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October 10, 1991

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MEMORANDUM FOR AMBASSADOR REGINALD BARTHOLOMEW  
MR. STEPHEN HADLEY  
MR. VICTOR ALESSI  
MR. DOUGLAS MACEACHIN  
LTG JOHN SHALIKASVILI  
AMBASSADOR READ HANMER

FROM: JOHN GORDON *[Signature]*  
SUBJECT: Nuclear Initiatives Discussion Paper

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL  
Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: APR 25 2016

We plan to meet this afternoon at 3:00 pm to discuss where we go in response to the new initiatives presented by President Gorbachev. I have drafted a short paper (attached) outlining the specific Soviet proposals and a few of the considerations that should bear on how we respond.

At our meeting I would like to briefly discuss each element and decide how to proceed on each.

Attachment  
Discussion Paper

NSC Declassification Review [EO 13526]  
DECLASSIFY IN PART  
by Mary Ronan on 12/22/2014

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Energy Act 1954~~

Department of Energy Document Review	
1 <sup>st</sup> Review Date: <u>11/13</u> <i>[Signature]</i> NS-40 Reviewer Authority: <u>DD</u> Derived From: _____ Declassify On: _____	Determination: (Circle Number(s)) 1. Classification Retained <input checked="" type="radio"/> 2. Upgraded/Downgraded To: <u>FOUO</u> 3. Contains No DOE Classified Info 4. Coordinate With: _____ 5. Declassified <input checked="" type="radio"/> 6. Classified Info Replaced <input checked="" type="radio"/> 7. Other (Specify): <u>Att-Encl.</u>
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**DISCUSSION PAPER**

**RESPONDING TO PRESIDENT GORBACHEV'S NUCLEAR INITIATIVE**

**Introduction**

The President announced his nuclear initiative on September 27; President Gorbachev presented his proposal on October 5.

During the just-ended visit to Moscow by the Bartholomew group, there were good exchanges with the arms control group headed by Obukov and with a number of very senior officials with the center and the republics, especially Russians. We gained an understanding and perspective of the Soviet initiative, and explained the President's in detail.

Members of the team felt a considerably different atmosphere in these discussions than in past arms control discussions. With few exceptions the Soviets were supportive of the initiative and talks were open and constructive. The President's proposal is popular and supported by the reformists and seems to have accomplished the goal of making it possible for them to take their own steps.

There will be a need to respond to that which is new in the Gorbachev approach. He has outlined a number of unilateral moves which he challenges us to step up to and offers several joint initiatives.

This paper provides a framework for our initial discussions of these responses and defines the work we need to do to be able to make decisions on the specific steps.

**Objectives**

A key goal of any response should be to stop the "bidding" for further reductions. Both Presidents have made far-reaching proposals. It is time to get the implementation underway and gain some experience with this approach to dealing with the Soviet Union.

That said, the President made a series of initiatives to which, on the whole, Gorbachev responded positively. In turn, we must be seen as dealing with Gorbachev's ideas seriously and constructively and react as positively as practicable.

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**Soviet Proposals**

1. Destroy all naval tactical nuclear weapons.

President Gorbachev proposed that on a reciprocal basis the two sides destroy all naval tactical nuclear weapons.

There are three obvious options for the U.S. -- stick by our original position to destroy a portion of those removed, agree to the Soviet proposal, or find some middle ground.

Under the original U.S. initiative, we plan to retain only the SLCMs and B-61s gravity bombs.

It would seem that there is little to be gained by seeking an intermediate option, destroying a greater percentage of these weapons. We would not have met the Soviet initiative, would not have saved much money, and would seem to be a niggling response.

Before deciding between the other two options we need to answer the following questions:

- What is the role we envisage for the stored weapons?
- What weapons and in what numbers are the Soviets likely to retain? What is their military potential?
- If we say "no" to this Soviet proposal, how will we articulate the need to retain these weapons in the face of the Soviet offer to do away with the entire class.

2. Central storage of all tactical air-deliver nuclear weapons.

President Gorbachev proposed that on a reciprocal basis, all air-delivered tactical weapons be stored at centralized locations, away from combat units.

This seems to be a workable proposition, one at least worth consideration for a positive response. It would bring the Soviet weapons under potentially better control and store them away from their aircraft. At the same time, the Soviets have given air-delivered nuclear weapons in Europe a new legitimacy. (Some would argue that the Soviet offer in itself gives US air-delivered forces in Europe a new legitimacy.)

Before offering a recommendation we need to:

- define the military impact of this concept
- assess available storage areas
- discuss the impact of this proposal on British and French systems
- discuss more widely this concept with the Alliance.

3. Unilateral reductions by the Soviets to 5000 strategic weapons by the end of the START reduction period.

Add to it starting ASMs?

After ratification of START, immediately begin intensive negotiations on further radical reductions of strategic arms by approximately one-half.

The Soviets were unwilling to discuss seriously the de-MIRVing proposal made in the President's initiative. From our discussions in Moscow we know that some in government had argued in favor of this step but that the military prevailed with the arguments of the numerical imbalance de-MIRVing could establish.

Discussions with Obukov and others showed that the Soviets had not fully thought through their options with respect to the post-START force structures. The Gorbachev response came without detailed analysis by the Soviets and without discussions with us. Further discussions with them on this may be of real value.

At the same time, the Soviet side was very clear that one of the benefits to them of the US initiative is to minimize future expenditures. We should not have high expectations that they will move more of their force to sea.

There may be some ways to combine the two President's initiatives.

For the Soviets to deMIRV their post-START force structure and maintain an overall balance in the number of warheads, the ceiling on warheads would have to drop to about \_\_\_\_\_.

Our decisions with respect to the 5000 proposal and our own MIRV initiative should inform how we react to the 50% proposal for further START reductions. We should not feel under great pressure to define the details of START II at this juncture -- in fact, we may not want to have formal START II negotiations.

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4. Proposal to examine developing joint early-warning systems of nuclear attacks with land- and spaced-based elements.

We should be willing to talk to the Soviets about this -- it is a more specific proposal of the President's statement in his speech. That forum may also be another place to speak to stability, strategic balance, MIRVs and the like.

5. A one-year unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, hoping to achieve a comprehensive test ban.

(!!!!!!!!!!!!!!)

6. Agree on the verified cessation of weapons-grade fissionable materials.

The United States has not enriched uranium for nuclear weapons since 1966 -- we anticipate an excess of some 170 metric tons over the next several years and plan to use the majority of the excess for naval power reactor fuel. There is also a significant excess of plutonium, and planned weapons returns will more than meet the requirements for new production, provided we can recover the returning material.

It is to be a step we can sign up to promptly, but we will not agree to verification. That is, our step should be a policy statement to the effect that it is not US intention to produce additional fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons. We will have to make clear that this does not limit our production of tritium production reactors which have the inherent capability of producing plutonium, and that it does not limit our ability to produce the plutonium isotope used by NASA in space power systems.

We will need to define what we want to do in terms of "openness and transparency," but we do not want to get into a verification swamp. It is clear from earlier work that we cannot hope to verify the quantity of already existing Soviet material.

7. Joint declaration by all nuclear powers on no first use of nuclear weapons.

The U.S. position (and NATO's) has long been that all should disavow the first use of all military force. We see no reason to change at this time. In fact we may be in an extremely strong position with the reformists in the Soviet Union to get them to sign up to our formulation.

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