspondence with several top leaders of the world, including Chairman Brezhnev. I did not see these letters as a substitute for negotiations, nor was I naïve enough to think that they would, in and of themselves, resolve any outstanding issues. Nonetheless, I felt that they could be a useful mechanism for developing a personal relationship with key foreign leaders. The first letter to Brezhnev was sent on January 26. It was preceded by some drafting negotiations between Vance and me, which foreshadowed later differences. I noted in my journal for January 25 that "the letter prepared in the State Department is just too gushy and naïve. I tried to tighten it up and gave several recommendations to Carter. He accepted most of them, but even so the letter remains, in my judgment, a little too eager and too gushy. I have now written a memorandum to Vance suggesting further changes, and I have given a copy of it to Carter in the hope of making him focus more on substance and less on atmospherics in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. It seems to me that it is important to press this issue even though it injects me a little earlier into central policy matters than I had planned."

On January 27, I jotted down that "on the morning of the 26th Cy Vance called and told me he accepts my letter and we gave this to the President to sign. Moreover, I gave the President my memo to Cy, urging an approach to the Soviets which is more substantive and less atmospheric and also indicating that it is important for him to stress to the Soviets that we take a number of issues very seriously and that accommodation with them will be based to some degree on their willingness to adjust on these issues. The President told me that he had read this memo and had assimilated it."

The letter was generally friendly in tone and the President stressed in it that "it is my goal to improve relations with the Soviet Union on

Nixon and Kissinger have oversold it as having already laid the basis for "the generation of peace." Moreover, they have adopted a stance of moral indifference, as exemplified in the recommendation to the President that he refrain from receiving Solzhenitsyn. The result of this oversell has been rising domestic disappointment with detente, prompting now a tendency to the other extreme, namely to reject detente as a whole.

5. A comprehensive and reciprocal detente would mean in practice:

- i. Scrupulous fulfillment of the Helsinki agreement. Hence it is important that the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of that agreement be closely monitored, especially in regard to human rights.
- ii. Making it unmistakably clear to the Soviet Union that detente requires responsible behavior from them on fundamental issues of global order and it is incompatible with irresponsible behavior in Angola, the Middle East, and the UN (e.g., stimulation of extremist resolutions such as the one equating Zionism with racism).
- iii. In a more polycentric Communist world, the United States ought to have itself a more polycentric policy, and not deal exclusively with Moscow. Thus more attention should be paid to China, since the Chinese and American relationship bears very directly on the American-Soviet relationship. There should be movement toward the further upgrading of our political relationships. Moreover, the abandonment of the policy of benign neglect toward Eastern Europe is desirable, for the United States ought to be at least as interested in Eastern Europe as the Soviet Union is in Latin America.
- iv. There should be continued efforts to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on arms control, and there should be particularly an effort made to lower the present SALT ceilings. The ceilings are too high and they make possible not only further weapons deployment but they also breed mutual insecurities. At the same time, it would be highly desirable for the Soviet Union to become more explicit about its own longer-term strategic plans, for the very secrecy which surrounds its strategic planning breeds insecurity and suspicion on the American side (which, in contrast, is completely open about its longer-term strategic planning).

This memorandum spelled out the fundamentals of my approach to the Soviet question, providing a consistent guide for the various policy debates in which subsequently I became engaged.

the basis of reciprocity, mutual respect and benefit." Carter noted Brezhnev's speech at Tula in which Brezhnev had stated that the Soviet Union would not seek superiority in arms. He assured Brezhnev that this was the U.S. position as well, noting that "there are three areas where progress can be made toward this goal." The first would involve the rapid conclusion of SALT; the second, an adequately verified comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, accompanied by greater openness about our respective strategic policies (a point that I insisted on inserting into the letter); and the third called for renewed efforts to achieve progress in MBFR. The President also went on to tell Brezhnev that the United States would be actively seeking a peaceful settlement to the Middle Eastern and southern African disputes, and that it was his "belief that the U.S.S.R. can contribute to the realization of progress towards peace in both of these critical areas." Carter concluded the letter by expressing the hope for an early summit meeting.

On February 1, Carter met with Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Ambassador, for the first time. The meeting lasted one hour and was designed to underline some of the points made in the letter to Brezhnev. In my conversations and in a memorandum to the President before the meeting, I urged him to determine very delicately what overall message and impression he wanted the charming and skillful Dobrynin to report to the Politburo. I suggested that he emphasize his interest in concrete progress: accommodation on SALT, reciprocal restraint in crisis areas, and the mutual reduction of insecurity with regard to each side's intentions and capabilities.

In the course of the meeting the President called for a tangible, drastic reduction in nuclear weapons, reduction of the possibility of a preemptive strike, some reduction of conventional weapons, and a reduction in international arms sales. Carter also told Dobrynin that he preferred to separate the cruise missile and Backfire issues from SALT II (both matters left unresolved in the previous Administration's negotiations with the Soviets). He indicated that he wanted to confine SALT II to numbers, but that the other issues would be open to negotiation later. Following a successful conclusion to SALT II, the President said, he would like to see the total number of nuclear missiles reduced to several hundred.

I was somewhat disappointed in the meeting, because, as I noted then, Carter "went into the general propositions, but he also skipped quite a bit from topic to topic, getting rather involved in specifics. Dobrynin, who at first was quite nervous and was obviously suffering from a certain stage fright, began to assert his diplomatic skills, to pump Carter quite skillfully, probing for his positions on SALT, the Middle East, the Indian Ocean, and so forth. . . . Sensing my unease, Carter later commented when we were alone, 'I tried to stick to the generalities but he kept probing me for specifics.'"

In addition, Vance and I met separately with Dobrynin. My first meeting with the Ambassador was on the evening of January 24, and I was impressed by his persistence in seeking to learn how we would organize ourselves to negotiate SALT and by his hints that it would be useful for him to maintain a back-channel relationship with me. Conscious of Vance's concerns, "I made a point of emphasizing that from now on the Secretary of State will conduct negotiations," though I did not foreclose consultative meetings. I had lunch with Dobrynin shortly thereafter, and meetings over a meal—either at the Soviet Embassy or in my office—subsequently became a frequent occurrence.

Dobrynin and his wife and granddaughter also came to my house, and occasionally we played chess. A skillful and sophisticated debater, Dobrynin always reminded me of an amiable bear, who could all of a sudden turn quite nasty. In his discussions with me he never lost his cool, except—and invariably—whenever I suggested that Gyorgy Arbatov (the director of the Soviet Institute on America) was an influential Soviet figure. Dobrynin would become red in the face and vehemently inform me that Arbatov was a man of no standing and little influence—a creation of the American media.

It is a well-established Soviet practice to quickly take the measure of a new U.S. President by pressing him hard on some issue. Carter was no exception. Brezhnev's initial response of February 4 to the President's letter had been relatively positive. Brezhnev commented—some-what patronizingly—that he "found it on the whole constructive and encouraging," and he stressed that "to achieve disarmament is, due to objective reasons, the central area of relations between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. at the present time." He seized upon Carter's earlier references to the Middle East and to Africa, stressing that cooperation in these areas between the Soviet Union and the United States was essential. He also indicated that he would be prepared to discuss the possibility of a meeting with Carter when Secretary Vance visited Moscow. It was evident from Brezhnev's letter that the Soviets hoped to obtain from the new American President a quick SALT agreement, based on the earlier Vladivostok arrangement with former President Ford, including the Soviet version of the understanding on the cruise missile.

Carter personally decided to respond to Brezhnev with a much broader proposal. On February 7, he directed Vance and me to immediately develop a response which would be, according to a handwritten note that he sent us, "personal and specific, including in particular comments on SALT II (less cruise missiles and Backfire?), SALT III (substantial reductions), demilitarized Indian Ocean, prior notice of all missile test firings, throw-weight limits, prohibition of mobile missiles (including SS-20), civil defense limitations, reduced arms sales, Berlin, human rights." I worried that this might be too much

altogether. This was the Soviet position at its most extreme. Brezhnev went on to ridicule Carter's expression of concern regarding unpimpeded access to Berlin by suggesting that "it is sent to a wrong address." To Carter's rather carefully crafted comments on human rights (which were intended to be reassuring) the Soviet leader wrote scathingly that he would not "allow interference in our internal affairs, whatever pseudo-humanitarian slogans are used to present it," and took particular exception to the exchange of letters that had just taken place between the President and the Soviet Nobel Peace Prize winner, Andrei Sakharov. Describing it as "correspondence with a renegade who proclaimed himself an enemy of the Soviet state," Brezhnev rather ominously added, "We would not like to have our patience tested in any matters of international policy, including the questions of Soviet-American relations." Brezhnev's letter was a jolt to Carter. My private notes for the day, February 28, convey how the key principals in Washington reacted, and—interestingly—they foreshadow Carter's later decision to move on China:

The most important item of the day was the letter from Brezhnev to Carter. It was waiting for me on my desk when I arrived at work this morning in an "eyes only" envelope from Vance. Vance described the letter as "good, hard hitting, to the point." But I read it rather differently. It struck me as being brutal, cynical, sneering, and even patronizing. It certainly was no response to Carter's effort to get a negotiating process going and to establish some measure of even personal correspondence. It was a very sharp rebuff.

Toward the end of the day when General Haig was leaving Carter's office, Carter said for me to stay behind and then we sat and talked for about half an hour to forty minutes. He asked me what I thought of the letter and I told him. He agreed with my diagnosis. He was quite taken aback by the letter. He said he was disappointed by it, but at the same time he indicated that he was not affected by this. He stressed a couple of times that it didn't bother him. I could tell to some extent it was a disappointment. We discussed how we should handle it and in what manner we could best respond. I was also struck by the fact that Carter said that he would like to consider now taking more initiatives toward China, something which clearly must have occurred to him in the light of this rather unpleasant response by Brezhnev. It is quite obvious that the letter was a bucket of cold water and must have been a disappointment if he really expected that there could be very rapid movement toward SALT. In some ways I was made to think of the first encounter between Khrushchev and Kennedy when Khrushchev almost tried to talk

at once, and suggested that the draft indicate to Brezhnev that any effort to widen our collaboration and to contain our competition must be based on reciprocity. Accordingly, in the message to Brezhnev, the President noted that the U.S.-Soviet "competition—which is real, very expensive, and which neither of us can deny—can at some point become very dangerous, and therefore it should not go unchecked. To me, this dictates nothing less than an effort, first, to widen where we can our collaborative efforts, especially in regard to nuclear arms limitations; and, second, the exercise of very deliberate self-restraint in regard to those trouble spots in the world which could produce a direct confrontation between us." Finally, I prepared for Carter, and Vance approved, a rather personal paragraph, designed to appeal to Russian pride: "I know and admire your history. As a child, I developed a literary taste by reading your classics. I know also how much, and how very recently, your people have suffered in the course of the last war. I know of your personal role in that war, and of the sacrifices that were imposed on every Soviet family. That is why I believe we are both sincere when we state our dedication to peace, and this gives me hope for the future."

The letter left open the possibility of either a comprehensive SALT II proposal like the one Vance subsequently took to Moscow or, alternatively, a quick agreement which would defer the questions of the cruise missile and the Soviet Backfire bomber. The letter noted that "recently there seems to have been an increasing inclination to create new tensions and constraints in Berlin, which could cause deterioration in the delicate political balance there. I trust that you will help to alleviate these tensions." It also expressed the hope that all of the understandings reached in Helsinki would be respected by the Soviet Union. To reassure the Soviets, Carter added that "it is not our intention to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. We do not wish to create problems for the Soviet Union. But it will be necessary for our government to express publicly on occasion the sincere and deep feelings of myself and our people. Our commitment to the furtherance of human rights will not be pursued stridently or in a manner inconsistent with the achievement of reasonable results. We would also, of course, welcome private, confidential exchanges on these delicate areas."

Brezhnev responded on February 25 in a chilling manner. Referring to Carter's letter, he began by saying that "I want to talk bluntly about our impression and thoughts it evoked. As I understand, you are for such straightforward talk." He made it plain that any agreement on SALT had to be based on the Vladivostok understanding, including the point that "in January of last year a concrete formula for the accounting of air-to-surface cruise missiles within the aggregate of strategic arms was practically agreed upon." In addition, the letter insisted that the Backfire ought to be excluded from the agreement

Kennedy down and tried to browbeat him into concessions. The letter from Brezhnev had a little bit of the same tone. In any case, one of its consequences may be that there will be fewer illusions concerning how easy or difficult it will be to resolve some of the outstanding issues in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. In that sense, this may be a very salutary experience.

In spite of Carter's private efforts to reassure both Brezhnev and Dobrynin that he was not planning to use human rights primarily as an anti-Soviet weapon, the incident with the Sakharov letter had clearly touched a raw nerve. One has to concede that this event did not help the relationship between the new Administration and the Soviet Union. But a harsh reaction was not the only course open to the Soviets: they could have simply ignored, or at least played down, the matter. At our end, it is difficult to see, even in retrospect, what other course of action Carter could have pursued. The letter arrived shortly after the inaugural. Sakharov congratulated the new President on his commitment to human rights and drew attention to the human-rights problem in the Soviet Union. We all felt that the President had to reply. The prestige of the author was such that failing to do so would invite adverse comparisons with the widely criticized refusal by President Ford to meet with Solzhenitsyn. Had the Nobel Peace Prize winner been a resident of Chile, the liberal press would have been outraged by Carter's failure to respond. Moreover, American-Soviet relations had not been hurt by Brezhnev's direct contacts with Gus Hall and other pro-Soviet American activists, nor did we take public exception to Soviet proclamations that the world was destined to experience a global revolution. We had every right to insist that human rights was the wave of the future, not to speak of the fact that it would have been cowardly to ignore Sakharov's letter.

Accordingly, Vance and I drafted a carefully worded reply to Sakharov couched in language that made it clear that the President's concern was global in character and not focused specifically on the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, probably to drive home to Carter their sense of outrage, and to demonstrate our impotence, in subsequent months the Soviets stepped up sharply their suppression of human-rights activists.

Seeking Deep SALT Cuts

The initial correspondence between Carter and Brezhnev, in spite of the controversy over Sakharov, set the broad context for our policy efforts. With arms control as our immediate preoccupation, we engaged in the urgent effort to frame a new SALT negotiating approach. This phase culminated in the Moscow talks (March 28-30, 1977) between

Vance and Gromyko and in the Soviet rejection of the two U.S. proposals that Vance brought with him.

On Thursday, February 3, I chaired the first meeting of the Special Coordination Committee on SALT. I was sensitive to the fact that previously the Assistant for National Security Affairs never chaired NSC committee meetings at the top Cabinet level. Since under the new system established by President Carter I was to chair the SCC, I felt it prudent to suggest to the President that he open the meeting himself, and then leave the room, yielding the chair to me. I felt that this would make my role somewhat more palatable to the others, with the chairman's mantle bestowed upon me personally and visibly by the President himself.

This meeting was essentially exploratory. The President underlined his commitment to deep cuts, a position with which all the principals were now familiar.* At this initial meeting there was a consensus that we should pursue a comprehensive SALT II agreement, the framework of which would be along the lines of the U.S. proposal of January 1976, which in turn had evolved from the formulas agreed to in Vladivostok, and then later by Kissinger in Moscow. The key unresolved issues in these negotiations were whether the new Backfire bomber should be subjected to strict SALT limitations, and what range constraints were to be imposed on the cruise missiles that the United States hoped to deploy in the early 1980s. To get an agreement quickly, we explored the possibility of deferring the Backfire and cruise missile issues to later negotiations. Though no substantive decisions were reached, the SCC commissioned an interagency working group to develop alternative packages in two general categories: (1) packages based on the Vladivostok agreement and the January 1976 U.S. proposal; and (2) a package based on significant reductions for both sides (e.g., reducing the overall aggregate tentatively agreed to at Vladivostok from 2,400 down to 2,000 or even less).

In the weeks that followed, several more SCC meetings were held, to review alternative SALT packages that the working group developed and to resolve internal issues. There were wide differences among the various agencies on the preferred opening proposal, although we all agreed that an effort should be made to move beyond the final negotiat-

* Prior to the inaugural, the President-elect had met for broad strategic briefings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on more than one occasion, and he had startled them by asking whether they felt that American security and the strategic balance could be maintained if both the Soviet Union and the United States were to reduce their arsenals to 200 ICBMs each. It was unclear to me at the time whether the JCS were more astonished by this notion or more tempted to exploit it to avoid any progress on arms control altogether. Paul Nitze, a well-known critic of the SALT negotiations, with whom the President consulted on more than one occasion, also pressed for very deep and comprehensive cuts, at least down to the level of 1,000 missiles.

ing positions of the Ford Administration. I limited my role largely to that of chairing, posing questions, and becoming familiar with the details of the various options. I felt that I could serve the President best if I could ensure that the JCS view was fairly taken into consideration in the shaping of SALT proposals, so that subsequently SALT would not be opposed by the Pentagon when it came up for ratification.

For example, on March 11, I noted in my journal that "yesterday we had an excellent SALT meeting, and I was quite pleased with the way the whole meeting developed. For one thing, I was able to guide it much more effectively. I got the participants to lay out their positions. I deliberately asked Paul Warnke to speak first, and then I had him followed by Harold Brown, and then General [George] Brown [Chairman of the JCS], and then I gave the last word to Cy Vance, thereby balancing the softs and the hards and trying to create a framework for agreement. I am hopeful that by the end of this week and early next week we will have several options to lay out before the President, and then he will have to decide his basic choice and also try to prime the delegation, particularly Cy, for a firm and unyielding stand in Moscow. It is to be expected that the Russians will try to be quite tough, and we should not immediately pull back and start making concessions, which I suspect some members of the U.S. delegation will be tempted to do."

By the middle of March, our proposals started to take shape. In early March, my deputy, David Aaron, Roger Molander, who was exceptionally knowledgeable on SALT, and Victor Utgoff, a new member of the NSC and a specialist in systems analysis, had come up with the ingenious notion that we consider an ICBM freeze as an option for Moscow. This was based on the desirability of limiting the momentum of Soviet ICBM modernization. At the March 10 SCC meeting I raised that idea, and Harold Brown responded positively to it. This came to be a significant element in the later SALT II agreement, providing for the first time a mutually agreed impediment to the acquisition of a new generation of offensive weaponry.

The real stumbling blocks remained the Backfire and cruise missile issues. The State Department and the ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) favored an accommodating posture, one which in effect exempted the Backfire and imposed strict limits on the cruise missile. Defense and the Joint Chiefs took almost a diametrically opposing view. In the early meetings, the Defense Department tended to dominate the discussions, and it was with a touch of relief that I noted (on March 3) that "in the SALT meeting yesterday the State Department was more assertive and as a consequence I think we will go into next week's SALT discussions with options which are a little more realistic than those that so far have been put forth by Defense."

There was general consensus among all the participants, both civilian

and military, in favor of deep cuts, and it is not true, as was subsequently alleged, that the deep-cuts proposal was foisted on Carter by Brown and/or me. Indeed, Vance and Warnke submitted on March 18 to the President a memorandum to that effect. At that time they wrote: "We share your objective of reaching a meaningful SALT agreement as soon as possible. As you have made clear, such an agreement could include substantial reductions in strategic forces on both sides and limitations on the introduction of new weapons. One approach would be to seek to defer the Backfire and cruise missile issues, conclude an agreement based on Vladivostok, and proceed immediately with further negotiations. Another way to achieve the same objective would be to seek an agreement now which includes significant reductions and resolves the Backfire and cruise missile issues. Since follow-on negotiations are likely to require years to complete, a more comprehensive agreement this year would involve less risk than concluding a minimal agreement now and relying on subsequent negotiations to pursue our main objectives."

I favored modest cuts as the most attainable goal. On March 11, I sent the President a memo outlining four basic SALT outcomes: (1) deferral of contentious issues; (2) modest cuts to approximately 2,000 strategic delivery systems; (3) Vladivostok levels; and (4) deep cuts below 2,000. I supported option 2, stating that it was unlikely the Soviets would agree to more than that. I also reported that "Cy and Paul are prepared to accept within that context a separate limit of 300 for Backfire as well as collateral constraints, whereas Harold and JCS feel that without the lower aggregate of 2,000, deployment of Backfire (beyond the limit of 120) should be counted in the aggregate."

The U.S. negotiating position for the meeting in Moscow at the end of March was finally hammered out in two top-level meetings with the President held on March 19 and 22. The March 19 meeting was attended by the President, the Vice President, Vance, myself, and Brown (who had not originally been included but was added at my urging to achieve greater balance), and it was meant to review the draft Presidential Directive which I had prepared. It provided for three options. The first choice called for "deferral" until a follow-on resolution of the Backfire and cruise missile issues, with the rest of SALT II to be based on the Vladivostok levels. The second, and less preferred, option involved reductions to 2,000 (from the Vladivostok total of 2,400) for all ICBMs and to 1,200 (from 1,320) for MIRVed ICBMs; a limit on heavy ICBMs (which applied specifically to the Soviet side) to 150, which they currently possessed; an ICBM freeze; and a 1,500-kilometer across-the-board limit on cruise missiles. Finally, a third alternative essentially split the difference between the other two, and it was to be held back as "the least desirable" outcome.

At the meeting Carter instructed that the deep-cuts proposal be made

the preferred alternative. The proposed levels for aggregates were reduced further to 1,800-2,000 and to 1,100-1,200 respectively, while the cruise missile range limit in the reduction proposal was changed to 2,500 kilometers largely on Brown's recommendation. The latter change was done largely to get the JCS to support the proposal, though I did note in my journal that "the position on the cruise missiles was toughened in my judgment somewhat beyond the point of need, thereby reducing the likelihood of Soviet acceptance." Unfortunately, this remark was correct.

The NSC meeting on March 22 was largely pro forma. After I presented various negotiating options, the President led a discussion largely designed to obtain JCS support for the SALT package. As I wrote in my journal: "I was quite impressed by the way Carter massaged the JCS. On the one hand, he made a number of statements which seemed to indicate his concerns for the things that the JCS stress—on-site verification, no free ride for the Soviets with regard to the Backfire, and yet all in all he was able to put through proposals which have rather different consequences insofar as these specific items are concerned. We have also instructed Vance to put forth the two proposals and to stick to them, and I think that is quite important. We also stressed to him that the Soviets are likely to reject and ridicule our proposals, but that he has to stand fast." Specifically, he was told to submit only the first two options, but not the third, even if the Soviet reaction was negative.

I foresaw just such an outcome, and wrote on March 25 that "I expect that the Soviets will not accept our preferred offer and that at best we will come out with our third option. If, however, we can stand fast and not be intimidated and keep pressing, it is conceivable that the Soviets will come around and accept our first proposal, which in that case would mark a really significant turning point in the U.S.—Soviet relationship. If accepted, it would mean a true impediment to a continued arms race, a true stand-down in the level of the arms race, and an arrangement which by and large would ensure political and strategic stability as well as parity." For this reason, I very much favored our not revealing the third proposal until a sufficient time had elapsed to convince the Soviets that we were prepared to stand pat and, if necessary, even to engage in an arms race.

As Vance prepared to go to Moscow, there was a subtle improvement in the tone and substance of Presidential correspondence with Brezhnev. As I have already noted, Brezhnev's letter of February 25 had exercised Carter a great deal, and much of the response was drafted by the President himself. Vance had urged the President "not to let yourself be drawn into a tone of equal harshness in your reply," and suggested focusing on substance alone. The President, however, felt that the State Department draft contained too much of an explanation of his position on human rights, and that "I do not need to explain

myself to the Soviets." Accordingly, he rejected the proposed draft (which was actually quite firm) with the somewhat unkind comment that this "wouldn't have been worth the stamp if we were to mail it to Moscow."

My own view was that the President should take some exception to the tone of Brezhnev's letter, and Carter incorporated an introductory paragraph by me which said: "Your letter of February 25 caused me some concern because of its somewhat harsh tone, because it failed to assume good faith on my part, and because there was no positive response to the specific suggestions contained in my previous letter. The differences between our two countries are deep enough, and I hope that you and I never compound them by doubts about our respective personal motives." He went further, adding: "Please do not predicate your future correspondence on the erroneous assumption that we lack sincerity, integrity or a will to make rapid progress toward mutually advantageous agreements. I do not underestimate the difficulty of the substantive issues or the technical details, but we are determined to succeed."

I spent an evening reworking the President's draft because I was concerned that "he is proposing too many things all at the same time, and this is bound to generate unnecessary confusion. It may also make the Russians feel that he is really not serious about his proposals." In a novel departure, the President accepted my suggestion to send the message to Brezhnev through the hot line. The hot line had never been used this way before, and we felt that it might be useful to employ it for direct personal communications, obviating the need to go through our respective Foreign Ministries or Embassies.

Brezhnev's response came on March 15. It was briefer, focused almost entirely on SALT proposals, and was businesslike in tone. However, it reiterated the Soviet position on cruise missiles and insisted again that the SALT agreement should be essentially a reflection of the Vladivostok understanding—as defined by the Soviets. Referring to the earlier exchanges on the tone of correspondence, Brezhnev was conciliatory, noting that "I do not quite understand the meaning of your reference to the tone of my letter of February 25. Its tone is usual—businesslike and considerate." On the eve of Cy's departure to Moscow, I gave the President a memo recommending that he give Vance a personal, handwritten note addressed to Brezhnev. I suggested that the President emphasize his commitment to arms reduction, say that Cy spoke on his behalf and enjoyed his complete confidence and that he hoped to continue the personal correspondence.

In addition, on the President's personal instructions, I phoned Dobrynin to convey a personal message from Carter to Brezhnev. It was to the effect that the President was determined to put through a SALT agreement, but he could only do so in a comprehensive and

constructive fashion during the first year, when he had maximum political leverage. The President also told me to tell Dobrynin that negative comments in the Soviet press about him (generated by the human-rights controversy) made it difficult to sustain this positive approach to U.S.-Soviet relations.

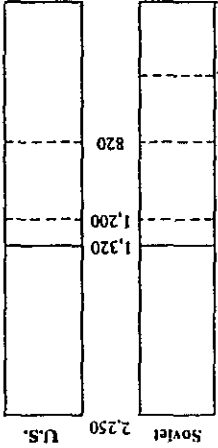
The Soviets were unmoved, and turned down the two U.S. SALT proposals immediately. Vance then cabled back proposing that we submit our third option to the Soviets, but (as I noted in my journal on March 30) "both Mondale and I felt very strongly that this should not be so, and the President approved a message to [Vance] indicating that he should stand fast. . . . I was rather surprised that Cy was so willing immediately to retreat to our fallback position." Cy's own assessment, cabled from Moscow, was more consistent with our original expectations: "My view is that they have calculated, perhaps mistakenly, that pressure will build on us to take another position. One of their problems apparently is that they feel we have departed too far from the basic Vladivostok framework. . . . In any case, although the results on SALT were definitely disappointing, we should not be discouraged. A certain testing period was probably to be expected."

Accordingly, I wrote on March 30 that "if the American public stands fast and we do not get clobbered with the SALT issue, I think we can really put a lot of pressure on the Soviets. We have developed an approach which is very forthcoming; on the one hand, we are urging reductions, with the other hand we are urging a freeze, and at the same time we are urging more recognition for human rights. All of that gives us a very appealing position, and I can well imagine that the Soviets feel in many respects hemmed in. However, all of that could begin to collapse if any of our colleagues begins to act weak-kneed and starts urging that we start making concessions to the Soviets."

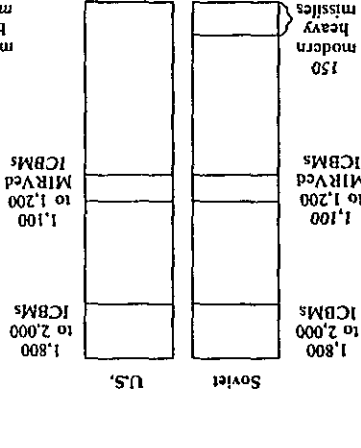
Unfortunately, within days the press adopted an increasingly critical attitude, arguing that the United States had overplayed its hand. In so doing, it exploited Vance's own admission, made in the course of his return from Moscow, that perhaps we had miscalculated to some degree. The press also played up comments by some members of Vance's delegation, which included Leslie Gelb, to the effect that the United States should have simply gone forth with the original Vladivostok formula. The Washington Post led its story with the headline "Some Aides Feel U.S. Miscalculated," with its staff writer, Murrey Marder, writing that American sources had privately conceded that the Administration had made a basic misjudgment. All of that contributed to greater pressure on Carter to revise his position and made it more difficult for us to hold the line.

With the benefit of hindsight, it seems to me that our side perhaps did make the mistake of discussing too publicly its proposals for comprehensive cuts. We hoped it would generate wider understanding of the

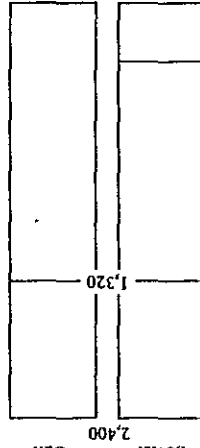
SALT II LIMITS
(Launchers)



COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL
(Spring 1977)

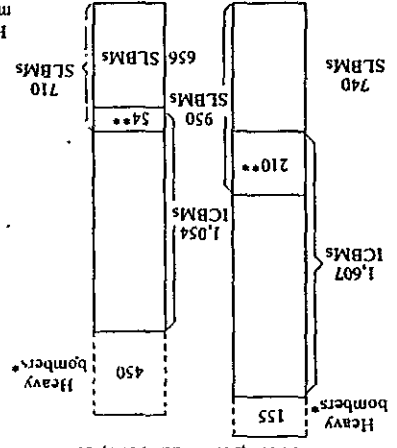


VLADIVOSTOK LIMITS
(November 1974)
(Launchers)



AGGREGATE STRATEGIC FORCE LIMITS

SALT I LIMITS
(1972 Interim Agmt)



SALT II decided issues of Backfire bomber & cruise missiles:
A. Backfire not heavy bomber launcher
B. Cruise missile not single launcher

Aggregate (missiles & heavy bombers)
1,800 to 2,000 ICBMs
1,100 to 1,200 MIRVed missiles
150 U.S. modern heavy missiles

Aggregate (missiles & heavy bombers)
2,400 MIRVed missiles
1,320 U.S.S.R. allowed 308 modern heavy missiles
U.S.S.R. modern heavy missiles counted as single launchers

Heavy bombers not constrained by SALT I Limits
Numbers of heavy bombers
MIRVed missiles
Key issues left unresolved:
A. Should Backfire bomber (U.S.S.R.) be counted as heavy bomber
B. Should U.S. cruise missiles be counted as single launchers

constructive character of our proposals, but it might have been wiser to prepare the ground through confidential discussions with Dobrynin in Washington and with the Soviet leaders through our Ambassador in Moscow. Our public pronouncements regarding the forthcoming U.S. proposals on deep cuts might have created the impression in Moscow that an acceptance of them would be a one-sided concession to Carter. However, it should not be overlooked that the Soviets also rejected our more modest fallback proposal, and it is quite evident that the Soviet side wanted to extract maximum concessions from Carter—concessions that he could not make politically and which could not be justified strategically. The Soviet interpretation of the Vladivostok agreement, particularly as it pertained to the Backfire and cruise missile issues, was clearly one-sided. In fact, two years later, when the SALT II agreement was finally reached, the Soviet side did accept, by and large, the postulates on these two issues that we advanced in March 1977.

Salvaging Detente

The Soviets rejected our two SALT proposals without even making a counterproposal. Responding to Vance's press briefing in Moscow on the U.S. proposals, the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, engaged in an angry, podium-thumping speech to journalists calling the U.S. package a "cheap and shady maneuver" to gain unilateral advantage for the United States. This generated widespread international and domestic concern that detente was coming to an end. Given the sharpness of the Soviet rejection, the President decided that I ought to give, for the first time, a public on-the-record briefing on our SALT position, and I did so in the White House on April 1.

In my briefing, I laid particular stress on the proposition that our proposals were designed not only to halt but to reduce the arms competition and that we continued to hope for renewed negotiations. I refused to label the Moscow meeting as a breakdown, thus keeping the doors open to resumed negotiations. In my explanation of the U.S. position, I put special emphasis on the proposition that "the time is ripe for doing something more than creating a framework for further competition" in nuclear weaponry. As Reuters put it, "Mr. Brzezinski's attitude at the White House press conference seemed to reflect the view that detente had not necessarily been derailed."

In private, we confronted a far more difficult task. Were we to stand pat on our SALT proposals or, instead, begin to adjust our position so as to make it more palatable to the Soviets? More generally, how were we to widen detente so as to make it more comprehensive and genuinely reciprocal, thereby also both more stable and more acceptable to the

American people? Finally, in this context, what response were we to generate to the continuing and growing Soviet strategic challenge? The Soviets were making every effort to obtain from President Carter a quick SALT agreement on terms favorable to the Soviet Union. They wanted us to accept detente as the major priority of American foreign policy, with its implied acceptance of Soviet proxy expansionism in Third World areas. On the Middle East, the Soviets were in effect proposing a U.S.-U.S.S.R. condominium. The Soviets must have assumed that Carter's public commitment to SALT gave them bargaining leverage which could be exploited to obtain these ends.

I confess that I was becoming rather skeptical about the prospects for progress. I wrote on April 3: "Today we met in the White House—the President, Cy Vance, Paul Warnke, Fritz Mondale, and myself—to review the Moscow mission. Both Cy and Paul emphasized that the Soviets were quite cordial, in spite of their firm rejection. Nonetheless, I do feel that neither they nor the President really appreciate the degree to which the Soviets are hostile to our proposal and the extent to which they wish to put us under pressure. My guess is the going will be much tougher than any of them realize. Much will depend on the extent to which the press, the mass media more generally, and Congress support us on this issue. And at stake may be the longer-range nature of the U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship, including the capacity of this country to stand up to a challenge somewhere in the early 1980s." Thus, my view was that the ball was in the Soviet court and we should sit tight and wait for a counterproposal.

But Carter was under pressure not only domestically but also from our allies to take a somewhat more forthcoming position. Both Callaghan and Schmidt were in touch with Carter during the late spring and early summer, stressing Brezhnev's allegedly conciliatory attitude and urging Carter to reciprocate in kind. For example, in mid-July, Schmidt told the President that Brezhnev should be viewed as actively promoting detente and needing Western help. The President also told me that he received a letter from Callaghan reporting both Schmidt's and Brezhnev's concerns about Carter's foreign policy and about some of the people around Carter. I laughed and said, "Myself included, of course." The President did not deny it.

One way to resume contact was through an early Carter-Brezhnev summit. Knowing of Carter's interest in an early summit meeting, the Soviets refused to commit themselves to it in advance of "prior agreements." I had proposed in 1976, and I repeated the proposal publicly with the President's approval in mid-April 1977, that both sides adopt the practice of holding regular, informal annual discussion meetings not tied to specific agreements. I felt that such meetings would provide the basis for more serious discussion of contentious issues, with-

out generating public expectation of wide-ranging agreement. My hope was to create a forum for informal, in-depth discussion, so that through a gradually growing understanding it would become easier to resolve negotiating conflicts.

In his private correspondence with the Soviets, the President repeatedly referred to the possibility of a summit. Since the Soviets had again indicated in their oral note of June 3 that they would prefer not to have a summit until the agreement on SALT had been worked out, I urged the President not to repeat the invitation, but he did so again in his letter to Brezhnev of June 9. Carter wrote that he hoped "I can welcome you to our nation at an early date so that you and I can pursue personally our goals of disarmament, peace, trade, and increasing cooperation and friendship. If a formal visit to Washington should prove inconvenient to you, we might consider a less formal meeting, perhaps in Alaska, somewhat similar to your previous meeting in Vladivostok." Although I had reservations about having a summit, the Alaska proposal was my idea, since that would lend itself to a more informal, consultative type of meeting along the lines of my earlier proposal. However, the Soviets were not only unmoved but increasingly graceless in their response. On June 30, Brezhnev wrote to Carter, reiterating the Soviet position on SALT and ending with the following abrupt comment: "Now about our meeting. We have already brought to your attention our considerations on that subject. Therefore, there seems to be no need of repeating them here."

From April on, Carter came to commit an inordinate amount of time to the SALT effort. He would meet frequently with his key advisers on a Saturday morning, in sessions lasting sometimes as much as two or three hours. He carefully monitored the work of the SCC, which met with increasing frequency, and on which I would report to him the same day a given meeting was held. He would review carefully the instructions that I would send to Paul Warnke when he was negotiating in Geneva, or to Cy Vance when he was scheduled to meet either with Dobrynin or with Gromyko. He would meet with the JCS in order to solicit their support, to reduce their concerns, and to give them a sense of genuine participation in the shaping and refining of our proposals. Last but not least, he also engaged himself in direct talks with Ambassador Dobrynin, a development which both Vance and I viewed with some apprehension. We felt it was unwise for the President to become, in effect, the principal negotiator, whereas he probably felt that the issue was too important to be left to Vance or to me.

The first such "negotiating" session was held on April 12. Prior to it, I told the President that Vance and I felt that the meeting should not be too long and that he should try to take the offensive and not let Dobrynin set the pace of the discussion. (What I feared, of course, was

a repetition of the first Carter-Dobrynin meeting.) Unfortunately, the meeting did not go well. Dobrynin was surprisingly aggressive, frequently interrupted the President, and tried to score debating points. As I noted afterwards: "I rather feared Dobrynin went away feeling that our first option, which is in favor of a comprehensive reduction and freeze, is no longer viable, and that is what happens when one negotiates on the spot. Subsequently, both Mondale and I agreed that this went much too far and that an effort will have to be made to pull the thing back." To make matters worse, we had not undertaken yet a comprehensive assessment of our position, and I was afraid Dobrynin might transmit a wrong signal to Moscow as to where the United States stood.

In subsequent weeks, Vance and Warnke met further with Dobrynin. I also met with him for an extensive session in which I attempted to put our SALT negotiations in the larger context of American-Soviet relations. I tried to make the Ambassador understand that unless there was progress on SALT soon, we faced the prospect of a slide in the opposite direction. At the same time, we in the Administration continued our substantive work on SALT, with the President providing personal leadership. An important session was held on Saturday, April 25, at which a new position was reached, essentially combining some elements of our initial comprehensive cuts proposal with the so-called deferral option. At this meeting both Harold Brown and I urged somewhat stiffer conditions, and I noted in my journal that "there is a tendency on our side to want an agreement so badly that we begin changing our proposals until the point is reached that the Russians are prepared to consider it."

During this period I also started talking more frequently about this matter with Ham Jordan, in order to get a better feel of the domestic political side. Jordan became an increasingly valued ally in my attempts to maintain a tougher position. He agreed that no further changes should be made, for this would weaken the President politically. I hoped that he would tell the President this directly and thereby make the President more resistant to Vance and Warnke's entreaties for a more conciliatory approach.

The discussions with Dobrynin paid off and, in effect, negotiations resumed in early May. On the eighteenth of that month, Vance and Gromyko met for another SALT session. Instead of dealing with a flat Soviet rejection, we were now engaged in trying to narrow the differences between our respective negotiating positions. These differences at this stage involved: (1) whether the aggregate level of delivery systems would be 2,250 (Soviet position) vs. 2,150 (U.S.); (2) whether the MIRV (multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle) level should be 1,320 (Soviet) vs. 1,200 (U.S.); (3) whether the ALCM

(air-launched cruise missiles) limits should be in the treaty (Soviet or the protocol (U.S.); (4) whether ALCM-carrying heavy bombers should count in the 1,320 (Soviet) vs. a sublimit of 250 (U.S.); (5) whether MIRVed heavy missiles should be further limited to 190 (U.S.); (6) whether there should be a sublimit of 250 on Backfire (U.S.); and (7) whether the ban on new ICBMs should apply only to MIRVed ICBMs (Soviet) or all ICBMs (U.S.). In the meantime, it was jointly agreed that the arrangements regarding cruise missiles would run for three instead of two years, that SLCM (submarine-launched cruise missiles) and GLCM (ground-launched cruise missiles) testing and deployment would be limited to 600 kilometers for that period, and that mobile ICBMs would be banned. This represented some genuine progress.

Throughout the summer I made a sustained effort to obtain JCS support and to mediate the disputes, which largely arose between Harold Brown and Paul Warnke. My notes for August 17 are typical of this concern: "Cy Vance and I tend to represent the middle position and on all of the major issues I think I can say that the middle position came out as the final position of those present. The essential problem is that while our position is a reasonable one it is unlikely that in the short run the Soviets will accept it and it is unlikely that in the long run it is sufficient to meet the threat that the Soviet buildup is posing. We agreed that Paul Warnke and I will talk to Dobrynin in order to try to make the Soviets understand the fundamental nature of our concerns. However, I must say that I am on the whole pessimistic about the short term. I doubt very much that the Soviets are prepared to make the kind of accommodation which will be reasonable. They will probably try once more to split us, either by trying all of a sudden a policy of softness and accommodation, and then of hardening, or by launching major propaganda attacks designed to frighten the Senate and the public and the journalists into thinking that a new U.S.-Soviet crisis is at hand."

On another occasion I jotted: "What was interesting about our SCC discussions on SALT today is the degree to which the military seem to prefer simply to have more and more weapons, irrespective of the strategic consequences. They thus argued at the meeting that our proposed cuts in our mutual forces don't go far enough in reducing the Soviet strategic threat to us and yet at the same time they involve too high cuts of our own forces and therefore higher ceilings ought to be set. On the other hand, Warnke and Vance, who are engaged in negotiating the agreement, and are preoccupied with obtaining an agreement, are more inclined to make accommodations and concessions than the rest of us, who are not directly involved in the negotiations. All the while, the Soviets are sitting patiently on the sidelines, telling us from time to time that their government is not flexible and that

therefore it is up to us to make new proposals. This is the standard line that Dobrynin keeps feeding us."

Another major step forward in the negotiating process occurred in September. The President reviewed our various options at a formal NSC meeting, and for the first time the possibility of agreeing to count ALCM-carrying heavy bombers in the 1,320 aggregate in return for a 1,200 MIRV limit was raised. This had been my recommendation as a way of breaking the deadlock on this subject, for by now I was playing a much more active role. Previously I had opposed strongly the inclusion of ALCM-carrying bombers in the 1,320 limit, but I had come to believe that a 1,200 MIRV limit would satisfy our basic interests. The combination of the two limits imposed an identical ceiling on all MIRVed ICBMs for both sides (1,200), while in effect allowing the United States an additional free 120 ALCM-carrying heavy bombers through the imposition of a joint ceiling of 1,320 on all MIRVed ICBMs and ALCM-carrying heavy bombers combined, since the Soviets did not have ALCM-carrying heavy bombers.

The NSC meeting was also preparatory to the forthcoming talks with Gromyko, who was scheduled to visit Washington two weeks later. Vance first met with him in New York, and then Gromyko came to Washington, where he had an extensive session with the President. On the eve of the Washington meeting, Carter received a memorandum from Vance and Warnke recommending additional alterations in our position, but these were strongly opposed by Brown and me. In his meeting with Vance, Gromyko had been surprisingly hard. On some matters he even took a retrogressive position and stuck to it in a totally unyielding fashion. As it turned out, it was a typical Soviet softening-up tactic. On the evening prior to the meeting with the President, I received a call from Cy, who indicated that the Soviets were beginning for the first time to take a reasonable position. Most importantly, they proposed to set a limit on land-based MIRVed ICBMs of 820, which was a concession to us.

The Carter-Gromyko meeting came at a critical time. We had indications that the Soviets were finding Carter hard to understand. From their perspective he was a complicated individual who resented criticism and who was trying to wrest concessions from them which from their point of view would change the strategic balance of forces. Therefore, Gromyko's meeting with Carter was important not only in terms of SALT but also for the Soviet attitude toward U.S.-Soviet relations in general. And the meeting was a personal success for Carter. It is best simply to reproduce my fresh impressions of the day:

I must say the President could not have been better. He made an excellent presentation, giving an overview of the sort which I strongly felt he needed to do; he did not coddle Gromyko, nor

invite him into a separate session, which initially he was inclined to do but which I urged him not to do. He gave Gromyko a *tour d'horizon* which was extremely effective, both in substance and in tone. He rebutted Gromyko when Gromyko made a counter-response. He did not let him score points. And then when we got to the nitty-gritty of negotiating SALT he was very skillful in presenting our position in such a way that it was projected as a very significant concession which the Soviets must match. I really told him afterwards that I don't usually flatter him, and I certainly don't hesitate to disagree with him, but I was genuinely proud of the way he performed. Gromyko was quite skillful and not as dour as projected, a little too verbose, and I sensed that he was rather impressed by the President's performance. The Russians all watched the President closely and they must have been struck by the fact that he was very much on top of the data, well informed, quite skillful in shooting back immediately any Soviet argument. When the Soviets at one point indicated that they had made a concession by accepting our proposal for lowered aggregates, the President immediately and very eloquently pointed out to them that accepting an aggregate that is lower for both sides is no concession but simply an acceptance of common sense and of genuine and mutual reductions. There was no way that this could be presented as a concession to the United States.

The Carter-Gromyko meeting put new momentum into the SALT process. However, a large number of issues still remained to be resolved. The next several months saw us concentrate on such matters as what ought to be the overall aggregate limit, how the telemetry issue and concealment question should be resolved, what new types of SLBMs (submarine-launched ballistic missiles) and ICBMs should be permitted, how we could resolve the question of cruise missile range definition, what were the implications of SALT for our relationships with our allies (the so-called noncircumvention issue), and what kind of limits could be imposed on heavy mobile ICBMs and heavy SLBMs.

The resolution of these issues involved a tedious process of negotiating, and it was well-nigh impossible to accelerate it. In early January 1978, Vance and Warnke wrote a memo to the President summarizing the progress achieved in the course of various SCC meetings during October and November and urging that we move promptly to resolve the outstanding SALT issues by sometime in the spring of 1978. Harold Brown accompanied their memo by a commentary which warned that any agreement that was negotiated must be such that it could be adequately defended to the public. In other words, he warned against undue haste and any one-sided concessions. I supported him on this.

The outcome of these further deliberations was a renewed Vance-Gromyko dialogue, undertaken on April 20 and 21, 1978, in Moscow. This meeting achieved some additional progress; namely, Soviet acceptance of our formula on noncircumvention and a joint agreement on a 2,250/1,200 aggregate and MIRV limit. There was no progress in these talks either on the Backfire or on what new types of ICBMs should be exempted from a jointly agreed freeze. The limited character of this progress meant, in fact, that our hopes for a spring 1978 agreement had evaporated. It was evident that another political push would have to be made sometime in the course of the late summer or early fall, perhaps in conjunction with Gromyko's next visit to the United States. In the meantime, we became increasingly concerned over our ability to achieve ratification in the Congress of the likely SALT agreement. The President met on occasion with Senators Henry Jackson and Sam Nunn and became particularly concerned that they both might reject our SALT agreement because of the cruise missile definition issue.

The central question in this thorny issue was whether the restrictions and bans would apply on all cruise missiles or only on those which were actually carrying nuclear warheads. Almost every key figure had altered his position in the course of the year. The matter was not only extraordinarily convoluted technically, but precisely because we all changed our positions, the President at one point became intensely irritated and chastised me for attempting too persistently to change his mind on the subject.

The internal U.S. debate on our SALT position and the resulting negotiations with the Soviets were accompanied by a major effort to widen the scope of U.S.-Soviet detente. This was in keeping with our earlier belief that it would be a mistake to confine detente purely to arms control. It was the general view of the Administration, and certainly my own, that only in this way could we test the extent to which the Soviet Union was prepared to become genuinely a more cooperative partner in dealing with global problems.

Our efforts were concentrated in five broad areas: (1) through negotiations with the Soviets, we wished to promote the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean; (2) through conventional arms transfer negotiations, we hoped to obtain Soviet agreement to limit the flow of arms, from both the United States and the Soviet Union, to Third World countries; (3) by reconvening the MBFR negotiations in Vienna, we hoped to parallel SALT by mutually agreed reductions on the conventional level in the central theater of any possible East-West military confrontation; (4) by consummating a comprehensive test ban agreement (CTB), we hoped to further strengthen the existing limits on vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation; and (5) through joint talks regarding the Middle East issue, we hoped to create sufficient

American-Soviet consensus to make possible the resumption of the Geneva Conference between the Arab and Israeli sides.*

I had sent the President a memorandum on the subject "Measures for Stabilizing U.S.-Soviet Relations." It opened by reporting that Secretary Vance "has submitted a memorandum identifying a number of measures which you may want to consider as part of an effort to 'stabilize' U.S.-Soviet relations."

The Vance memorandum proposed the following:

1. An informal meeting with Brezhnev.
2. Use of nongovernmental scientists to encourage their Soviet counterparts to be more forthcoming on SALT.
3. A meeting with the President for Vladimir Kirillin, the Deputy Prime Minister and head of the State Committee on Science and Technology, who will be in Washington in July, and the granting of remote access to the Soviets to the Cyber 76 computer for use in their weather observation system.
4. Increased Soviet involvement in global and North-South issues.
5. Invigoration of U.S.-Soviet working groups.
6. Examination and development of bilateral scientific agreements.
7. A series of minor steps such as permission to the Soviets for opening a banking office in New York; high-level U.S. representation at the sixtieth anniversary ceremony in Moscow in November; expansion of scientific exchanges; our visa policy to be more flexible; greater accommodation with the Soviets on civil aviation arrangements; some U.S. participation and consultation with Japan in the Yakutsk liquefied natural gas project; greater consideration of the effect on the Soviets of our forthcoming announcements regarding weapons procurement or deployment.

In my covering memo, I expressed skepticism over some of the proposed steps (I noted, for example, that the President had seen Dobrynin twice; the Vice-President had seen Foreign Trade Minister Patolichev;

* Actually, I had relatively little confidence that we would make any progress in MBFR and CTB, and throughout the Carter years I was not very interested in these subjects. I saw them as nonstarters, but out of deference to the President's zeal for them, I went through the motions of holding meetings, discussing options, and developing negotiating positions. My view was that the MBFR was too complicated a process, with too many participants, to yield any tangible results; while I saw CTB as a likely embarrassment to any effort on our part to obtain SALT ratification. I feared that our legislative circuits would become overloaded if we tried to obtain both SALT and CTB, but I respected the President's deep moral concern over nuclear weapons and I did what I could to move the bureaucratic machinery toward meaningful proposals—yet ones which would not jeopardize our ability to continue the minimum number of tests necessary for our weapons program.

Brown had had lunch with Dobrynin, who had also met often with Vance and with me; while U.S. Ambassador Toon was still waiting to see Brezhnev and Defense Minister Ustinov). "The recommendations themselves could be interpreted to imply—though that is not their intention—that the cause of current strains is either the result of misconceptions or lack of U.S. effort and that we need a series of steps (some of them quite minor ones) to prove our seriousness or sincerity. I must confess that I doubt this premise. If the Soviet leadership views the Administration's more assertive foreign policy as a sign of hostile intentions, then a number of good-will gestures will have little impact. Indeed, there is some risk that the Soviets will conclude that their counterattacks are having an effect." I concluded my memo by saying, "In general, I feel that we should maintain a steady course, pursue those negotiations where progress is to our mutual advantage (SALT, CTB, the Indian Ocean, etc.), and not convey the impression of either haste or concern. U.S.-Soviet relations are the product of long-term historical forces and we should not become too preoccupied with transitory aspects, some of them deliberately generated by the Soviets in order to exercise psychological and political pressure on us."

The President indicated that he would not see Kirillin, and he expressed skepticism regarding the very last two items on the miscellaneous list (7), but did not make any major comments on the others, generally approving them. (The computer, however, was disallowed later.)

In early July 1977, responding to growing press criticism of the stalemate in American-Soviet relations and of our alleged responsibility for such a stalemate, the President asked me to give him a report on the various initiatives that we had taken to improve U.S.-Soviet relations. In response to his request, I reported that we had initiated the SALT proposals, the CTB talks, talks on arms limitations and restraint in the Indian Ocean; a proposed ban on chemical warfare, talks on restraining arms transfers, a program for nonproliferation of nuclear weapons; talks on a ban on radiological weapons; an invitation for the Soviets to sign the Treaty of Tlatelolco; consultations with the Soviets regarding the Middle East, a proposal in the President's press conference of March that the Soviets join in avoiding any interference in Africa; an invitation in the Notre Dame speech for the Soviets to join in aiding the developing world; meeting of the Joint Commercial Commission, which had not previously met because of the Soviet involvement in Angola; delivery of a supermagnet for joint experiments in energy. I added that "in sum, the foregoing scarcely supports the Soviet claim that we are putting obstacles in the way of improved relations or have embarked on some anti-Soviet course. We have already carried the ball while they have constantly complained in order to build pressure for concessions."

During this period, despite some of the press comments which had generated the President's concern, the public tenor of U.S.-Soviet relations somewhat improved. The Brezhnev-Carter correspondence became less abrasive. The President gave a major speech at Charleston, South Carolina, on July 21, in which he incorporated the U.S. initiatives I had listed for him, referred to our policy of competition and cooperation, and optimistically declared: "Beyond all the disagreements between us—and beyond the cool calculations of mutual self-interest that our two countries bring to the negotiating table—is the invisible human reality that must bring us closer together. I mean the yearning for peace, real peace, that is in the very bones of us all." The Soviet side did take a number of public steps in the area of human rights which aroused American concerns, but we deliberately muted our reactions to avoid further friction. Moreover, Secretary Vance formally brought on board a well-known academic expert on Soviet affairs, a former colleague of mine at Columbia University, Professor Marshall Shulman, and his appointment was widely publicized by the New York Times and the Washington Post as auguring a more constructive and responsible approach toward the Soviet Union.

At that time, I was still "camping" at the Harrimans' and they offered similar refuge to Marshall. On some mornings we would walk to work together, he to the State Department and I to the White House, which gave us a chance to discuss informally the state of U.S.-Soviet relations. In one of our morning walks to work, we lamented the absence of effective coordination within the U.S. government of the various cooperative U.S.-Soviet links. We were both aware that by now many agencies had developed bilateral contacts with their Soviet counterparts and that there were many official and unofficial exchanges in process. This created a situation which was not only somewhat confused but susceptible to deliberate Soviet exploitation. Accordingly, I suggested to Marshall that we create an interagency committee, which he might chair, to monitor all such activities. Having secured his assent, I issued the appropriate White House instructions to create that committee. When its formation was announced, the New York Times made it front-page news, adding the amazing interpretation that this was a further public signal to the effect that the Administration was moving toward a more conciliatory attitude toward the Soviet Union, with policy influence allegedly passing from the NSC to Vance and Shulman.

By and large, this period was marked by relative harmony within the Administration, though there was some friction on specific issues. The SCC began working on our proposals for the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean in May 1977, and by September we were ready to move forward with a proposal for a mutual declaration of restraint, our objective being the stabilization of the existing military situation in the Indian Ocean. The proposed declaration was designed at a minimum

to ensure that during an agreed period of about five years deployment of Soviet or American naval units into the Indian Ocean would be limited approximately to the current levels on each side. This position was contested by ACDA and State, with both of them favoring reductions from existing levels. On January 24, 1978, the President also approved a recommendation that at the first private meeting between the U.S. representative and the Soviet negotiator, the American side would deliver a protest to the Soviet Union regarding the negative implications for our negotiations of the ongoing Soviet activities in the Horn of Africa and the related buildup of Soviet military presence. Our effort to generate a joint limit on conventional arms transfers also moved forward without any basic disagreements within the Administration. Exploratory U.S.-Soviet talks on limiting the export of arms to other nations were held, but they did not yield concrete results.*

The October 1, 1977, U.S.-Soviet statement on the Middle East was perhaps the high point of this brief period of seeming improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations. The Soviets did not hide their disappointment when, within days, the U.S. side walked away from the statement, and Brezhnev, in subsequent letters to Carter, complained strongly at the growing willingness of the United States to exclude the Soviet Union from the Middle East peace process.

During the summer and early fall, the President also undertook some private initiatives designed to generate greater momentum in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. In July, after reading my memorandum listing our efforts to improve and to widen the scope of the U.S.-Soviet relationship, the President decided to give Governor Averell Harriman the list, which he could convey to Brezhnev in a personal message. Harriman, who undertook that initiative with much encouragement from Vance and Shulman, prepared a letter from the President to Brezhnev in which the President was again to raise the issue of a summit meeting with the Soviet leader, perhaps at Camp David, but I prevailed on Carter to have it redrafted into a proposal from Harriman himself. Brown and I reviewed the proposed letter, and we both agreed that "the letter is too pleading and creates the impression that a U.S.-Soviet summit is a favor that the Soviets are granting us. After returning to my office, I

* Later on, I did have an intense disagreement with the head of the U.S. negotiating team, Leslie Gelb, a close protégé of Secretary Vance. Gelb favored talking to the Soviets about U.S. arms transfers to some of our allies, in exchange for their willingness to talk about Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. I felt that this was no bargain, and Gelb was instructed to confine our discussions to these two neutral regions. At one point, he sent back a cable ridiculing formal instructions to him not to do so. As a consequence, I had to inform him that he would be immediately recalled unless he developed rapidly the necessary enthusiasm for the President's position. He did. Not long afterwards, he left government service and wrote quite critically about me. I was not surprised.

redrafted the letter, making it more of a contribution of Harriman's and more of his own initiative and less a letter on the President's behalf." Brezhnev's response to Harriman was politely unforthcoming. In early September, the President received a letter from Chancellor Schmidt, "strictly for the eyes of the President only," indicating that, in August, Schmidt had been in touch with Brezhnev to the effect that Carter would be willing to establish a personal and confidential contact with the Soviet leader. According to Schmidt, Brezhnev had responded affirmatively. The President asked me for comments on this, and I gave him a handwritten note on September 14 pointing out that a personally responsible and high-level emissary could be useful in contacts with the Soviets, but I warned against using the Germans. "Arranging it through the Germans raises questions as to their role and interest in this, and also the question of our other allies. Would they be informed? To have such a meeting without their knowledge, but with German cooperation, would be odd; to inform them would guarantee a leak. . . . If the moving force has been Schmidt, then I suspect that he has been put up to it by Egon Bahr, an . . . ex-aide of Brandt's, who already tried something similar on me." As it happened, this initiative, which the President told me was Schmidt's, came to naught, for later in the year Schmidt told me that the Soviets had not followed up on it.

Efforts to maintain a dialogue with Brezhnev continued throughout the year and occasionally generated some disagreements with State. I opposed any further references to a summit meeting. Both the President and Vance desired it, however, and our side kept raising the issue. For example, in November 1977, Vance submitted a draft prepared by Shulman in which the President was to express personal congratulations to the Soviets on the occasion of the Soviet sixtieth anniversary. In the proposed draft the President was to say: "I have a major task facing me in convincing the American public and our Congress that the treaty and other documents we contemplate signing are in the U.S. interest, as I believe they are. Ambassador Dobrynin will have reported to you the efforts I am making here to this end. I will apply my best efforts and political judgment to the task and believe I will, in the final analysis, be successful." The proposed draft also again expressed the hope for a meeting between the two leaders.

In my cover memo to the President on November 1, I objected to both passages. The first seemed to me obsequious; the second was certainly redundant, given Brezhnev's firm brush-off to previous efforts along these lines. The President approved the excision of these passages. However, to convey a positive signal to the Soviets, the President did agree to meet with Soviet Foreign Trade Minister Patolichev in early November, despite my objections that the Soviets were not providing similar hospitality to our visitors or even our Ambassador. I felt we should insist on strict reciprocity.

The impetus for these growing disagreements with State came from two sources. I was becoming increasingly concerned over the longer-term implications of the Soviet strategic buildup and by the growing Soviet-Cuban military penetration of the Horn of Africa. Both issues came to complicate enormously the management of U.S.-Soviet relations, and eventually brought to the surface, even on the public level, the simmering disagreements between the Secretary of State and me.

We had commissioned a broadly gauged review of the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance as one of our first official acts. I asked Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard to undertake it, for I wished to obtain not only a narrowly focused accounting of the relative military strength of the two countries but a more sophisticated appraisal of the relative performance—military, political, economic, and ideological—of the two competing systems. The outcome of that undertaking was an ambitious paper, Presidential Review Memorandum 10. Its conclusions were mixed. It identified the military domain as the one in which the Soviets were making the greatest strides, and it registered some urgent apprehension regarding our ability to stand off the Soviets in Europe in the event of a conventional conflict. The report highlighted the need for a more sustained effort to build up both U.S. strategic capabilities and overall allied conventional military power. It also identified the Persian Gulf as a vulnerable and vital region, to which greater military concern ought to be given. At the same time, it was relatively sanguine about our overall ability to compete politically, economically, and ideologically with the Soviet Union. It thus provided the intellectual underpinnings for my own predisposition in favor of an activist, assertive, and historically optimistic policy of detente. Such a policy, however, had to be based on adequate military power, and hence its concomitant had to be a deliberate decision to reverse the military trends of the preceding decade.

PRM-10 led in turn to an important Presidential Directive, PD-18, signed on August 24, 1977. This document directed that we maintain a strategic posture of "essential equivalence"; that we reaffirm our NATO strategy, namely a forward defense in Europe, and the maintaining of a "deployment force of light divisions with strategic mobility" for global contingencies, particularly in the Persian Gulf region and Korea. The interagency debate over the PD-18 draft revealed a sharp dispute within the Administration about the implications of PRM-10. One side preferred to limit our strategic forces to an assured destruction capability and to consider reducing our forces in Europe and Korea. The Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf region was to be addressed through arms control efforts with the Soviets. The other side, on which I found myself, pointed to the momentum and character of Soviet military programs, the vulnerability of the oil-rich region around the Persian Gulf, and the growing Soviet projection of power in Africa, Southeast Asia, and

possibly even the Caribbean. The final version of the PD reflected NSC/Defense preferences for NATO and Korea, the NSC initiative for a Rapid Deployment Force, and a stalemate on the strategic forces issue. It left open the final policy decision on nuclear employment doctrine, subject to later analysis and study.

This process gave me additional arguments on behalf of greater caution regarding any U.S.-Soviet collusion on such regional matters as the Middle East, and it reinforced my previous predisposition to push on behalf of an American-Chinese accommodation. I saw in such accommodation, together with our own enhanced defense efforts, the best way for creating greater geopolitical and strategic stability. As the months went on, I became increasingly firm in the view that it would be better not to have a Carter-Brezhnev summit until we had taken some concrete steps to improve relations with China and to enhance our strategic resilience. This is why I subsequently pushed hard not only for diplomatic relations with Beijing but also for the MX decision.

Is There Linkage?

The more immediate source of friction between Vance and me was the Soviet-sponsored deployment of the Cuban military in the African Horn. In the summer of 1977, the long-standing territorial disputes in the Horn of Africa were complicated by the dramatic switch in allegiances of the Ethiopians and Somalis. The increasingly extreme leftist government of Ethiopia broke with the West, while the Somalis, who had been aided by Moscow, turned to the United States. The unsettled situation was of serious concern to Egypt, the Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and us, because we all had evidence that the Soviets were providing increased aid and using Cuban forces in the already tense border war. Of course, our ability to assist the Somalis was not helped by the fact that they were the nominal aggressors in the Ogaden, having crossed over an established border into territory they claimed belonged to them.

However, in my view the situation between the Ethiopians and the Somalis was more than a border conflict. Coupled with the expansion of Soviet influence and military presence to South Yemen, it posed a potentially grave threat to our position in the Middle East, notably in the Arabian peninsula. It represented a serious setback in our attempts to develop with the Soviets some rules of the game in dealing with turbulence in the Third World. The Soviets had earlier succeeded in sustaining, through the Cubans, their preferred solution in Angola, and they now seemed embarked on a repetition in a region in close proximity to our most sensitive interests.

I was strengthened in my view by the repeated, like-minded expressions of concern by both Giscard and Sadat, leaders with a refined

strategic perspective. Both warned Carter on several occasions not to be passive or to underestimate the gravity of an entrenched Soviet military presence so close to weak, vulnerable, yet vitally needed Saudi Arabia. Sadat let it be known that he was afraid the Soviets were seeking to embarrass him specifically by seizing control of territory crucial to Egyptian interests. We had a report from the Shah, who had traveled to Aswan and to Riyadh, that both the Egyptians and the Saudis were increasingly concerned by the increased Soviet activity. In fact, the Shah reported that the Saudis were "petrified" by the prospect of a Soviet presence across the Red Sea. The Sudanese had also expressed to Carter their worries about Soviet activity and U.S. lack of activity. In a personal message the Sudanese President wrote: "We believe that the Soviet Union is pursuing a sinister grand strategy in Africa leading to some definite goals. We are truly alarmed at the extent of Soviet influence in our region; alarmed at the means it uses, and at the ultimate goal it drives at. . . . Against this vigorous Soviet activity in Africa, we notice that the American role is generally quite passive. We expect and hope that the United States in the prevailing circumstances in Africa would respond favorably to requests of help from those countries ready and eager to defend themselves against the Soviet threat."

Yet in spite of such expressions of concern, throughout the late fall of 1977 and much of 1978 I was very much alone in the U.S. government in advocating a stronger response: Vance insisted that this issue was purely a local one, while Brown was skeptical of the feasibility of any U.S. countermoves. But by the late summer of 1977, intelligence sources provided mounting evidence of growing Soviet-sponsored involvement. As a result, I promoted a State-chaired PRC meeting on the subject of growing tension in the Horn of Africa, which resulted in a recommendation to the President, which he approved, to accelerate our efforts to provide support to the Sudan, to take steps to reassure and strengthen Kenya, and to explore means of getting as many African leaders as possible to react adversely to the Soviet-sponsored Cuban military presence.

On November 22, on my urging, the President directed Andy Young to make a speech in the UN against the Soviet-Cuban presence in Africa, and on December 13, there was a mini-SCC on Soviet-Ethiopian airifts to the region. On December 14, I had dinner with Dobrynin, whom I pressed on the subject, and "he gave me assurances that the Ethiopians will not cross the Somali frontier once they begin to recapture the Ogaden; that his leaders strongly believe in the conspiracy theory interpretation of what recently has happened in the Middle East, even though he knows it's not true; and he urged that the President write Brezhnev regarding what is of importance to the President with regard to SALT. He also expressed rising concern that SALT will not be

ratified. In my conversation with Dobrynin I warned him quite flat out that continued influx of Cubans and of Soviet war matériel to Ethiopia would make us alter our position from that of restraint to that of more active involvement. I told him that we had restrained some of the neighboring countries from sending in their troops, but if the Soviets persist we will stop restraining these neighbors, and after all they are closer and in a better position to pour in much larger numbers of troops. Thus their policy will be self-defeating, while the results would be an intensified crisis in American-Soviet relations. More generally, I told him it seemed to me our relationship on the one hand involves some accommodation (SALT, the Indian Ocean, CTB) but also increasing tensions (in the Middle East, in Somalia, and perhaps on human rights). Accordingly, more of an effort should be made by them to try to improve the relationship."

With Carter's approval, I also started briefing the press on the growing Soviet-Cuban military presence, and by mid-November 1977 articles started appearing, registering the growing escalation of the Communist military efforts. For example, the *New York Times* produced on November 17 a front-page report, including a map, detailing the growing Soviet-sponsored Cuban military activity on the African continent. The President also started referring more frequently to this issue in his public comments, in an effort to make the Soviets more sensitive to the proposition that their conduct was not compatible with the notion of mutual restraint. To drive the point home to the Soviets, just before Christmas I inserted into a letter from Carter to Brezhnev "some reasonably straightforward language regarding Soviet conduct in regional conflicts, notably in the African Horn." The letter stated: "I would also hope that the United States and the Soviet Union could collaborate in making certain that regional African disputes do not escalate into major international conflicts. The fighting that has developed between Ethiopia and Somalia is a regrettable development, one which should be contained and terminated before it spreads further. . . . I mention these concerns because I deeply believe that it is important for us, to the extent that it is possible, to avoid becoming involved in regional conflicts either as direct protagonists or through proxies. . . . I write about this because it is my determination to do my utmost to improve the American-Soviet relationship." I obtained Cy Vance's approval for that language in return for inserting a few paragraphs from Cy's proposed text regarding the Middle East, language which was designed to reassure the Soviets. Specifically, I put in the following at Cy's request: "Without such Soviet help, it might prove difficult to reach the common goals of a comprehensive settlement negotiated in Geneva, as emphasized in your letter of December 16."

As hostilities increased and as more Cuban troops went to Ethiopia, Gromyko suggested the classic Soviet solution to regional disputes—a

joint U.S.-Soviet mediation effort pointing to a condominium. I believed that it would only legitimize the Soviet presence in the Horn and suggested instead that we put more effort into urging the regional leaders and other African nations to call for a withdrawal of all foreign troops and for mediation by African states alone. In a memo to the President on January 11, I reiterated my grave concern about the longer-term implications of the Soviet presence, and suggested that the war had to be made increasingly costly to the Soviets in its political and military dimensions. I elaborated on my recommendation on January 18 in a four-page memo to the President: "Soviet leaders may be acting merely in response to an apparent opportunity, or the Soviet action may be part of a wider strategic design. In either case, the Soviets probably calculate, as previously in Angola, they can later adopt a more conciliatory attitude and that the U.S. will simply again adjust to the consolidation of Soviet presence in yet another African country."

By mid-January several thousand Cuban military were deployed in Ethiopia and the number was continuing to grow. Accordingly, I started convening frequent SCC meetings on the grounds that the issue was gradually escalating into a crisis. In the third week of December, I noted after one such meeting: "Everyone is afraid of getting into a crisis, and hence the general tendency is to downplay the seriousness of the issue. . . . You could almost sense the anxiety in the room when I mentioned the possibility of more direct action to make it impossible for the Soviets and Cubans not only to transform Ethiopia into a Soviet associate but also perhaps to wage more effective warfare against Somalia. Yet if Ethiopia and South Yemen become Soviet associates, not only will access to Suez be threatened, and this involves the oil pipeline from Saudi Arabia and Iran, but there will be a serious and direct political threat to Saudi Arabia. This is something we simply cannot ignore, however uncomfortable the thought may be."

It was roughly at this time that Sadat raised with us the possibility of deploying Egyptian forces in Somalia, and we agreed to that initiative. We also informed Giscard of the Egyptian plan, but Sadat did not follow through. I suspect that he hoped for more active American support, both logistical and financial. Neither, however, was forthcoming.

Because I became more and more concerned that we would not respond assertively enough, I urged the President not to make any more public comments on the subject, but privately I continued pressing for stronger reactions. In response to SCC initiatives the President sent letters to Giscard, Tito, General Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela, and Morarji Desai of India, describing his concerns about Soviet-Cuban involvement and urging them in turn to warn Moscow and Havana of negative consequences for East-West relations of continued outside interference. I was very gratified that the President, in meeting Soviet Politburo member Boris Ponomarev,

spoke up forcefully on this subject, warning the Soviets that we did not wish a confrontation but that the Soviets were running the risk of creating one in a region which was very sensitive to us.

Encouraged by the President's strong stand, I started pressing again in the SCC for a more direct reaction. I was concerned not only about the foreign implications of perceived U.S. passivity in this strategic area, but also about the effect it would have on domestic politics and what that would mean for SALT. As I had written earlier in January to the President, "... failure to pursue such a course could prove to be damaging and will be exploited by your political opponents with considerable effect. Indeed, the Soviet-Cuban offensive could coincide with the signing of SALT." My view was that the deployment of an American aircraft carrier task force near Ethiopia would send a strong message to the Soviets and would provide more tangible backing for our strong words.

I also believed the regional powers had to be motivated by their own self-interest to repel the Cubans. It was the responsibility of the United States to give them confidence in this endeavor. I pursued this line of argument throughout the spring. At an SCC meeting on February 10, I argued that it was important that regional powers not see the United States as passive in the face of Soviet and Cuban intervention in the Horn and in the potential invasion of Somalia—even if our support was, in the final analysis, only for the record. My arguments were corroborated by David Aaron, who, having just returned from a special mission to Ethiopia, believed that some show of U.S. force was important.

Harold Brown and Cy Vance, however, opposed that approach. Vance particularly was against any deployment of a carrier task force in the area of the Horn. For the first time in the course of our various meetings, he started to show impatience, to get red in the face, and to raise his voice. I could sense that personal tension was entering into our relationship. Vance believed that we should emphasize a political settlement that would make it easier for the Somalis to withdraw, but that we should keep our forces out, even if the Ethiopians crossed over the frontier into Somalia. He argued that "we are getting sucked in. The Somalis brought this on themselves. They are no great friends of ours, and they are reaping the fruits of their actions. For us to put our prestige on the line and to take military steps is a risk we should not take." In his opinion, the United States should not put an aircraft carrier in the area unless we were prepared to use it. Vance was supported in his arguments by Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Richard Moose, who expressed the view at the February 21 SCC meeting that "the best protection against invasion of Somalia would be world opinion."

I continued to make my point that more was at stake than a disputed piece of desert. To a great extent our credibility was under scrutiny by

new, relatively skeptical allies in a region strategically important to us. I believed that if Soviet-sponsored Cubans determined the outcome of an Ethiopian-Somali conflict, there could be wider regional and international consequences. There would be greater regional uncertainty and less confidence in the United States. But if the United States and France each deployed an aircraft carrier nearby, it would certainly make the Cubans think twice about participating in the invasion of Somalia, while tangibly demonstrating our concern and presence. Just placing the carrier in the area did not mean that we were going to war.

Brown played a particularly cautious role. He agreed with my analysis of the consequences in the short run but with Vance about the long-run outcome. He argued that sending a special task force without a specific purpose would likely have negative consequences outweighing the advantages. He pointed out further that if Somalia were invaded and Siad Barré overthrown, it would be viewed as a failure of the U.S. task force to do its job, and that failure would impair the credibility of such task forces in future crises elsewhere—in short, a U.S. bluff would have been called. As he put it in the NSC meeting of February 23, "... if we know the situation will come out all right in Somalia... then we might deploy the carrier and take credit for success in preventing an invasion. On the other hand, if we do not know how the situation will come out, or we do not intend to use the aircraft carrier in Somalia, then we should not put it in." Brown did, however, become more receptive when the President himself sounded positive on the idea of deploying an aircraft carrier in the Indian Ocean.

With so much at stake, I felt that I should see whether I had broader support in the Administration. One evening late in February, "I spoke to Bob Strauss about my concerns regarding the longer-range international and domestic implications of the situation in the African Horn. He thoroughly agreed with me; he pointed out that if our foreign policy doesn't succeed, I will be personally blamed because I will be seen as the person closest to the President; and that many people feel that it is weak and indecisive." I then "talked to Fritz Mondale and while he increasingly leans to the idea of putting in a carrier, he is reluctant to recommend this to the President."

In the end, I did not carry the day. The President did not approve at this time the deployment of U.S. aircraft into the area, but indicated willingness to consider moving a carrier closer into the area near Diego Garcia. As I noted in my journal: "Everyone otherwise was against me. The Defense Department speaking through Harold, the JCS speaking through General Jones, and State speaking through Cy—all of them seem to me to be badly bitten by the Vietnam bug and as a consequence are fearful of taking the kind of action which is necessary to convey our determination and to reassure the concerned countries in

the region. My argument was that we would not be stepping into a fight but we would be conveying seriousness simply through our presence."

During this period, we were also concerned about how the Horn situation might affect our other relations with the Soviets. Generally the President remained upbeat in his public remarks, believing that relations between the two countries had improved since he came to office. In my memos to him and in our meetings, however, we did consider the Horn within the context of overall U.S.-Soviet relations. On January 18, I wrote to the President: "The Soviet leadership should be unambiguously but quietly advised of potentially destructive impact on the U.S.-Soviet relationship of Soviet military involvement in Ethiopia. Both ongoing and future efforts to improve the relationship could be adversely affected. Note should be taken of the self-imposed U.S. restraint in matters and areas of concern to the Soviet Union (e.g., regarding transfer of militarily significant technology, not to speak of arms, to China), a position which we wish to maintain because of our desire to promote a genuinely comprehensive detente."

In a February SCC we discussed a possible range of responses to the Soviet and Cuban activity. We agreed unanimously that there should be no direct linkage between Soviet and Cuban actions in the Horn and bilateral activities involving either country and the United States. However, positive consideration was given to taking action in the area of space cooperation (future shuttle cooperation) and a greater flexibility with respect to technology transfer to China. (Vance reserved his position on the latter.)

Although the Ethiopian leader, Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu, assured Aaron during his consultative mission that the Ethiopians would not invade Somalia once they regained the Ogaden, we were becoming increasingly concerned about evidence of growing Soviet involvement in the country and the possibilities of expansion of the conflict beyond the borders of Ethiopia. Not only had the number of Cubans increased dramatically to 10,000 or 11,000, but according to our intelligence information about 400 Soviet tanks and some 50 MiG jet fighters had been sent to Ethiopia as part of a major transfer of Soviet arms. Finally, we learned that the first deputy commander in chief of Soviet ground forces, Petrov, was in fact providing direction for the Ethiopian military operations. This at a time when the Soviets were blaming the United States for a cooling in our relations.

On February 24, Brezhnev gave a speech in which he expressed the hope for better U.S.-Soviet relations, which he said were being blocked by certain U.S. actions: slow progress on the SALT talks, decisions on the neutron bomb, and congressional restrictions on trade. The next day the State Department responded with a statement which expressed

support for concluding SALT but also said that the character of Soviet-American relations depended "upon restraint and constructive efforts to help resolve local conflicts, such as the Horn of Africa."

On March 1, Mondale asked me to join him in one of his morning press briefings. In response to a question of whether there was "linkage" between Soviet aid to Ethiopia and the likelihood of new limitations on U.S. and Soviet strategic weapons, I said, "We are not imposing any linkage, but linkages may be imposed by unwarranted exploitation of local conflict for larger international purposes." I reiterated my belief that SALT in itself was of benefit more or less equally to the United States and to the Soviet Union. But I also pointed out that "it is only a matter of realistic judgment to conclude that if tensions were to rise . . . then that will inevitably complicate the context not only of the negotiating process itself but also of any ratification that would follow the successful conclusion of negotiation." The press immediately headlined this as advocacy by me of "linkage" as a policy. I did not see in my statement a policy recommendation but merely a recognition of fact: namely, that the American public would not support agreements with the Soviet Union if it saw the Soviet Union as increasingly aggressive.

On March 2, the President spoke at the National Press Club, where he was asked about SALT and the Horn. Expressing his hope for Somali withdrawal from the occupied Ogaden region, a removal of Soviet and Cuban forces from Ethiopia, and a lessening of tension in the area, Carter said: "The Soviets' violating of these principles would be a cause of concern to me, would lessen the confidence of the American people in the word and peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union, would make it more difficult to ratify a SALT agreement or comprehensive test ban agreement if concluded, and therefore the two are linked because of actions by the Soviets. We don't initiate the linkage."

On the same day Vance appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and said in responding to a question, "There is no linkage between the SALT negotiations and the situation in Ethiopia." All this discussion produced the following headline in the New York Times: "Top Carter Aides Seen in Discord on How to React to Soviet Actions; Brzezinski Appears Tougher than Vance—President Leans Toward Security Adviser."

As soon as the linkage issue surfaced, Cy became very angry and agitated. At an SCC meeting on March 2, he firmly insisted that there was no linkage whatsoever between the Horn and SALT. I noted that "the President said in response to a question this noon that there is no linkage but Soviet actions may impose such linkage." Both Brown and Vance responded, "That is wrong," and Vance went on to say, "I think it is wrong to say that this is going to produce linkage, and it is of

fundamental importance." I responded, "It is going to poison the atmosphere." The argument continued. Vance: "We will end up losing SALT and that will be the worst thing that could happen. If we do not get a SALT treaty in the President's first four years, that will be a blemish on his record forever." Brzezinski: "It will be a blemish on his record also if the treaty gets rejected by the Senate." Vance: "Zbig, you yesterday and the President today said it may create linkage, and I think it is wrong to say that."

The next day I wrote another memo to the President, in which I once again noted my concern about what our lack of resolve was signaling to the Soviets: "The Soviets must be made to realize that detente, to be enduring, has to be both comprehensive and reciprocal. If the Soviets are allowed to feel that they can use military force in one part of the world—and yet maintain cooperative relations in other areas—then they have no incentive to exercise any restraint. The conclusion to be drawn may be unpleasant and difficult, but I see no other alternative: in brief, our limited actions in regard to the specific conflict must be designed to convey our determination, while our broader response must be designed to make the Soviets weigh to a greater extent the consequences of their assertiveness for detente as a whole."

The debate over Soviet assertiveness in the African Horn in fact raised three key issues: Were we dealing with a local or a strategic question? How should we respond? Was there any linkage to SALT? For Vance, the African matter was largely a local issue, and he was strongly backed by the State Department; I argued that the newly discovered Soviet-Cuban passion for the integrity of frontiers could hardly be analyzed in such narrow terms. Moreover, even if one allowed what seemed to me to be a preposterous notion, namely that the Soviets were acting out of some sort of strange territorial legalism, their presence so close to Saudi Arabia was bound to have strategic consequences, whatever the Soviet intent may have been.

Having disagreed on the diagnosis, it was only natural that we disagreed on the remedy. I strongly believed that a show of force was necessary, that our allies would welcome it, and that it would convince the Soviets that we were serious when we said that detente should be both reciprocal and based on restraint. Finally, I was convinced for political reasons that SALT would be damaged if we did not react strongly, for the American public was prepared to support detente only in the context of genuine reciprocity in the American-Soviet relationship. Had we conveyed our determination sooner, perhaps the Soviets would have desisted, and we might have avoided the later chain of events which ended with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the suspension of SALT.

We will never know, even with the benefit of hindsight, whether my

preferred course of action would have been more effective. In any case, the fact is that the Soviets did step up during this time their use of the Cuban proxy in Africa and in a manner which potentially threatened our vital strategic interests. Did they do so because they concluded that the new Administration was so eager for SALT that it would not react? Did they do so because they saw the opportunity for joint collaboration in the Middle East wane and then disappear after Sadat's bold initiative? That complaint was reiterated frequently in Brezhnev's communications to Carter, and it was evident that the Soviets were genuinely disappointed that the Sadat initiative, subsequently backed by the United States, had excluded them from the driver's seat insofar as the peace effort in the Middle East was concerned.

However, it is difficult to argue that the Soviet-sponsored use of the Cuban military proxy in Ethiopia was brought on by Soviet disappointment over the Middle East. Such an explanation fails to take into account the long lead times required in the undertaking of an air and sea lift of the type that was involved in the transfer of Cuban troops to Ethiopia. Thus the most likely conclusion is that the Soviets at this time believed they could probably have their cake and eat it, too. They were thus pursuing a strategy of indirect expansionism while still seeking to fashion a detente relationship with the Carter Administration that would permit the Kremlin to attain its three objectives: a favorable SALT treaty, a flexible and one-sided detente, and a regional condominium in the Middle East.

In two successive weekly reports, I gave the President my views on where our relations stood with the Soviets approximately one year after we took office. In the first report, entitled "Strategic Deterioration," I noted that there were serious dangers on the horizon in U.S.-Soviet relations. I was particularly troubled by the potential Soviet success in the African Horn: first, because it would demonstrate to all concerned that the Soviet Union has the will and capacity to assert itself in the Third World; second, because it would encourage Libya, Algeria, and Cuba to act even more aggressively. "In effect, first through a proxy (as in Angola) and now more directly (as in Ethiopia), the Soviet Union will be demonstrating that containment has now been fully breached." The Ethiopian situation, coupled with what I saw as growing indications of political instability in Western Europe as well as our failure to exploit politically our relatively favorable position in the U.S.-Soviet-Chinese triangle, might contribute to a further deterioration in the U.S. global position. In that setting, I once again warned the President, SALT would not have a chance and our ability to deal with other issues would be severely handicapped.

In a report written a week later, I used the following chart to analyze Soviet behavior since Carter had come into the White House:

Benign

SALT (tough but serious)
 CTB (clearly seeking accommodation)
 Indian Ocean (seeking rather one-sided proposals)
 Chemical Warfare (positive-exploratory)
 Radiological Warfare (positive-exploratory)
 Nuclear Proliferation (positive-cooperative)

Neutral

Middle East (not helpful but not overly destructive)
 Arms Transfers (restrained, not actively cooperative and seeking to retain Soviet freedom of action)
 MBFR (rigid on key issues)

Malignant

Neutron Bomb (intense propaganda campaign vs. U.S.)
 Human Rights (suppressed at home and some success in toning down U.S. criticism abroad)
 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (uncooperative and destructivist)
 Southern Africa (uncooperative and encouraging extremism)
 Horn (assertive intrusion with demonstrable effects)

Soviets. They will never be able to use their nuclear forces to threaten, to coerce, or to blackmail us or our friends. . . . Arms control agreements are a major goal as instruments of our national security, but this will be possible only if we maintain appropriate military force levels. Reaching balanced, verifiable agreements with our adversaries can limit the cost of security and reduce the risk of war. But even then, we must—and we will—proceed efficiently with whatever arms programs our own security requires.”

The speech was a good one and set us on the right course. I did not think, however, that it made up for our lack of determination vis-à-vis the Soviet actions in the Horn. (Moreover, our credibility with the Soviets was undercut by an initiative which baffled me: Vance's closest associate on Soviet affairs, Marshall Shulman, reassured the Soviet Embassy—without any White House knowledge—that the President's speech should be viewed primarily as designed for domestic consumption and therefore should not be interpreted as indicating declined U.S. interest in SALT or accommodation.)

Two years later, in March 1980, as we were reacting to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, I wrote in my journal: “I have been reflecting on when did things begin genuinely to go wrong in the U.S.-Soviet relationship. My view is that it was on the day sometime in . . . 1978 when at the SCC meeting I advocated that we send in a carrier task force in reaction to the Soviet deployment of the Cubans in Ethiopia. At that meeting not only was I opposed by Vance, but Harold Brown asked why, for what reason, without taking into account that that is a question that should perplex the Soviets rather than us. The President backed the others rather than me, we did not react. Subsequently, as the Soviets became more emboldened, we overreacted, particularly in the Cuban Soviet brigade fiasco of last fall. That derailed SALT, the momentum of SALT was lost, and the final nail in the coffin was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In brief, underreaction then bred overreaction.” That is why I have used occasionally the phrase “SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden.”

There was, however, in my estimation, one important beneficial outcome from these troublesome months. We started reviewing more systematically the advisability of developing strategic consultations with the Chinese in order to balance the Soviets. As my minutes for the meeting of March 2 show, “everyone agreed that these consultations should focus for the time being on scientific and technological cooperation. Secretary Brown felt they might usefully encompass political issues, specifically the Horn situation as well.” I followed this up by initiating an interagency meeting on U.S.-Chinese relations, and I started pressing the President for more sustained initiatives toward China. Thus, on the morning of March 3, “I talked to the President first of all briefly about the situation in Ethiopia. I told him that I will have recommenda-

I suggested that the chart indicated that the Soviet Union was prepared to be cooperative in those functional areas likely to cement a parity relationship with the United States. At the same time, the Soviet Union is unwilling to accommodate in ideological and political areas; in fact, it is quite prepared to exploit Third World turbulence to maximize our difficulties and to promote its interests.

“In effect, the Soviet Union is seeking, and apparently has had some success in obtaining, a selective detente,” I concluded. I wrote that the proper U.S. response should be not to undermine emerging cooperative relations in the “benign” category, but to increase the costs of Soviet behavior in the “malignant” category. In the briefest form, I suggested, this means continued insistence on human rights as part of the ideological competition; countercampaigns on interventionism and more affirmative political initiatives in areas of Soviet sensitivity, such as China. Only thereby could we push the U.S.-Soviet relationship increasingly into the “neutral” or “benign” category.

The President responded to some of the points I had raised in these two weekly reports, and on March 17 he gave another major foreign policy speech at Wake Forest University. The tone was quite different from that of the relatively conciliatory speech given at Charleston in July 1977. It stressed U.S. determination to defend national interests and preserve American values. He declared: “Our strategic forces must be—and must be known to be—a match for the capabilities of the

tions for him shortly from our SCC meeting, but in my judgment the basic question was the nature of detente itself. Soviet actions do impose a linkage and the President ought to move now by initiating consultations with the Soviets and with the Chinese. To the Soviets I suggested he consider sending both Vance and Harriman," and I raised the possibility of myself dealing directly with the Chinese.