

SALT II AND THE GROWTH OF MISTRUST

Conference #2 of:

THE CARTER-BREZHNEV PROJECT

A conference of U.S. and Russian Policymakers and Scholars

Held at Musgrove Plantation, St. Simons Island, Georgia

6-9 MAY 1994



Sponsored by the CENTER FOR FOREIGN POLICY DEVELOPMENT
of the THOMAS J. WATSON JR. INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
Brown University

with support from:

The Arca Foundation,
Carnegie Corporation of New York,
The CarEth Foundation,
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation,
The W. Alton Jones Foundation,
and the Winston Foundation for World Peace

MAY 7: MORNING SESSION 1

ROBERT LEGVOLD: Let me begin by saying what a pleasure it is for me to be a part of this undertaking. I cannot think of many conferences that could be more interesting, and potentially more important, than this meeting. Briefly, I would like to make two points about the importance of this meeting from my perspective. First, I believe that the enormous changes that have occurred in international politics and in the U.S.-Soviet relationship during the last several years did not occur overnight. Despite the drama and the intensity of events at the end of the 1980s, I think this has been a long process with various critical stages, one of which was the period that we are talking about at this meeting. And as a result I think it is of more than merely historical interest--merely getting the historical record right for purposes of historians and consumers of history. I think it does have a contemporary significance. I think it is an important part of the legacy that brings us to the present moment.

Second, in terms of understanding that period, I would like to say that, as somebody who has been a consumer of the information that we have--as a university person who cares about this long period of time--my own view is that at this stage, while we have a number of accounts that tell us a good deal about what happened during this period of time--including some important memoirs from those of you around the table--we still do not have very good explanations for why things happened the way they did, especially between the two sides. We may have a better notion of why things happened on the American side than on the Soviet side, but we do not yet have a very good notion of why things happened the way they did *between* the two countries. And if any enterprise can begin to provide a deeper understanding of why

May 7--Morning Session 1

things occurred as they did, it should be this process.

Third--and finally--from my point of view, this exchange about this period seems to me important because it was a moment in the post-war era when the hopes of earlier years--the early 1970s--began to go sour, when things began to go wrong. It didn't all happen during this period; it had obviously begun to move in that direction even in the Nixon period and the Ford period. But it continued during this period. When I look at the contemporary U.S.-Russian relationship, I see some similarities. We've been through the period of extraordinary hopes over the last four or five years--not just during the two years of Russian independence. There may have been illusions at the root of that hope, too, but there are signs now that things may not go as well as we had expected in U.S.-Russian relations. There are signs that we could, to some degree, follow a similar path to that of the 1970s, although in very different circumstances and with a very different shape.

So the problem of understanding why things happened seems to me to be of much more than merely historical interest. Again, I want to say how pleased I am to be a part of the project, and how much I look forward to your exchanges.

And now a few words about detail. First, I want to apologize to you in advance for my rudeness: I will address everyone by their first name, even people that I do not know well personally. I am doing that not because I *want* to be rude, but because I want to dispense with ceremony in order to facilitate the exchange among all of us. Second, when you wish to speak--or when you begin to speak--you need to push the large button on the right of your microphone. When you are not speaking, or when you have finished speaking, make sure that you turn it off,

May 7--Morning Session 1

because otherwise it will create interference. As far as the languages are concerned, Russian is on Channel 2, and English is on Channel 1. The volume control is on the left.

Let me say one other thing about the undertaking in general; Jim [Blight] can correct me if I am wrong about this. The objective of this exercise is to get our conversation on the public record, and to introduce these insights to a larger audience. As a result, a transcript of the meeting will be prepared and will be circulated to all of you for your editing or for your adjustments, and then it will be issued to a larger audience. There will also be efforts in the course of the several meetings of this undertaking to publish various parts of it, either as articles, or ultimately perhaps as a book, as happened in the case of the Cuban missile crisis project. But from the beginning we will attempt to communicate what has transpired at this meeting to a broader public.

The agenda is not meant to be constraining, even though it has an order that proceeds chronologically through the period that we are looking at. Our opening session this morning until the coffee break at 10:45 is devoted to the transition from President Carter's election until the actual beginning of the administration in January 1977, looking primarily at the early planning; and then we turn in the second session this morning to look at least in general terms at the preparation for the important visit of Secretary of State Vance to Moscow in March of 1977. But we understand that the conversation would be most profitable if it has a life of its own. In terms of procedure, I am not going to set formal time limits on people when they speak; but I hope that all of us at the table will recognize that there are a number of people with important things to say, and that we will bear that in mind. In order to have a coherent

May 7--Morning Session 1

conversation, I will try as much as I can to recognize people who are commenting on the immediate point under discussion, which may mean that, as a queue forms, I will put off calling upon some of you on the list if you are not speaking to the immediate point. At conferences in the United States we often use a system for signaling a request to break the queue, or to move up on the list to comment on an immediate point. I am not going to use that system at the outset; I am going to see if I can recognize enough of what you mean by your body language so that we don't have to go through that formality. If I'm not good at that and it doesn't work, then we will change it for the second session this morning. But that's the way I would like to proceed at this point, so that we don't constrain things too much in terms of procedure.

Finally, then, we are ready to begin. We will start this session, and most others, with a set of challenges, provocations, or questions to each side. Mark Garrison on the American side, and Sergei Tarasenko on the Russian side, will open with very brief opening challenges of five minutes each. I turn to Mark Garrison first, and then we will hear from Sergei.

MARK GARRISON: I see this first session as an opportunity to review where each side was coming from at the time President Carter took office in 1977. Of course, the new administration could not have been expected to have its policies in place already, but the basic perspectives of the new president and his advisers are obviously the starting point for what followed. It will be useful to us to have a baseline to work from that will evolve and be enriched as the sessions go on.

With respect to the materials you all have before you, let me draw to your attention the

May 7--Morning Session 1

fact that among the documents newly available to us are the papers of Averell Harriman, who served as Carter's channel to the Soviets before the inauguration. In the briefing book, we also have declassified U.S. intelligence estimates of Soviet military capabilities that were available to the new administration, as well as the famous "Team B" estimate of Soviet intentions.

Sergei Tarasenko and I have been given the role of asking questions in order to "prime the pump," if you will, to stimulate your own questions and your interactions with each other in pursuit of new insights. So, for my part I would like to invite the Americans at the table to recall the views that they had--and that President Carter held--around January 1977 with respect to the importance that you attached to trying to change Soviet policies, whether in Europe, or in the Third World, or at home--for example, on human rights; and also to recall how those aims of trying to change the Soviets stacked up against nuclear arms control negotiations. In other words, what did you see as the highest priority? That, of course, is going to raise the question of President Carter's own reluctance to set priorities, growing out of his optimism that all was possible. In addition, would any of you now see merit in Georgy Kornienko's assertion that the Harriman channel led the Soviet side to believe that Carter would stick to the terms of the Vladivostok Accords, and thus that this magnified the Soviets' shock when that turned out not to be the case?

Sergei, of course, will have questions regarding Moscow's views at that time; but I'd also like to add the hope that the Russian participants will try to give us a sense of what the concerns were that preoccupied Soviet leaders--whether they be domestic problems, Eastern Europe, China, or whatever. With that, I turn it over to Sergei.

May 7--Morning Session 1

SERGEI TARASENKO: I think it is important now to touch upon some psychological aspects of our relationship at that time. It was a situation when, on our side, there was a team that had been involved in that process for at least ten years. [Leonid] Brezhnev had been in his position and had been dealing with these questions all along. On the American side, a new president came to office, a new team came to office. How did this affect the psychological climate? How did this affect perceptions on both sides? It seems to me that what we had here was an unsynchronized process, or a process taking place at two different levels. I would be very interested to know whether the American side took that psychological factor into consideration--the fact that it had to deal with a very old and experienced leadership, an established leadership. And when the American side embarked on its new approach, so to speak, how much had those factors been considered?

The second question I would like to address to my colleagues. It always interested me very much. The decision-making processes in the United States and the Soviet Union were completely different. We did not have any public opinion polls; we did not have any public discussions of disarmament, or of strategic negotiations. I have always found it fascinating that no more than ten or twelve people were involved in the process. And they were able to move that process ahead. I talked with [Georgy] Kornienko about it before I came here: "Who was the person, or what were the forces, that favored disarmament?" I asked him. "Who was in favor of it?" And he said that they never had any formal papers--they never wrote any formal documents--detailing our doctrine, or stating our policy. [Andrei] Gromyko was interested in the disarmament process for foreign policy reasons; but Kornienko said that, in his opinion, the

May 7--Morning Session 1

main moving force behind that process was Brezhnev himself, who carried with him since World War II a certain emotional attitude towards these problems.

Therefore, I have two questions: a question about psychology, as to how much the American side took the differences that I mentioned above into consideration--the generational differences; and on our side, how we defined our interests--to what extent the Soviet side was interested in genuine disarmament. I will not be revealing any secrets when I say that the first directive for our negotiators in the strategic disarmament negotiations was very simple: to come to the negotiations, to listen to all the Americans had to say, and to do nothing more.

LEGVOLD: Thank you both. Now the floor will be open. First, Marshall [Shulman] has a question--to Sergei, I believe.

MARSHALL SHULMAN: Yes. Sergei, among the people who did have an interest in the technical aspects of disarmament, were there not some Soviet scientists who were engaged and concerned? My impression from the non-governmental contact we had had was that there were a number of leading scientists who may have been influential in the policy-making process.

TARASENKO: I think it is a question that my colleagues who were more involved with the process could answer better. I observed it as an outsider; I don't know anything about the internal process.

May 7--Morning Session 1

LEGVOLD: Would someone on the Russian side care to comment on the role of academics or scientists in the negotiations? Anatoly.

ANATOLY DOBRYNIN: Others on our delegation would like to say something on the question of the role of the scientific community, but I would like to say that, as a practical matter, they did not have very much influence. That is the answer to the question. I was involved in the negotiations through the Foreign Ministry; I was an ambassador. We had some really knowledgeable people working on the arms negotiations. They wrote their papers; they sent these papers to the Central Committee; but practically nobody read them. If something technical came to the Foreign Ministry marked "Top Secret," Gromyko would get it, but I doubt that he would have read it; he would give it to his deputies. Unfortunately, the scientific community, from the very beginning, was not very much involved in the practical work of negotiations. They were involved intellectually; they were following what was going on; they came to Foreign Ministry for information, using friendly ties--not official, but friendly--and said, "Please tell us what is happening." Georgy Arbatov, for example, was the head of our most important institute in Soviet-American relations. But when he came here to Washington, he used to come to me and ask, "What is our position?" When he went to the American side, he went as a representative from Moscow. But he cannot have known what was really going on there.

SHULMAN: What about Nikolai Petrovich Kapitsa?

May 7--Morning Session 1

DOBRYNIN: Well; the experts knew what was going on to some extent. They had their sources. But it was our mistake not to involve them more actively. We didn't ask them to participate in preparing the papers. They knew nothing about our negotiating position, our preparations, or our delegation's instructions. Nothing. If you asked them whether they had their own ideas, or if you asked them their opinions, they would answer you; but as to what our actual position was, or how it was prepared, they did not know. They participated, in a way, by sending papers, and they tried to say things orally to influence some members of the delegation or other high officials--people such as [Yuri] Andropov, for example, or maybe Gromyko. But that was all. They were not really invited to the crucial discussions. As Sergei Tarasenko mentioned, ten or twelve people made the decisions. They never were among those ten or twelve people who participated in the practical preparation, in preparing the crucial directives for our negotiators. None of them did. It was really prohibited to show the telegrams; there was a law, really--unofficially, at least. You couldn't show any telegrams to any of our scientific people. Only to that group of ten or twelve men. While talking with us on a friendly basis, they would criticize certain aspects of our policy. This was useful to us as background. But, unfortunately, we didn't make good use of the intellectual potential that we had for the practical work of formulating our positions.

LEGVOLD: Harold [Brown] is on this, and then Cy [Vance] is next.

HAROLD BROWN: The U.S. scientific and intellectual community, of course, both

May 7--Morning Session 1

contributed to the general atmosphere of U.S.-Soviet relations by writing publicly and by using private channels to people in the government, and by coming up with very specific proposals. They, of course, had access to officials, and a general understanding of forces on both sides, strategic forces. It is my impression that Anatoly is right that the Soviet side's intellectuals were not in a position, in general, even to know what the characteristics of the weapons systems were. And, in fact, during SALT I it was unclear even how much Foreign Ministry officials knew about that. [Laughter on the Russian side.]

DOBRYNIN: We found it out from you. [Laughter.]

BROWN: Yes. So there was a very considerable asymmetry there. So far, however, neither here nor in the documentation has there been much mention of another element on the Soviet side which, I assume, had a substantial input into the deliberations and even in the negotiations indirectly: the General Staff and the Ministry of Defense. I assume--well, I *know* they had a lot to do with it, but not much of it comes through in the documentation, and it would be very helpful to have more information about that.

DOBRYNIN: It's quite simple. They affected things the wrong way. [Laughter.]

LEGVOLD: I'm going to come to Nikolai [Detinov] in a moment, because I think he'll say some things about Harold's question, but Cy is next on my list.

May 7--Morning Session 1

VANCE: Thank you very much, Bob. I'd like to shift a bit for a moment, and give a few brief opening remarks. Before doing that I want to say how very pleased I am to be a participant in these discussions, and to express my deep appreciation to Smith Bagley and all the others who labored so carefully in arranging such a congenial setting for these meetings.

Let me start up by saying, as has previously been indicated in the materials which had been put before us before we gathered here, that the task that we are undertaking in this series of meetings is to seek to understand why relations soured between the United States and the USSR during the period 1977-1981. For this conference, our assigned task, as I understand it, is to analyze the course of our efforts to bring nuclear weapons under more rational control. The spirit that would drive our discussions is not, in my judgment, to prove who was right or who was wrong. Clearly, none of us can claim to have been wholly right or to assign blame to our failure to have been more successful in our efforts. But rather, our task is to improve our understanding of why things happened the way that they did in light of the information which is now available to us, and with the benefit of retrospective hindsight and insight.

Perhaps the most important lesson, I think, which emerges from a study of the documents which have been made available to us is how deeply events were influenced by the interaction between the domestic political situation in the two countries, of which we had only limited awareness at that time. A word about some background factors. On the U.S. side, it's apparent in retrospect, I would submit, that an important factor was the rising conservative tide in American politics which limited our freedom of maneuver in the negotiations on the control of nuclear weapons, and which foreshadowed the difficulty of ratifying a SALT treaty. On the

May 7--Morning Session 1

Soviet side, it appears that an important factor was that this period coincided with the declining years of an aging and an increasingly immobilized political leadership. On the international plane, the turbulence of international politics--including the collapse of the colonial empires in Africa, in Southern Asia, and elsewhere--created new opportunities for exploitation and competition, which repeatedly, I submit, interfered with efforts to stabilize political relations between the United States and the USSR.

Now, a brief word on some factors relating to nuclear weapons. The SALT II negotiations came on the heels of a period in which the Soviet Union, through great effort, had achieved strategic parity with the United States. This made the negotiations acceptable to the Soviet side, but it created a new set of apprehensions on the U.S. side. The SALT process was complicated by a number of complex factors. These factors included the asymmetry of the force structures of the two sides, which complicated the problems of determining with precision what "parity" meant in practice, and determining the equitability of measures to constrain non-comparable weapons systems. In particular, the reliance of the Soviet Union on large MIRVed missiles created an apprehension on the U.S. side of the potential vulnerability of its land-based missiles to a disabling first strike attack. This, therefore, led us to emphasize as a major objective the reduction in the number of Soviet MIRVed heavy missiles. From the Soviet point of view this bore inequitably upon its main strategic capability. But beyond this basic technical problem, what proved to be more troublesome were the sharp differences in expectations with which the parties approached the opening negotiations. In the period leading up to the negotiations the Secretary General made it clear that he expected to pick up negotiations where

May 7--Morning Session 1

they had been left off in Vladivostok. From President Carter's point of view, he wanted an early agreement, but he was increasingly concerned that more substantial reductions were required than had been allowed for in Vladivostok. Therefore, in retrospect, it seems clear that the two sides did not allow themselves sufficient time to talk out these critical differences in expectations, and I think this is a very important factor. Thank you, Bob.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Cy. I think it was very helpful general comment, and it concludes with a further challenge to both sides that follows up on Mark's original point on the American side. Judging from his reaction, Viktor [Sukhodrev] has something to say about the domestic point that you were making at the outset, Cy. I'm going to turn to him. We've also opened this other issue: Harold's question about the role of the General Staff and the military in the preparation and conduct of the arms negotiations, and Nikolai will respond to that. But first I'm going to turn to Viktor in response to Cy.

VIKTOR SUKHODREV: Thank you. I want to pick up on what Sergei said about the very narrow circle of people who were really dealing with these matters on a day-to-day basis on the Soviet side, and particularly what he said about Brezhnev himself as a person at the core of that--his wartime experience, his lack of formal education, and yet his great emotional involvement in the whole process of détente and disarmament. I want to turn specifically to the MemCon of Harriman's talk with him on June 4, 1974, when the outcome of the American election was still not clear. [Questions from other participants about the exact date of the

May 7--Morning Session 1

meeting.] June 4, 1974--Section IV, page 306 in your notebooks. This is June 4, 1974, and I feel that is why it is important. Nixon was still president, and Nixon's final visit was still to come. But Harriman was there to talk about what could come in the post-Nixon period. And there Brezhnev made a remark which those of you who read the MemCons may remember--a remark which he was to make over and over again. Perhaps most Americans did not realize. I quote: "the importance of those first few minutes of conversation with Nixon in 1972 which had had a decisive effect." What was that conversation? This was 1972, the first Nixon visit. It was the conversation that appeared in none of the programs of that visit. It was not scheduled. Two or three minutes after the arrival of Nixon at the Kremlin, where he was to stay, he was approached, through me, with a suggestion, which I had not known about--maybe Anatoly had, but only shortly before that--that they have a non-scheduled meeting: Brezhnev and Nixon, one on one. Nixon could bring an interpreter, if he so desired. Nixon did not so desire, and said he would settle for me alone. Now, why was this unscheduled? Why did nobody know about it? Because, officially, according to the directives--and this went for succeeding talks as well--the Politburo had decided that three people would conduct the negotiations on the Soviet side. This was the troika: Brezhnev, [Nikolai] Podgorny, and [Aleksei] Kosygin. Podgorny and Kosygin had no idea that Brezhnev was going to come out with the suggestion that they meet one on one, because it went against the Politburo decisions. But it was a reflection of the internal competition. I deliberately do not use the word "struggle" for preeminence in the Politburo in this case; that, too, is important. Now, this conversation was totally unprepared. There were just three people in the room at the Kremlin. Nixon walked over from his residence

May 7--Morning Session 1

to the Kremlin, and there were just three people in the room: the two principals and myself. Brezhnev had a piece of paper, Nixon had nothing. May I say, Anatoly, that this caused a furor among the foreign policy people. Nixon bore the brunt of this. Henry Kissinger was absolutely furious.

DOBRYNIN: He tried to get notes from you, right?

SUKHODREV: He did. Ultimately he did. There is one MemCon in the archives of the American State Department, or the White House, or wherever, which was written by a Soviet diplomat: myself.

DOBRYNIN: I think we don't have it in Russian.

SUKHODREV: They have to.

DOBRYNIN: No, they don't.

SUKHODREV: Well, anyway; now, what was that conversation about? It set the tone, and Brezhnev referred to it again, and again, and again. I repeat; I don't know where that MemCon is. It would be interesting for subsequent discussion to get it. Maybe it's no big deal. There was nothing specifically about strategic arms--no numbers, nothing. It's significance is purely

May 7--Morning Session 1

psychological. Nixon did indeed say what Brezhnev says that he said, although in different words perhaps: "Let's leave systems aside, and let's talk about how to improve our relationship." That left upon Brezhnev a lasting impression.

Podgorny and Kosygin were furious, partly because it held up the official banquet for about 45 minutes while they were talking. They were also furious because it was a pure violation of the Politburo directive. Nobody knew about it. [First name?] Alexandrov told me: "Go to Nixon before he comes in, go up to his quarters, and ask him whether he wants to meet with Brezhnev right now, one on one." They did. I think that that is important background, and a backdrop to those conversations, and to all of those that were then held. Brezhnev returned to it over and over again, just as he did to the story which Harriman recounts in this MemCon, and which I am sure is included in many other MemCons. I called it the Sermon on the Mount--where he tells about his father and how his father told him what should be done to those who wage wars. Harriman recounts this in detail. Brezhnev would return to this in conversations with Kissinger, I am sure with Cy, and with many many other people. I knew it by heart. I used to take notes as well as translate, and when I came to that story, I would just put in my notebook, "Sermon on the Mount." [Laughter.] I would wait patiently for him to finish, because it was a long story, and then I would just go into it from memory. I think that that is important because Brezhnev was at the center of the whole debate on strategic arms. He was deeply personally involved. His personal involvement helps to explain why he was so disappointed. He felt that all he had done at Vladivostok was being completely overturned. Thank you.

May 7--Morning Session 1

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Viktor. Nikolai, then Viktor [Starodubov].

DOBRYNIN: May I say something?

LEGVOLD: Okay, if it's on this point; very briefly, Anatoly.

DOBRYNIN: Just to add two things to what Viktor said. Yes, Brezhnev was very much disappointed at what happened because he felt Vladivostok his was major achievement. More than that, he had had a real struggle over Vladivostok. The Politburo was very badly split. During his stay in Vladivostok, he called [first name?] Grechko, our Minister of Defense, three times. Grechko was the chief opponent. Finally, Brezhnev said to him very angrily: "Okay, convene a Politburo meeting right away; I will come to Moscow and we will discuss this question." And then, of course, Grechko didn't really want the trouble of a fight with the General Secretary. He said, "Okay, I accept your judgment, I accept on this one." So Brezhnev had really reached the limits of the Politburo's willingness to go along on this one, and when Cy came to him with a new proposal, he hated the idea of coming back to the Politburo and saying, "Look here, they are dissatisfied, we again have to begin from the very beginning." So the psychological and political climate within Politburo made it very difficult at that particular moment to accept the new figures which you proposed.

LEGVOLD: Okay, now, the next person I have is Nikolai [Detinov], and then Viktor

May 7--Morning Session 1

Starodubov, and then Sergei Kondrashov.

NIKOLAI DETINOV: I would like to say several words about the question which has been raised here--about the mechanism of decision-making concerning SALT negotiations in the Soviet Union. I have to admit that indeed our scientific community was not involved in the process of working out any specific positions at the negotiations. Such individuals, and such scientists as [first name?] Inozemtsev, Arbatov, and several other individuals who had direct access to the Soviet leadership and who had frequent meetings with the leaders--they, of course, had some influence on the general character of U.S.-Soviet relations, and on general questions, but they did not know any concrete details about the negotiations, and that's why they could not even discuss such topics.

Immediately after the SALT negotiations had begun in Helsinki, the Politburo made a decision to create a special group: the so-called Commission for Monitoring the Helsinki Negotiations. The Secretary of the Central Committee, Dimitry Fedorovich Ustinov, was appointed to be the chairman of that group. Later he became the Minister of Defense. The members of this Commission were: Gromyko, Grechko (the Defense Minister), Andropov, [first name?] Smirnov (Chairman of the Military-Industrial Commission at that time), and [first name?] Keldysh. I have to say that Keldysh was a member of that Commission for a very short time. He left the Commission after several months. He had to leave, because he could not have any influence on the decision-making. Of course, the members of that Commission had conversations and meetings with Leonid Ilych Brezhnev, discussed the major questions with him,

May 7--Morning Session 1

and gave certain instructions for preparing documents. At that time all documents were prepared by the Defense Ministry, the General Staff, and the Foreign Ministry. Nikolai Vasilievich Ogarkov, who was the First Deputy of the Chief of the General Staff at that time, was in charge of it in the General Staff. Gromyko himself, and Georgy Markovich Kornienko--and also Kiril Petrovich Novikov, who was the head of the International Organizations Department--were the crucial people in the Foreign Ministry. This is how the preparation of all those things began. Of course, every member of the big Politburo Commission, which was later called "the Big Five" after Keldysh had left, had his own advisors and assistants who advised them on what to do and how to do it. But in the first period there were no deliberations and discussions of the initial negotiating positions. Only by the time of the Vladivostok summit had a working group been created for the big Politburo Commission. Organizations which were represented in the big Politburo Commission sent their representatives to the working group. It was a working group at the level of Deputy Ministers. Kornienko represented the Foreign Ministry; [first name?] Kozlov, who at that time became the First Deputy of the Chief of General Staff, represented the Defense Ministry; [first name?] Mityaev, who was an assistant of Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, represented the KGB; [first name?] Asachiev represented the Military-Industrial Commission; and from the Central Committee's Department of Defense Industry, I myself took part in the work of the Commission.

That Commission began to prepare all the materials on the Soviet positions for further consideration by the "Big Five." I need to mention that this working Commission was not formalized as to its membership up until the very end. It worked efficiently; it involved military

May 7--Morning Session 1

specialists in its work; it involved scientists--mostly engineers who worked on weapons systems; and diplomats. The members of the Soviet negotiating delegation participated in the work of that Commission when they were in Moscow between sessions. They all helped to prepare the relevant directives. I have to say that the representatives of the General Staff and the Foreign Ministry always played the largest role in the work of the Commission. They practically held all the cards in preparing the initial documents.

This mechanism enabled us, first, to work out very well-balanced documents, decisions, and proposals for the negotiations and for U.S.-Soviet relations in the sphere of strategic disarmament in general; and second--which is very important--such a collegial approach practically excluded the possibility of any opposition emerging to the decisions already made in the Soviet Union. This was because all the institutions that could potentially have had some influence or have criticized the decisions had to take part in the work of that Commission themselves, and in the decision-making process. This mechanism practically existed up until the very end of the Soviet Union's existence, until the end of 1991. And when the members of the Big Five--some members of the Big Five--were in the Lefortovo Prison, the Small Five continued its work for some time and continued to prepare certain documents and proposals for Gorbachev at the last stage of his tenure as a President of the Soviet Union. [Laughter.]

LEGVOLD: Nikolai, that was very helpful; thank you very much. Before turning to Viktor and then to Sergei, I will interrupt and turn to Les [Gelb], because I think you are on this issue, aren't you? [Gelb shakes his head.] Okay, then I'm going to hold you for just a moment.

May 7--Morning Session 1

Viktor Starodubov, please.

STARODUBOV: Nikolai Detinov has just said most of what I was going to tell you. I would like to add something. He said that the initial number of members in the Big Five was six--six individuals representing six institutions--and then one left the Commission, and five members remained. Nikolai said that Keldysh, who was one of the original members, did not have any influence. I would like to clarify it a little. Even though Keldysh was a member of that Commission for a short time, he left a lasting trace of his presence. In the Commission, as I think everywhere--as here in America--there existed some internal diplomacy, not only external diplomacy. Leonid Ilych Brezhnev gave Keldysh a lot of respect, and listened to his opinions. And the military often used him in order to get their own points of view through to Brezhnev, sometimes in opposition to their own Defense Minister. That was especially evident in ABM questions. I think that if not for Keldysh, the ABM negotiations would have dragged out for a long time. There was great ambivalence about whether to make the decision or not. It was through Keldysh that they succeeded in persuading Leonid Ilych that the ABM question had to be resolved by rejecting the option of building unlimited anti-ballistic missiles defenses. He understood that. So did the General Staff, who also favored the ABM treaty; but Grechko was against it. And the question was finally resolved with the help of Keldysh. This is what I wanted to add.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Viktor. Sergei.

May 7--Morning Session 1

SERGEI KONDRASHOV: If you permit me, I would like to say a couple of words on the topic that we are discussing now, concerning the scientists' participation in the process. There is one aspect that illustrates the role of the Security Ministry in those questions. There were many cases when either those who took part in designing and engineering a weapon system, or those who took part in working out our negotiating positions, did not dare to report their points of view directly to their superiors. There were many examples of such people reporting to Andropov, either directly or through his staff. They wrote memos, expressed their genuine positions, with a hope that it would, naturally, remain confidential and never become public; but they wanted by all means to report their point of view to the leadership. We processed those memos, of course. Andropov knew about each of them, and when necessary, certain opinions were sent to General Secretary Brezhnev anonymously. It was one important element, because the procedure was widely used. This is the first element.

The second element relates to the situation in the country. I have to tell you that right before the new Carter administration came to office there were several defining elements of the situation in our country. One of the most complex elements, and the one which required constant attention, was the Soviet-Chinese relationship. You know that there was serious bloodshed on our border with China in 1969. The subject of the conflict was, in general, the exact location of the border and the status of 270 islands. The essence of the problem I could characterize in the following words: the border was drawn according to four Russian-Chinese treaties; because of the nature of the relationship that we had with China in the last century, the border line was drawn on the Chinese shore of the rivers defining the border, not in the middle

May 7--Morning Session 1

of these rivers. Therefore, the Chinese thought that the border line was not drawn fairly. After those complications and the bloodshed on the Chinese border, the huge mass of Chinese population in the immediate border region represented a major problem for the Soviet leadership. Our side of the border was very scarcely populated. It was a big problem. And at that very moment the American Leadership decided to normalize relations with China. That is why the role of the United States in the further development of Soviet-Chinese relations was one of our biggest problems, and we, naturally, began to monitor what the American side was attempting to do--to normalize relations--very closely and carefully, mainly via Foreign Ministry and Intelligence channels. We understood that it might interfere with our vital interests.

The next element was the fact that in 1975, the Final Act had been signed in Helsinki. We thought that the Final Act had struck an internal balance: between disarmament and confidence-building measures on the one hand, and the sphere of human rights on the other. And at the same time the Final Act had a political balance to it also: the balance between the interests of the East and the West. And when the Carter administration was preparing to begin its term, the question of how that balance of the Final Act would be preserved in Soviet-American relations became a big problem for our leadership. I have to say that already the first signals through our intelligence channels, and our internal evaluation of the news that certain individuals had been appointed by the administration, indicated to us that that sphere--the human rights sphere--would draw the special attention of the administration. And, of course, it was one of the very important circumstances that forces us to define our own position on those problems. I have to tell you that by allowing the official publication of the Helsinki Final Act in our

May 7--Morning Session 1

country, we took a bold step. Naturally, we understood that it would cause a very certain reaction in the country. Indeed, very soon Helsinki groups began to emerge, the dissident movement developed. But it still did not represent the level of concern for our leadership which would have prohibited any further progress in the human rights sphere. Just the opposite. I have to tell you that when the views expressed at the Belgrade meeting were considered by our leadership, Andropov told me (since at the time I was responsible for the "third basket" on our side) that we could go further in the sphere of human rights if there was progress in the disarmament sphere. He told me openly: "Well, you know the situation in the country; you know how much further we could go. If there is progress on disarmament with the Carter administration, you can make necessary decisions. You can make proposals in the sphere of human rights and basic freedoms."

This is what I wanted to tell you at the outset of our meeting. And, of course, I will add more as our conversation proceeds. Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Sergei. Les.

GELB: The buffet of anecdotes is so terrific that I am loath to suggest moving in another direction; but let me at least raise the possibility, and maybe the anecdotes can be fitted into this larger purpose.

It strikes me that the way you conceived this first session is the way we ought to be talking in this first session: namely, about how each side saw this enterprise, what the purposes

May 7--Morning Session 1

were--our purposes, and your purposes; how we saw your motives, and how you saw our motives. I think you can see from these documents that we probably did not spend a great deal of time talking about our purposes in the SALT negotiations, and that had we spent a great deal of time talking about it, we might not have agreed on what our purposes were. But we certainly spent a great deal of time talking about your purposes and your motives. It was in the forefront of many of our discussions. There were some who felt that from your standpoint these talks had very little to do with disarmament and a lot to do with trying to curtail the development of the American nuclear programs--that, in effect, the negotiations were a political trick to slow down the process of nuclear modernization and to prevent us from taking advantage of our technological superiority; to sow division in the American internal debate; and to create conflicts between the United States and its allies. Some even went further in discussing Soviet motives, and said that really what you were after was to try to create a climate to actually be able to intimidate the United States with the threat of the first strike--a preemptive strike. But we spent a great deal of time talking about these motives, and you must have known this, that this preoccupied us and shaped a good deal of what we proposed and what we did during the course of these years. But could you talk to the question of motives and purposes? And I think our side ought to do so as well.

LEGVOLD: Is there someone who will take Les's challenge on the Russian side? Sergei.

TARASENKO: Again, I talked with Kornienko, I asked him this question specifically. What

May 7--Morning Session I

was our military doctrine? What was the Soviet Union ready to do? What were our basic positions? Of course, he was very cautious in this conversation. He said, "I have never seen any paper, or any document, indicating this." And as far as he had known, there were no documents that would have been presented to the leadership of the Soviet Union outlining the operational military doctrine--how to behave under different circumstances; whether or when to try a first strike, or a retaliatory strike, and so forth. There was nothing like that. He said to me, "As far as I know, our military worked on those questions, and they analyzed them for the future as one would a game of chess--how many of these weapons we needed; how many of those; how much we would need for such and such a situation. But they never presented their positions to the leadership." And he told me that once, when Kosygin was still powerful--before he was pushed aside from the leadership--the General Staff attempted to push for a launch-under-attack policy. Kosygin very categorically prohibited even discussing that question. He said that by saying certain things, it would make it more likely that we would be put in a situation where it would be necessary to use nuclear weapons. He said that we could not agree to this. And as Kornienko told me, he had the impression that if there had been a first strike from the U.S. side, then our military would have had to write to the Politburo, saying, "According to our information a strike is being delivered," and the leadership would have voted on what to do. [Laughter.] He was very straightforward about that.

He also insisted that, as far as the military were concerned, the reference in Brezhnev's Tula speech to "sufficiency" and all the talk about the Soviet desire to achieve military superiority had no grounds. He had known all the Chiefs of General Staff, like [first name?]

May 7--Morning Session 1

Zakharov, [first name?] Kulikov, [Sergei] Akhromeev, [Nikolai] Ogarkov, for a long time, and as he said, they deeply felt that the Soviet Union was substantially inferiority in strategic weapons--in all systems--and that the best they could hope for was to preserve the status quo, and not to fall behind any more. What they wanted to try to do was hold on to the position that had been achieved by the time of, let's say, 1977. There was no discussion about any superiority, about any accumulation; they did not even dream about that. Because, he said--I am just repeating his words--that the military--the disarmament specialists--clearly perceived a big, a qualitative lag, an inferiority. And in those circumstances the decision to hold START negotiations reflected a desire to prevent the U.S. side from a breakthrough in the military sphere, to secure the position already achieved, to stay in the same ballpark, or at least the same league. This is what he said to me very clearly. I am just repeating what he told me. Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Sergei. Now I have three people who want to comment on this. First Harold, then Anatoly, then Marshall. Harold.

BROWN: I think it's a good thing that we are concentrating for the moment on strategic nuclear weapons and disarmament issues. Later--maybe even next year--we'll get to the questions of linkage, U.S. views about whether the Soviet Union wanted to take over the world, the interactions between these things, and so forth. But on the strategic weapons issue and the disarmament issue, it is clear from what has been said on both sides that the lack of transparency

May 7--Morning Session 1

with respect to the Soviet strategic doctrine was a real problem for the United States.

Now, it is true that if the Soviet side had said, "We are only interested in deterrence," there would have been Americans who said, "They are lying." But, at least, there would be the beginning of a discussion. The separation between Foreign Ministry and General Staff knowledge of--and participation in the formulation of--that doctrine probably contributed to the lack of transparency. On the U.S. side, there was also a problem: there was too much concern among the U.S. political class, and among many journalists and academics--not all of them were in favor of disarmament, as Les Gelb pointed out--about Soviet first-strike capabilities, which were never that great. But, in fact, as the strategic arms negotiations evolved, Soviet concerns about the American qualitative superiority, and American concerns about Soviet quantitative superiority--specifically having to do with heavy missiles and their ability to destroy the U.S. retaliatory capability--resulted in quite different goals on both sides. And it was the tension between the respective goals on the two sides that drove the negotiations, beginning all the way back in 1968 and '69, recurring periodically, including in 1977. When we get to the point of discussing the specific proposals, I think we should keep this background in mind.

LEGVOLD: Thank you. Anatoly.

DOBRYNIN: I want to add something on this issue. Really, it relates more to what Sergei mentioned. Of course, our military people, as I understood it, had various plans and options for using nuclear weapons--when to use them, how to use them, at what level, and so forth.

May 7--Morning Session 1

Very occasionally I would discuss these matters with the military--unofficially--because we had a friendly relationship with some people from our General Staff. But I can tell you this: Foreign Ministry people did not discuss this on a regular basis, and we did not spend even five minutes on it in discussions with your State Department. Gelb and others talked about first strike capability, first use, no-first-use, nuclear options, and so on. We did not discuss them in the Foreign Ministry. *In the Foreign Ministry*, I emphasize. In the General Staff, they discussed these things. But we never really tried to be involved.

This was very bad, because we didn't know what they were talking about. All we knew about nuclear war we knew from American sources, you see. [Laughter.] I am speaking for myself, and all my friends, including Kornienko. We knew nothing about it. So, it made things much more difficult. Actually, it made things too simple, too: we did not have very elaborate theories underlying our negotiating positions. We did not really discuss the balance of interests, we discussed the balance of weaponry: "How many missiles do we have? Okay, you have more, and we have less, so let's insist until we reach the same level. We will stand without moving." It was too simplified. Simplified, but at the same time it was really very difficult to negotiate with you. You put things in a much broader context than this. This was both a plus for you and a minus. The plus was that you were much more educated in strategic doctrine than we were; the minus was that you were always drawn into details. So when we began to discuss with you, we didn't know whether you were just talking, or trying to impress us. [Laughter.] It was very difficult even to report to Moscow what you were talking about. [Laughter.] When I wrote a telegram, I would always try to communicate enough information to let the Politburo

May 7--Morning Session 1

decide whether the Americans were serious or not. But in the discussion it was sometimes really very difficult to know.

It is an open secret--I think somebody mentioned it somewhere; Carter, perhaps--that in the whole history of the Soviet-American discussion, not a single time did the Russians mention a figure with respect to their nuclear arms. They always waited until the Americans offered the figures, and they would say "yes" or "no." Sometimes we would add or subtract, but all the numbers were American. So were the names. I myself did not even know until the very last moment what "SS-18" meant. [Laughter.]

So all of this made our diplomacy very difficult. Maybe that's why our diplomacy was really rather simple. We had very simple diplomacy. We just went forward without paying attention to what you were saying to us. We just repeated the same answers to the same questions. Of course, I am exaggerating. But this did make it very difficult for us to negotiate constructively--I am speaking about the Soviet diplomats.

I think that you overplayed the importance of hypothetical scenarios. I recall speaking to [Thomas] Watson, who before being appointed ambassador was Chairman of the Advisory Committee. I said, "What is the main lesson that you draw from your experience as Chairman of the Commission?" He said, "One thing I draw, Anatoly, after two years being Chairman of the Commission, is that we couldn't allow the military to handle nuclear war. Because they couldn't handle it as well as a civilian could do it. Because they--the military--know very clearly how many weapons one side could strike with, and how many the other could return, but they avoid answering the question of what would be the result after such a war, and how we deal

May 7--Morning Session I

with the world after the war."

So, let's discuss these things in concrete terms. To summarize--yes, this was situation where none of the Russian diplomats, including top ambassadors, knew what our military doctrine was, except that we were always on the defensive, defending our country. But I never heard what the military doctrine of the Soviet Union was. I don't know, maybe you didn't even know your own doctrine. But I didn't know ours. This made things very complicated and very simple. I didn't know much about the actual military situation--how powerful the missiles were, what the real balance was, whether we could annihilate your capacity with a first strike or not--we just took it all for granted. That's all. I think this might clarify your question a little bit.

LEGVOLD: Marshall?

SHULMAN: Well, I think it's useful that we have identified that at this early stage one of the fundamental problems of the asymmetry on the two sides was the extent to which those responsible for the negotiations were involved in the discussions of strategic doctrine. I go back to what Sergei said about what Kosygin reported. And I think one further elucidation might be useful from the Soviet side, particularly from those with military experience.

From my point of view, in observing the period from Glasboro, in 1967, when the president sought to argue with Kosygin first about the importance of deterrence, there was a gap between U.S. and Soviet understandings of the role of nuclear weapons. The U.S. always spoke about them as retaliatory. But what the discussion at Glasboro reflected was the American view

May 7--Morning Session 1

that it was important to put the emphasis on deterrence rather than on superiority to achieve a first strike capability. The president was also arguing the disutility of defensive measures--arguing that the measures that the Soviet Union was then contemplating for antiballistic missile defense did not make sense either in doctrinal terms or in practical terms. Kosygin took this message back, and obviously was finding it very difficult to accept at that point.

Now, from the point of view of people in the United States who were trying to follow the developments within the Soviet military from what was published, and from what we read between the lines of the published material, it was clear that the idea of *deterrence*--which by this time was well-embedded in American thought--had no acceptance in the professional military and the General Staff. The interesting thing was that there was some percolation; something went on between that time and the time of the drafting of the Tula speech in early 1978 [someone corrects Shulman: 1977]. That's right; within a few days after the inauguration. At that point it was clear that what Brezhnev was making an effort to say was, "We do not subscribe to the doctrine of superiority; in effect we accept the notion of sufficiency." And then there was, of course, a debate in the United States about how to read this, how to understand it--whether to take it at face value, or whether to take it as a bit of *agitprop*, or what. But the publication of that speech and the debates on our side were important.

If you have any light to cast on the significance of the events that led up to the drafting of the Tula speech, I think it would be a very useful contribution to our discussion.

LEGVOLD: Viktor Starodubov.

May 7--Morning Session 1

STARODUBOV: The participants repeatedly emphasized the idea that only the General Staff--the military--possessed full information about the Soviet military forces, and about the programs that were under way in the Soviet Union. This was indeed the case. And we sincerely felt sorry for our diplomats, when during the discussions they got into very difficult situations because they did not have that information. I have to tell you about this because I am here as a representative of the General Staff at that time.

I would like to begin with what Secretary Brown mentioned as our main concern: the idea that the General Staff and the Soviet military were primarily concerned with defending themselves from a *retaliatory* American strike. I want to emphasize *retaliatory*. This is not true. I say this with deep knowledge and conviction. Our main task was not to defend the country from a retaliatory strike, because we did not plan a first strike from our side. If one looks at the realities, at the balance of relative capabilities, at the weapons that the Soviet Union had and that the United States had, you would realize that we just could not have set such a task for ourselves. Our main goal--our main concern--was to ensure our own retaliatory strike capability. And in the beginning, when the balance of relative capabilities was strongly in the Americans' favor, we did think about launch-under-attack or launch-on-warning, because we were afraid that the U.S. could just wipe out the small number of strategic forces that we had, and then dictate their conditions to us. That is why we considered the possibility of a launch-under-attack, or a strike immediately after we got a signal about a nuclear attack from the United States. Later, when we had achieved relative parity, we considered only the option of a retaliatory strike. The idea behind that retaliatory strike was deterrence, even though on our

May 7--Morning Session I

side this term--"deterrence"--was not used at all for a very long time. But in fact the concept of deterrence was there from the very beginning of existence of the Soviet strategic forces.

Now I would like to describe to you our general way of thinking, how we came to those concepts, to those conclusions. Maybe what I will say will be familiar to you; but I will try to present our approach systematically.

First, I would like to say that we were not confident that the United States would not use nuclear weapons first. Maybe even to the contrary, we thought that in certain circumstances the United States could use nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union. What was this conclusion based on? First, they had already used nuclear weapons in war. I am talking about the two Japanese cities. Then, I have to say--and here Kondrashov can support me--that, already at that time--at that early time--we knew about the existence of plans for nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. If you want to refute me, then refute me. That is why we were persuaded that if a possibility of a nuclear attack existed, we should act as fast as possible, in as short time as possible, to ensure deterrence.

And maybe the U.S. side is still wondering, even at this time, why the Soviet Union has so many different types of missiles. Traditionally--especially early, when missiles were first being designed and built--they were put in the field without even having been tested properly. At least they still might be able to deter. Modernization of missiles followed very quickly. New types were designed very quickly, and the variety of types was the result of that process. And then it became a tradition. Thus the General Staff insisted on getting nuclear weapons as soon as possible, and in a quantity sufficient for a guaranteed deterrence--or, as [Robert] McNamara

May 7--Morning Session 1

used to say, to ensure deterrence by threat of unacceptable damage.

That was all logical. I don't think I am saying anything new. I am only saying that during all that time we just could not set ourselves the task of delivering a nuclear first strike against the United States. And it follows that we could not therefore set ourselves the goal of deterring a *retaliatory* strike of the United States.

In the second half of the 1960s, as you recall, were extremely concerned about the speed with which the Soviet Union was accumulating its nuclear missile potential. Yes, the speed was great; we had been building about 200-250 ICBM launchers a year, and more than 100 SLBM launchers. But I have a chart that I can pass around to all of you indicating that, in terms of both launchers and warheads, the line representing U.S. weapons has always been above and to the left of the Soviet line. What does this mean? It means that we have always been several years behind the United States. And those U.S. campaigns under the slogan of "falling behind the Soviet Union" just did not fit those realities.

Finally, I think that it was logical for both countries that at some point the leaders came to the conclusion that it was impossible to continue increasing armaments any longer. The U.S. saw it for their own that the Soviet Union was capable of achieving parity and to sustain it, and that made any further arms race unwinnable. We in the Soviet Union understood it too, but we also understood that for us trying to catch up with the United States would be too costly, too difficult, in terms of the economy and so forth. That is why we came to the conclusion about the need for negotiating limits on, and later reducing strategic weapons. I would like to pause on this for now. Thank you for your attention.

May 7--Morning Session 1

DOBRYNIN: Excuse me. I have one question for you [indicating the U.S. side]. Did the United States have plans for a first strike, or not? We were very interested in this at the time. Did the United States have a real plans for first strike--a nuclear first strike against the Soviet Union? If so, under what circumstances? I am taking about 1977, the beginning of the Carter period; or let's say Nixon. As the General just mentioned now, we didn't have first strike intentions, for the reasons he just explained. What about your planning? Please explain.

BROWN: Well, the U.S. certainly had no first strike *intentions*. There was--and there is, I suppose, still now; but there certainly was then--a so-called "strategic integrated operational plan"* that included a very large number of targets in the Soviet Union. Periodically the Joint Chiefs of Staff would go through an exercise: a command post exercise, or a study of what an exchange would look like. Those exchanges always began with a Soviet strike on the United States. I assume that the Soviet General Staff also went through such exercises, and that they always began with an American strike on the Soviet Union. We always evaluated our forces in a retaliatory mode, so there was a strike plan, but--

DOBRYNIN: Was it a first strike?

BROWN: We never did exercises with the U.S. striking first, although we did calculations as to how the exchange would come out if the U.S. struck first and the Soviet Union retaliated, and

*Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP)

May 7--Morning Session 1

vice versa. And what we always found was that it didn't really matter who began the war: both sides ended up being destroyed. Our operational planning always assumed that the war would begin with a Soviet strike.

See, our position--and it was very publicly expressed--was that no one could win a thermonuclear war, and that therefore deterring it was important. Deterring it was the central strategic issue. But deterrence depends not on how you think something will come out, but on how the *other* side thinks something will come out--because deterrence is deterrence of the other side. And we didn't know what the Soviet calculations looked like because the Soviet strategic doctrine was not transparent. As I said, we had a strategic operational plan which said which targets would be struck in the Soviet Union under certain circumstances, and there were all sorts of arrangements to withhold strikes against civilian populations, withhold strikes against certain Soviet allies in the Warsaw Pact, and so forth. That's all well known. But we had no plans for a first strike.

DOBRYNIN: So, as I understand it, it is rather ironic that during all those years of rivalry between our two countries, the main premise was that neither you nor we intended to have a first strike. If it had been clear from the very beginning, I think many issues could have been solved on the spot.

BROWN: I think neither side--well, I cannot speak for the Soviet side; but we were not, within the government, so much concerned about Soviet intentions for a first strike in a peaceful

May 7--Morning Session 1

situation--a "bolt-out-of-the-blue" situation. What we were concerned about--what I was concerned about, certainly--was that in a situation of great tension--in Europe, for example, where there might even have been conventional military conflict--the Soviet leadership might misconstrue either American intentions or the balance of strategic forces in such a way as to decide either that there was going to be a nuclear exchange, and that they'd be better off striking first. I was concerned that the Soviet political leadership might hear a convincing briefing from a Soviet military planner saying, "If we, the Soviet Union strike first, we can destroy all the land-based American systems and bombers, and the subsequent imbalance would be so great either that we can limit the damage that the American submarine-launched missiles might do, or else we might be in a better negotiating position." Now, I must say, I always found this scenario difficult to believe or to imagine; but it was something that had to be considered. There may well have been similar considerations on the Soviet side with respect to us. To repeat, I never felt that we would let the imbalance become such that it would become plausible, but it was the kind of calculation of weapons balance that the U.S. military had to make. That was part of their professional responsibility.

DOBRYNIN: Let me add--

LEGVOLD: Anatoly, I'm going to hold you now.

DOBRYNIN: Very quickly.

May 7--Morning Session 1

LEGVOLD: All right, but be very brief, because I got other people on the list.

DOBRYNIN: You've heard what the military just said: that they did not have a first strike capability, or first-strike intentions. So, Harold: did you have them or not? I am not speaking about how you evaluated *our* intentions. Did you have plans for a first nuclear strike against the Soviet Union under certain circumstances or not? Yes or no?

BROWN: We never had any intention of a first strike.

STARODUBOV: A couple of words, to finish this. [Laughter; commotion.]

LEGVOLD: One moment. We are trying to bring some order to the discussion now. There are a number of people who want to speak on this specific point, and there is also a longer list of people who have been waiting to speak. So let me explain what I am going to do. I am going to turn first to Bill Odom and then to Stan Turner, who are next in line for brief comments; and then I am going to turn to Sergei Tarasenko and Viktor Starodubov for brief comments on this issue. Cy also wants to speak on this before we finish.

Now, patiently waiting have been Bob Pastor, Phil Brenner, and Odd Arne [Westad]. I will hold you off just a little longer if you don't mind.

Let me make a further point to people around the table. I notice that the initial discipline in comments is beginning to break down. So I would appreciate it if people would speak

May 7--Morning Session 1

succinctly, because we are beginning to lose time in the full elaboration of points. Bill Odom.

WILLIAM ODOM: I will be brief. It seems to me that the last exchange is bringing into play a factor that often was not in play in our development of the SALT positions, but which bore very heavily on the way this developed: and that is the conventional military balance in Europe and what the intentions were in Europe. And I think that in light of what Harold has just been saying, he is reflecting the tensions that we felt about this. I would like to pose a question to the former Soviet side, and to General Starodubov in particular, which perhaps he can answer later. When Grechko and the General Staff prepared their positions for the SALT process, or when they reacted to the U.S. positions, to what extent were your weapons programs and capabilities assessed in the light of your war plans for Central Europe? You know, we knew through our intelligence that you had very offensive operational plans. And since then we know from documents that have come out in East Germany that there was very extensive planning for using tactical nuclear weapons by the scores in Central Europe. So I think that factor began to bear on SALT, and it was not factored into our conceptualizations of intercontinental deterrence. Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Thank you, Bill. Stan Turner.

STANSFIELD TURNER: I'd just like to ask General Starodubov whether the General Staff took seriously General [Curtis] LeMay and people like him who did talk about American

May 7--Morning Session 1

intentions of a first strike?

LEGVOLD: Sergei Tarasenko.

TARASENKO: I would like to ask a question to our participants. I am just interested in this, as an observer, so to speak. How developed were our procedures for actually using nuclear weapons? I am speaking of all those buttons. Was that realistic or not? I think it is a question which is still very relevant today. Now nobody knows who exactly has access to those buttons in Moscow, and where are they. Was there any procedure for actually using them, or not?

LEGVOLD: Viktor Starodubov.

STARODUBOV: I am glad that I inspired such an animated discussion. Maybe I should start from the middle.

General Odom asked a question about how we took the competition in the military sphere in Europe into consideration when we were preparing our positions for the strategic arms limitations negotiations. Yes, we did take it into consideration. But we took it into consideration not in the sense that you implied in your question, but in the following sense.

During the SALT negotiations, we clearly saw that in Europe, besides those strategic weapons that the United States had--the classic ones, the triad--there were also the forward-based systems. In addition, there were aircraft carriers with nuclear weapons on board cruising along

May 7--Morning Session I

the European shores, whose goal was to deliver a strike at the targets in the territory of the Soviet Union--in Soviet territory, not at sea. It follows that we had to take these into our consideration, and to evaluate those weapons as an addition to the strategic potential of the United States. And as you recall, this question of the forward-base systems had been constantly raised during the strategic negotiations for a very long time--up until Vladivostok, really. Even there it was not completely dropped from the agenda. It was just postponed until future negotiations. This is it.

Admiral Turner said that I claimed that there were U.S. plans for a first strike, and that we were basing that conclusion on certain statements. No, I assure you, there were no statements.

I would also like to argue with Secretary Brown. To say that in 1947, or 1948, or 1949, the U.S. was developing its nuclear strategy on the basis of expecting a Soviet attack requiring a U.S. response--this view is groundless, because the Soviet Union did not have nuclear weapons at that time, and it could not have attacked the United States. I mean nothing personal, Secretary Brown. But my initial remark, and my statement was based on what our thinking was like, on the basis of our thinking from the very beginning. That is why at that time it was just logical to assume that the United States was preparing a nuclear strike, because we simply did not have nuclear weapons. Thank you.

KONDRASHOV: I wanted to add something.

May 7--Morning Session 1

LEGVOLD: Just a moment, Sergei; Cy also wanted to comment on this. I will come back to you. Please, be brief, and we will break for coffee. Cy?

VANCE: I will be very brief.

In response to the question put by Anatoly: I want to say categorically that, during the time when I was Secretary of State, we had no intention to ever launch a first strike. And I believe that the same thing was true during the period when I was in the Defense Department.

BROWN: It was also true in 1947. [Laughter.]

STARODUBOV: Very good.

LEGVOLD: Sergei Kondrashov.

KONDRASHOV: On the basis, gentlemen, of the information we possessed, we come to the conclusion that there were several periods during which it was possible that there could be a first strike from the American side. We knew that right after the war up until 1949 there was a readiness on the U.S. side for a first strike. I would say there was a readiness. And that's why all of our intelligence resources in different fields were directed to get to know your concrete plans. Then, after the Soviet Union acquired atomic weapons, we understood that you entered the next stage of calculations during which you were considering the possibility of a retaliatory

May 7--Morning Session 1

strike on our side. After that time--and again, I wish to stress, on the basis of the information that we had--we came to a conclusion that you were considering two types of wars. One was general strategic war; the other was limited war. And you set before yourself the tasks of preparing for both of these alternatives.

I must say that, with respect to the later stage, as soon as Mr. Andropov came to office in '67, one of our major preoccupations was to organize intelligence activity to assess the progress of your planning with regard to the possibility either of a first strike or of a limited strike. I must tell you that we were basing our contingency plans on the assumption of your readiness to strike. The only problem for us was what political situation would cause your action, and what our steps should be. Certainly we had contingency plans for all sorts of weapons--and that's the point. But from the very beginning, I must emphasize, we were basing our calculations on the possibility of your first strike.

GELB: What you mean by "readiness"?

KONDRASHOV: I mean the readiness according to the political situation. So we were certainly eager to know what situation in Europe, for instance--a situation over Berlin, or a situation somewhere else--would cause you to strike. That was our main anxiety: to assess the overall political situation and your readiness for a first strike. Because certainly our considerations were purely defensive. We were not considering taking triggering some political situation that would cause you to strike first, and result in retaliatory action on our side.

MAY 7: MORNING SESSION 2

LEGVOLD: All right, let us begin again. The question was raised earlier about each side's intention of a first strike. I would like to make a point. There seems to be a little roughness in the way issues are being formulated. When Harold Brown responded to the question about American plans and intentions to launch a first strike, he was speaking about a preemptive first strike. When Anatoly asked the question whether the Americans had the intention to use nuclear weapons, he was speaking in any context. That is, he was asking whether the Americans had plans to use nuclear weapons first--perhaps in the context of a European war in which NATO's conventional defenses faltered. In order to clarify the positions on the two sides, I think, we need to be clear about these distinctions. Zbig, you are next.

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI: That's precisely the point I was going to make. I think I know pretty well what the president's attitude was on this issue. I would put it this way, Anatoly. Under no circumstances could I envisage the president authorizing a preemptive first strike against the Soviet Union. It was totally contrary to his thinking, to his psychology, to his view of the relationship, or to his sense of responsibility to history. That was simply out of the question. Secondly, the president was skeptical of the notion that the Soviets would ever launch a first strike. We sometimes discussed it; we worried that some of the Soviet strategic dispositions might make the Soviets feel that they could do it. But I have to say that the president was always skeptical about it. And he did not think that this was in any way something to taken very seriously.

May 7--Morning Session 1

LEGVOLD: I see that Zbig and Marshal would like to comment right now. Nikolai, I know, has more to contribute. I think we are at an important point. Zbig wants to comment on what Sergei just said. But, Zbig, could we hold off until after coffee? We are going to break for thirty minutes. When we come back I'll let you make your point to Sergei immediately, and then I think Nikolai is still on it. This issue will continue. Thirty minutes for coffee.

May 7--Morning Session 2

Nonetheless, since the issue did arise, the president had to consider how to respond if there was a Soviet first strike. And he did accept the idea that if there was a Soviet first strike, the United States would respond without waiting to absorb the impact of the first strike under all circumstances. In other words, he was inclined to consider the possibility of responding under attack--or, as it used to be called, on warning. But it was deliberately designated as "under attack," and he was prepared to do that. We exercised that.

Thirdly, the president was clearly willing to use nuclear weapons if necessary in the defense of Europe, in the event of an overwhelming and progressively successful Soviet conventional attack. We had reasons to believe that Soviet war planning involved the use of nuclear weapons even in the course of a conventional attack in Europe. We did not have full knowledge of Soviet plans for war-waging in Europe then, although we now have a fairly complete knowledge. And they did, in fact, entail the use of tactical nuclear weapons in the course of attack. But in any case, without even being sure of that, the president was prepared to use nuclear weapons, and so stated at the first meeting of the Special Coordination Committee, the summaries of the minutes of which we now have before us today. In the very first session, he indicated that he was prepared to use nuclear weapons to defend our principal allies.

But I would like to use this occasion to also raise the question with the Soviet side of the Soviet response to the initial U.S. proposals regarding arms control. The president came to office deeply convinced that there was no fundamental contradiction between the pursuit of human rights and the pursuit of deeper and more comprehensive arms control. He thought

May 7--Morning Session 2

human rights was the general historical tendency in our time, and that the Soviet Union could not be immune to that process. And indeed, I think, historically, he was in fact correct. But beyond that, he thought that we could do better on arms control because the dynamic of the arms competition was creating a more precarious situation for both sides. Please bear in mind that we came to office at a time in which the détente relationship had somewhat stagnated and there had been no breakthrough in arms control for some time prior to the election of President Carter. When he assumed office, therefore, he seriously contemplated the possibility of using that initial phase of innovation which comes with a new administration to achieve a more comprehensive arms control regime with the Soviet Union. And that is what drove him in that direction. At the very first session we had--again, the summary of minutes is available to you--he stressed that he would like to see that explored, and he stressed very strongly that the purpose of any such initiative would not be to gain any advantage for the United States. He instructed all of us to develop proposals which would take into account a need for a balanced, mutually acceptable set of reductions--and this he said in a private meeting with us; it wasn't for public consumption or designed to reassure the Soviets. He stressed to us that the proposals we make must be equitable to both sides. And that is what motivated the initial American effort to propose deeper cuts.

It was said earlier this morning that the Soviet side was surprised by our proposals, especially because Governor Harriman had indicated to Mr. Brezhnev that we would simply continue with the Vladivostok formula. I have to say to you very frankly that Governor Harriman did not speak for President Carter, and he was not sent as an emissary by him. He

May 7--Morning Session 2

was, to put it very frankly, a self-appointed emissary. And of far greater impact on Carter were the views of Mr. [Paul] Nitze, who impressed Carter with the strategic desirability of deep cuts, and who argued that that would be more stabilizing. Carter was fascinated by that idea, and very attracted by it.

Nonetheless, when we did make the proposal to you, we made a proposal to you which had two aspects to it: one did indeed propose deeper cuts, and we advertised that quite a bit--so it couldn't have been quite that much of a surprise to you; but, secondly, we also had a proposal at the same time which was based on the Vladivostok formula, and we specifically said that if the deeper cuts were not immediately acceptable, the other proposal, based on Vladivostok formula--though deferring two issues on which no agreement had been reached, and on which there had obviously been a different interpretation of what Vladivostok involved--would be an acceptable basis for negotiation. These two issues were the *Backfire* and the cruise missile issue. So I am a little surprised to hear that it was such a surprise for you that we were proposing deep cuts, because you knew that it was coming; and second, it was not the only proposal. We also had a fallback proposal based on the Vladivostok formula, setting aside issues on which we disagreed for further resolution. I wonder why that second proposal was not considered more seriously if, for this or that reason, you could not entertain the more ambitious proposal initially.

LEGVOLD: Zbig, thank you very much. That's very helpful, because it pushes along with the agenda that we have this morning, and I think it's important for us to turn to the questions that you've posed. Before I turn next to Nikolai, who is next on the agenda, let me ask a couple

May 7--Morning Session 2

of questions prompted by your point, Zbig.

First, I would like to ask about President Carter's own inclinations, preferences, and drives on the question of nuclear weapons. In his inaugural address, he spoke of a nuclear-free world. To what degree was Carter actually influenced by the desire for eliminating nuclear weapons?

Secondly, early in the administration, as I look at the documents, he did ask you, Harold, in the Department of Defense, to assess the implications of going down to 250 launchers, as I recall--a very low level--and it got a very unsympathetic reception both from the civilians and from the regular line military, as I understand it. What was that all about, and how did that figure in things? Did the Soviet side have some sense of what Carter's commitments either to a nuclear-free world, or a world at very low levels, meant in this context? Nikolai, you're next.

DETINOV: I would like to respond to several questions which were asked earlier. The first question was formulated as follows: was there in the Soviet Union a certain mechanism, or a system of decision making for the use of nuclear weapons? I have to tell you that, yes, we had such a system. It was sufficiently effective, and it gave a certain confidence that there could not have been any accidental launch without a sanction by the highest leadership. This is the system, and it works.

Second, when we were talking about a first strike: I think one should not base one's judgment on intentions, or on the plans that the other side has, but rather on the *capability* to deliver such a strike. This should be the basis of our judgment. If you are talking about

May 7--Morning Session 2

capabilities rather than intentions, then at that time the Soviet Union had many reasons to be concerned and to understand U.S. actions as implying an intention to use nuclear weapons.

I will give you an example. It was mentioned that at the end of 1940s the United States had about 1,000 heavy bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons along the borders of the Soviet Union. And at that time you were saying openly that the United States had a nuclear strike plan for use against the Soviet Union. That stuck in our memories, and influenced the thinking of our military leaders. When in the beginning of the 1960s McNamara's proposal was carried out to create 1,000 Minutemen and 656 SLBMs, while at the same time the Soviet Union had fewer than 200 warheads for ballistic missiles, we perceived this as a U.S. intention to achieve a capability to deliver a first strike. We had not been saying that the United States would attack; but they might have had the capability.

Third, there is one more example I would like to mention now. When Reagan announced his SDI program, the first reaction of our leadership and of our scientists was that the United States wanted to create an anti-ballistic missile system that would give them the possibility to launch a first strike without fear of punishment. All such actions of the United States had a certain impact on the thinking and on the attitude that the Soviet Union had toward proposals that the U.S. administrations had been making at the time. That's all I wanted to say on this topic.

LEGVOLD: Harold, I have you next.

May 7--Morning Session 2

BROWN: I'd like to make a few points, and perhaps put to bed some of these problems, so that we can talk about what actually happened in 1977.

On President Carter's views on the possible use of U.S. nuclear weapons, I think Zbig has it right: possible tactical use in Europe against an overwhelming conventional force was certainly a part of U.S. military doctrine at that time; and a retaliatory strike--not a preemptive strike--in case of a massive Soviet launch against the United States was also a part of U.S. doctrine. Without going into the technical details, the fact that Soviet submarine-launched and land-launched ballistic missiles would arrive at U.S. bomber bases and U.S. silos at different times in case of a major attack--not simultaneously--meant that a U.S. retaliatory strike could begin before all of the Soviet warheads had landed on the United States. That, however, is not a preemptive strike; it's a retaliatory strike.

I would note also that in 1977--which is the time that concerns us--the situation that existed either in 1947, or in 1983 or 1984, was not relevant. What was relevant was the situation in 1977, and at that time the Soviet Union had, in its SS-18s, the possibility of attacking U.S. bomber bases and silos, and destroying them, leaving the U.S. only with submarine-launched forces for retaliation. I considered that sufficient as a deterrent force on the part of the U.S., but it certainly would have changed the balance after such a Soviet first strike, and that was responsible for a good many of the specific positions that the U.S. took in the SALT II negotiations as regards reductions, and as regards cruise missiles as well.

With respect to U.S. intentions and presidential intentions, I'd like to conclude with an anecdote of my own. It goes back to 1961 when President Kennedy was President of the United

May 7--Morning Session 2

States, and I had just arrived in Washington as a Defense Department official--a rather young one in those days. In May of 1961, I found myself at a National Security Council meeting at which the Joint Chiefs of Staff were also present--General LeMay, to whom Admiral Turner has referred, was present. And the president, who had a great deal of intellectual curiosity, asked, "What would be the result of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union?" He turned to General LeMay for an answer, and he turned for some reason to me for an answer--I guess because he knew that I had been a nuclear weapons developer in earlier days. He asked, "What would be the number of U.S. casualties if the Soviet Union struck first, and what would be the number of U.S. casualties if the United States struck first?" And I think I remember the numbers fairly well. The answer that General LeMay gave--who, as Admiral Turner pointed out, was one of the people who at least in earlier times had contemplated the possibility of a U.S. preemptive strike--said that if the Soviet Union struck first, there would be 60 million U.S. deaths. And the president asked me what would be the number if the U.S. struck first. I said, "Probably 20 or 30 million." And General LeMay had to agree. And President Kennedy said, "I don't see that there is very much difference. The answer is the same: there must never be a thermonuclear war." And that, I think, contributed to his view that he could never contemplate a preemptive strike. That has been the attitude of every president since.

To begin to respond to Bob Legvold's question, it has always been the case that every president has come to office and announced that he was going to abolish nuclear weapons--or, at least, that it was his strong intention to do so. President Carter, I think, was the first to put it into his inaugural--

May 7--Morning Session 2

LEGVOLD: Harold, is that true?

BROWN: Yes.

LEGVOLD: A nuclear-free world? Have other presidents argued for that?

BROWN: They've all said that we really ought to try to get rid of nuclear weapons. Reagan, for example.

ODD ARNE WESTAD: But I think he was one who *did* believe--

BROWN: I think they all believed it when they came into office. And then they started to think about the problems--for example, the problems that were embodied in my response to President Carter about two hundred nuclear weapons--I think he said one hundred to two hundred to begin with. I think that that memo said, "The lower the number gets, the bigger these problems get." And therefore most of them have settled for reducing the numbers, rather than eliminating nuclear weapons. But I think they all came into office with the intention of saying, "Let's try to get down as far as we can."

LEGVOLD: Thank you. The next person that I'm going to turn to is Vlad Zubok; but before I do, let me underscore now the questions on the table. I would like people on the Soviet-

May 7--Morning Session 2

Russian side to respond to Zbig's questions about the spring of 1977 and the American proposal for comprehensive reductions, particularly the issue of surprise and the attitude toward the proposal for deferral. Now, in turn, on the American side, try to get back to Marshall's original question: what did Americans make of the Tula speech? Did the administration take that seriously? There is a reference to it--especially the pledge of not seeking superiority--in President Carter's letter to Brezhnev on February 5th. But did it mean that people in the Carter administration believed that Soviet thinking was evolving to a new stage, and that this was something that was meaningful? Or did you think it was essentially eyewash, and you wanted to deal with it in a constructive way? I ask that question, because I think we then want to try to come back and consider the roots of the Tula speech. What was the Soviet leadership trying to say in January a few days before Carter gave his inaugural speech?

Vlad, you're next, and then I think I see Bill's hand. Do I, Bill?

ODOM: No. On the Tula speech, I think you want to hear from Sergei.

LEGVOLD: Okay. Vlad.

VLADISLAV ZUBOK: Well, I believe that the issues of perceptions related to the nuclear balance were important, but not crucial. They were not crucial for the beginning of the Cold War, for the end of the Cold War, or for the continuation of the Cold War. The basic question was trust and mistrust. And every new administration that came to the White House the Soviets

May 7--Morning Session 2

looked upon with a mixture of apprehension, suspicion, and hope. Much depended upon the first steps and the first signals, and the mechanism of transmitting those signals--the backchannels. My question is: why did the efforts to establish that channel between President-elect Carter--or Governor Carter before the elections--and Brezhnev ultimately fail? It was with great interest that I learned from Dr. Brzezinski that Averell Harriman couldn't play a role as such a backchannel, at least in the eyes of some American officials. But who could? There were some self-appointed ambassadors on the Soviet side, too: for example, Georgy Arbatov, as far as we can learn from documents. My question to Anatoly Fedorovich Dobrynin is this: how did the Soviet side understand Arbatov's efforts to indicate to the Americans that there would be no test of the new president? And a general question to both American and Russian participants: why did the efforts to create the backchannel fail? Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Zbig.

BRZEZINSKI: I think you have to understand the political situation that prevailed in the United States in 1976. The new administration came to office quite explicitly rejecting the idea of backchannels, secret negotiations, and so forth. It was made very clear from the very beginning that the negotiations would be conducted by the secretary of state either directly with his counterpart in the Soviet Union, or with Toly [Anatoly Dobrynin]. And I remember that, in fact, when Toly and I talked about the possibility of maintaining the kind of relationship that Toly had with Kissinger, I told Toly that this is not the way that the president wants to operate

May 7--Morning Session 2

now; that Cy would be the principal channel, and that that would be the way we would conduct our business.

But beyond that there is this question of the seriousness of the relationship. The issues between us were centrally important, and they were being posed very directly through the official channels. I don't think it's an adequate answer to say that somehow or other the absence of a backchannel explains the difficulty of dealing seriously with the proposals that were being advanced by the U.S. side. And, I repeat, these proposals had two dimensions to them: one was a more ambitious effort to go forward in keeping with the president's faith as well as conviction that we ought to move eventually towards a non-nuclear world; and the second set of proposals was based on Vladivostok--quite deliberately, and if you look at our documents, we prepared them on the basis of Vladivostok, but left aside two issues on which we could not have immediate agreement because we viewed them as unresolved.

LEGVOLD: Anatoly.

DOBRYNIN: Zbig, I really think your comment about use or non-use was interesting. I think it clarified several points. About the most recent items discussed, let me say this.

First of all, about Harriman. We knew, of course, that he was the not representative of the president. But at the same time he was an eager beaver who went back and forth between Georgia and Washington, and then said things to us on behalf of the president. Our people took that very seriously. After his reports, our Politburo sat and discussed them. Then I received

May 7--Morning Session 2

a telegram saying, "You have to go to Harriman and tell Harriman to go to the president." So Harriman was like an official channel. Arbatov was different. Arbatov said he was on his own. That is the difference.

On the second question you raised, about whether were we surprised or not about your proposal. No, we were not surprised; because from the very beginning you were talking about deep cuts. From the very beginning. Comprehensive cuts. Harriman had said that President Carter did not feel specifically obliged to follow everything that was in Vladivostok. This was the first time when people in Moscow said, how come? Why is he not obliged? But he was very clear. He indicated that the president was going to seek deep cuts. When we asked him, "How many?" he said, "Two or maybe three hundred missiles." It was a big revelation to Moscow.

I spoke with Cy, before he went there, and although you had not at that time fully defined your positions, he made it clear what we could expect. So, in Moscow they knew. I simply want to dispel the impression that you get from some of our colleagues. Maybe some of our colleagues have the impression that there was great surprise, that this proposal came suddenly. But for us it was around for four months. There were many indications from many sources that you wanted to make very big drastic comprehensive reductions. So this was no really revelation for us.

About the second proposal: the second proposal was taken in the context of the overall relationship with you. We did not see these as a first proposal and a second proposal. What actually happened before Cy went to Moscow was that we had a big discussion in our

May 7--Morning Session 2

government about what kind of relationship we were going to have with the new administration. Would it be like it was with Nixon, or before Nixon? And we were under the impression that the new administration was coming with the intention--maybe we were wrong--of taking a new course toward us on a whole set of issues. I don't say that it was a good course or a bad course, but a change of course. It was a change in arms negotiations, the proposal for drastic reductions; it was the new position on human rights. It looked as though at the very beginning of the new administration you were setting a new agenda, an agenda proposed by you--a completely new one, which we didn't have before. How were we to deal with this?

A decision was taken to begin not with the specifics of Vladivostok--because, after all, while they were important, it was more important to know what kind of course our relationship would take with the new administration. We had to decide whether we were going to fight these two issues, drastic reductions and human rights, and if so, how.

[UNIDENTIFIED]: Do you mean linkage?

DOBRYNIN: In a way, yes. In a way. Not directly, but in a way. It always happens; sometimes you make it a public linkage, and sometimes you do not say it. So this was the decision. And when Vance came, from the very beginning, when we first saw you [indicating Vance], we felt the proposal for drastic reductions was not a serious approach. I don't say that we were right or wrong, but that was the overall impression. So, the question was really: were we going to do something, prepare something, to find a compromise?

May 7--Morning Session 2

Zubok asked here about the backchannel. I was one of the participants for many years. I don't say that it is something of overriding importance, but it has some importance. Specifically in one sense: it gives you a chance to explain things. It helps provide a preliminary explanation of the position of the other country. It's simple. It doesn't always matter who the channel is; things are decided by the president. But the backchannel helps elaborate on your thinking a little bit. Not always. There was one situation when the secretary of state brought one proposal--drastic reductions--and someone else brought another one. And someone would raise human rights. It was difficult to know how to deal with this administration at all.

I should say, after an elaborate discussion they had in the government, Brezhnev was a little bit angry. He was not in the mood for this. In the first meeting with Nixon, he said, "Let's sit down and discuss what we are you going to do, because I am for peace, and you are for peace too." There was no such opportunity with the Carter administration. Maybe it sounds funny, but psychologically it's important, because during the previous fifteen years, that had been the pattern with any administration. And suddenly this administration came and did not send anything except a self-appointed ambassador who says one thing, but at the same time they couldn't take him for word because he was not speaking for a president, but a president-elect.

So, that was the situation. I think that in this sense, the channel--the backchannel--was useful at least for explaining things. It is important not just to have people come with very big proposals, accompanied by some other things which were not acceptable. You need contacts to explain things.

What we were really concerned about was having the agenda prepared by your

May 7--Morning Session 2

administration from the very beginning. You prepared it, and then brought it to us. Why did we have to accept it? If we want to understand the fight we had for years with your administration, we have to look at your agenda. Wrongly or rightly, that is how we saw things. That's why we were so angry, and didn't even want to discuss your proposals.

I think back channels are sometimes useful, useful mostly first for advance explanation, and also sometimes useful for working things out without much publicity. As a matter of fact, at one point there was work between Cy, me, and you too [indicating Brzezinski]. You were involved in this negotiation. Very few people know it, but before 1979 I had many meetings with you, too. They were useful. There was no publicity. So back channels were useful. I don't say it's really the most important thing, but still this is what happened.

LEGVOLD: Thank you very much, Anatoly. I think that's a rich introduction.

BRZEZINSKI: Could I respond to Anatoly?

LEGVOLD: Yes. I've got Cy next, and then I have Viktor. Before you respond, Zbig, when you noted the objective linkage that was implicit in the way Anatoly spoke, I would remind you of something that Sergei said earlier on the issue of human rights and arms control. According to his report, Andropov said that if there was a prospect of progress in arms control, then they might have been willing to be more forthcoming on the human rights issue. So, there was also a kind of linkage as Andropov saw the matter. Cy, you're next.

May 7--Morning Session 2

VANCE: I simply want to clarify some things that Anatoly stated. He was absolutely correct in saying that we laid out our proposals in really considerable detail. In the briefing book, there is a report of the March 21 meeting between Anatoly and myself in which we laid out immediately prior to going exactly what it was that we were going to put forward in terms of the basic deep cuts proposal, and in addition to that a fallback proposal. The problem that really arose, it seems to me, was that when we put our proposals on the table, nobody would listen to them, and contrary to usual practice, nobody said, "Well, let's sit down and talk about that and see if we can find a way to get around this thing." We got a wet rug in the face, and were told to go home. That was, in my judgment, a very important tactical mistake on your part, and indeed in subsequent years that was confirmed to me by Gromyko. Gromyko said to me, "One of the big mistakes we made was not coming back before you left and saying, 'Let's see what we can do about it.'"

LEGVOLD: Viktor.

SUKHODREV: Just a few points relating to the linkage between disarmament and human rights and what Anatoly was saying about the desire of the Soviet side--of Gromyko and Brezhnev--to talk about the overall relationship, the conceptual side of the Soviet-American relationship. Secretary Vance knows that Gromyko always used to start his meetings with secretaries of state or with presidents with that conceptual approach, from which he would then go on to the various items on the agenda--from disarmament, to Africa, to Cuba, or to whatever was on the agenda.

May 7--Morning Session 2

Now, with respect to SALT, you have to take into account the attitude of the Soviets. And here again, because this was so personalized, it was Brezhnev and Gromyko--those two--who conducted these negotiations, after all. You also have to take into account their attitude towards questions of human rights.

There was no surprise in the new proposals that were brought by Secretary Vance. I am not a policy maker, but I familiarized myself with the briefs for those talks, as I had to in order to be competent as an interpreter. I saw in those briefs a rough description of what eventually Secretary Vance did bring to Moscow. So, they were not a surprise, as Anatoly just said. But they were a disappointment for Brezhnev, who felt he had done so much hard work, personally, in Vladivostok. Suddenly this new administration was toppling the whole structure he had worked so hard to build.

Added to that was the attitude to human rights. Gromyko always detested having to discuss anything connected with Basket 3. But he had been conditioned--and this, I think, is an important factor--he had been conditioned by Henry Kissinger to treat the whole thing as something of no practical importance. [Laughter.] In Geneva, during one of their meetings--this was when the Final Act was being sort of hammered out, and when one of the main sticking points was Basket 3--they were quibbling over some specific formula, some form of words in what was to become Basket 3, which was unacceptable to Gromyko--it was too intrusive, he thought--when Henry Kissinger said directly, "Mr. Minister, why are we quibbling over these forms of words? No matter what goes into that Final Act, I don't believe that the Soviet Union will ever do anything it doesn't want to do." So that, in a nutshell, was what Gromyko--and

May 7--Morning Session 2

therefore, Brezhnev--had been conditioned to believe. Forget it. Let it be in there. Let's publish it. A bold step indeed, as Sergei has said. And suddenly, these human rights--out of nothing, in the minds of the Soviet leaders, Gromyko and Brezhnev--become a first priority issue in the eyes of the new administration.

So, those two things were regarded by both Brezhnev and Gromyko as a kind of personal affront. And that attitude--that emotional attitude--colored the whole relationship, as it were, and the negotiations on all other issues. They could never obliterate them.

Just another point on Harriman, and whether he was a kind of ambassador or a representative of the new administration: I have lived through several periods of transition between American administrations, and let me say that in that period, right after the elections and leading up to January the 20th, there was always a stream of would-be representatives of the new administration coming to Moscow and meeting at various levels--starting, of course, with Brezhnev on down. Of course, Harriman was a respected figure in the Soviet Union. He was believed perhaps more than others were. But I do recall that stream. I do recall a conversation that Brezhnev had, for instance, with Sargent Shriver. And, of course, I dutifully recorded those conversations, and they all went to the Politburo. They didn't know who the person in question was, but there were some of these people who were actually intimately hinting that they had the president-elect's ear--that they alone could speak on his behalf--and hinted broadly at the various high positions that they would be occupying in the incoming administration. Most of them never did. But the Politburo had these MemCons on the table.

Now, I remember discussing with Kornienko my impressions of people like Sargent

May 7--Morning Session 2

Shriver. Kornienko wasn't present; but I gave him my impressions--not what I put down on paper, but my impressions. Let me not go into that now. [Laughter.] But I think you all know what I mean. Thank you very much.

LEGVOLD: Okay. Now what I've got is a very short comment from Zbig on this, then Les next, then Sergei Tarasenko, and then I really am going to go to Odd Arne, who has been on the list for a long time.

BRZEZINSKI: I think we've gotten a very important clarification from the Soviet side of what happened in early 1977. It was in fact unilateral linkage that prevented progress on arms control, because we were not linking progress in arms control to other issues. After all, we are also entitled to have a view on human rights, just as you had a view on our human rights policy which you thought offensive or a personal affront. But we were not linking other issues to progress on arms control. It's quite evident from your responses that you were--that you felt concerned about our views on other issues, and *that*, in turn, led you to reject not only the more ambitious proposal--which was not designed to throw Vladivostok into a wastebasket, but was designed to go beyond it--but also the other proposal, which was based on Vladivostok. You've made it very clear, both of you now. That was because of other issues.

Well, of course, if there is to be linkage, then linkage can be reciprocal: we can link other issues to progress in arms control, too. But we didn't, because we wanted to have progress in arms control. Your position may be justified in terms of your reading of your own

May 7--Morning Session 2

interest; but you were clearly linking other issues to progress on arms control. We were not.

Now, I have to confess that I became someone who favored linkage, especially later on when other issues surfaced. But I was aware of the fact that once other issues were linked to arms control, it would certainly slow arms control down.

LEGVOLD: Anatoly, very quickly on this.

DOBRYNIN: Thank you. We couldn't leave it as it is--as if there was a linkage as Zbig understood it. What we are trying to say, myself and my colleagues, is that, for the sake of arms control, we were really prepared to consider some concessions, on our own. That's why even Andropov was giving instructions to make concessions on the most unwelcome issue--the issue of human rights. So, this was really linkage in a way, but this was not a tight linkage in bargaining terms. We were prepared, if things went well on arms control, to swallow some unwelcome discussion of human rights, since we hoped that the climate would be better between us. This is more or less what happened with Nixon. This was a connection in a way--a positive connection. But it was not a bargaining linkage.

BRZEZINSKI: So why didn't you accept our more modest proposal?

DOBRYNIN: Because we looked at the whole set of positions your administration brought into office, and they were unacceptable to us.

May 7--Morning Session 2

BRZEZINSKI: But the fallback--

DOBRYNIN: The fallback position had nothing really to do with Vladivostok. If you really wanted to discuss this issue, I was prepared to discuss it. The second proposal was not really a follow-up to Vladivostok. You said categorically on all levels, beginning with you, Cy, and the president himself, who made it clear when I spoke with him: there would be no restrictions on cruise missiles.

BRZEZINSKI: We said there were two issues which were not resolved--

DOBRYNIN: Yes. *Backfire* and this one. And the air-launched cruise missiles. This was an important question. And you just said, "No; let's leave it aside."

BRZEZINSKI: We said, "Let's defer that until we reach an agreement on that issue."

DOBRYNIN: Well, we had already been deferring for six years, through three administrations. Why defer each issue? We had experience enough in negotiating. I think we had enough.

LEGVOLD: I think we will revisit this issue when we begin talking about March and the proposals themselves. Les Gelb is next, and then Sergei.

May 7--Morning Session 2

GELB: I think I might be able to clarify some of these questions, but there are so many scorpions on the table now, it's hard to tell which one to pick up. [Laughter.] Even though the Carter administration did not in any formal way link human rights to arms control, I think we all understood that the strong position being taken on human rights issues was driving you crazy. It was not a mystery to us.

DOBRYNIN: I don't want to say crazy, but it was close. [Laughter.]

GELB: I meant crazy, Anatoly, in the same positive sense you were talking about linkage. [Laughter.] Secondly, I was a strong advocate for the Vladivostok agreement--let's just finish there. So, everything else I say should be understood in that context. I was in favor of settling for Vladivostok, as was my boss. We wanted to do that and move on from there. But when we were discussing what your reaction would be to going beyond Vladivostok, toward comprehensive agreement, you should know that even proponents of Vladivostok thought you would not react as negatively as you did. Now, I'm sorry Bill Hyland isn't here, because Bill played a critical role in this. Bill was a part of the Vladivostok agreement, and Bill's judgment was that you would not just totally reject a more comprehensive approach. He didn't want to destroy Vladivostok, but he thought you would not be nearly as negative as you turned out to be.

Next point. There is on occasion a little pallet you can throw into the water that clears up historical mysteries. You can walk away from here thinking that the comprehensive proposal and the Vladivostok-minus proposal were not serious, but there actually is evidence that

May 7--Morning Session 2

President Carter was prepared to go much further, including in the direction of meeting your other concerns about strategic arms. I think Harold, Cy, Zbig should talk to that point, because had you responded with any counterproposal to what Cy brought to Moscow in March 1977, you would have been greeted with a very interesting, far more interesting proposal on the American side, just to show, to prove that this wasn't a game. And I think we ought to talk about that, you ought to know that.

Finally, when we left Moscow, I think we left with real grievances as well, because, as Cy said, and as the record shows, you were fully forewarned about the alternatives--not just in the week before we left, but in the run-up to that. Your letter to Brezhnev shows that he knew fully what we were going to put on the table. And yet when we left, we left to the chorus of public statements by your government and background statements by your government that you had had no forewarning, that that was a very amateurish attempt to force something down the throat of the Soviet leadership after careful negotiations. So, from our standpoint, we did not surprise you; we did not come with a bolt out of the blue; and yet when we left, as Cy said, it was with a wet rag across the top of the head.

LEGVOLD: Sergei.

TARASENKO: Maybe I will try to speculate about some personal moments. It is a confirmed fact that in 1977, after Vladivostok, Brezhnev's health had deteriorated. He did not as attentively --

May 7--Morning Session 2

LEGVOLD: Sergei, did you said 1977? Do you mean after 1974 in Vladivostok?

TARASENKO: In 1975.

LEGVOLD: '75; all right.

TARASENKO: So, over these two years, he didn't follow foreign policy developments. And I would think that he did not read the telegrams which he was receiving from Washington. He did not follow the development of the new administration's position. He was not interested in that. In any case, in the reports both from the Embassy and from the Foreign Ministry, it was said that the position of the new administration had not been finally worked out yet. So there still remained some hope.

As far as I understand, on the eve of the negotiations, everybody who took part in preparing the documents and position papers came to a firm conclusion that the Americans had completely abandoned the Vladivostok agreements. Brezhnev simply felt indignation. Gromyko's reaction was unusual, too. You know, Gromyko was a very cautious person, always able to control his feelings. And I can only explain the fact that he gave that press conference-- and the way in which he conducted it--in terms of the following. At that time, Brezhnev was still was in full control over policy making, both internal and foreign. So Gromyko was carrying out an order, it seems to me. Although we can only speculate about it, Brezhnev might have said, "We need to give them a sharp rebuke, for their attempts to abandon Vladivostok."

May 7--Morning Session 2

Nobody else probably studied the question. There was an order from the very top to destroy the American proposals completely, and not to leave any other versions or any other hopes. If you look at all our previous policies, nothing like this had ever happened before. Such thing could have happened only if the person at the very top gave a certain very angry order. And then the person who received that order had to do the dirty work, so to speak. This is my explanation.

I think what we have here is the deteriorating state of Brezhnev's health. And in a way he probably felt that he was misled, because in our system people were not very eager to tell the truth; they always made it look a little better, or left it to the very end of conversation. And probably he was told about it only on the eve of the negotiations. He probably reacted: "No, how can it be!" At least, that's my impression.

LEGVOLD: Very briefly, Sergei, on this point.

KONDRASHOV: On the substance, I agree with what Sergei just said. But one small point of clarification: in 1977 I would say that Brezhnev was still in a full possession of his abilities. Later on the situation changed. But at that moment he still was able to follow the situation pretty closely. Maybe he wasn't able to read all the cables or the telegrams. But still his decisions were made with a clear mind and clear understanding of the situation. Otherwise, I agree with what was just said now. Thank you.

May 7--Morning Session 2

LEGVOLD: Odd Arne, and then Harold.

WESTAD: I want to continue a little bit on this important issue of perceptions, following up on what Les said. There is something here which is very unclear to me in terms of negotiation strategy. If the Soviet side was more or less expecting what came out of the American preparation process, how was it then possible that there was no direct answer prepared. Nothing seemed prepared in terms of political strategy--not at the meeting, and not for the next several months. We got some indications now from Sergei and others that Brezhnev's health may have been a factor; but, truly, there must have been some kind of discussion of Soviet perceptions of the Carter administration--this new incoming administration--which must have led to the kind of negotiation strategy that was developed on the Soviet side. I would very much like to challenge our Russian friends here to try to address that issue, in the broader sense. What was the perception of this new incoming administration--of the people that are sitting on the other side of the table from you here--in terms of what they wanted to achieve on the issues that we are now trying to discuss?

LEGVOLD: Harold.

BROWN: There has been some discussion of self-appointed emissaries as a factor in perception or misperception. And I take it that part of our task here is to learn some lessons about that. I would like to put on the table, as a useful introduction to this afternoon's discussions, the

May 7--Morning Session 2

question of public diplomacy, as well, as it contributed to perceptions or misperceptions, and to cite two items. One is Brezhnev's January 18th speech in 1977. I would like to ask our Russian friends what its purpose was, and how they expected it to be received. As we looked at it, I don't think I was clear at that time, and I'm still not clear now as to whether it was meant to be a major change in strategic thought, or just another "samovar" from Tula.

On the U.S. side, there is the question of public statements about SALT, including some leaks in March before Cy left for Moscow, and a statement by President Carter--a public statement. It would be interesting to know how that was received on the Russian side. I suppose it's important for the Americans to say, too, what it was meant to achieve.

LEGVOLD: The next person would be Viktor Starodubov, but Ilia Gaiduk, are you on this last point?

ILIA GAIDUK: Not really.

LEGVOLD: Okay, I'm going to hold you, then. Viktor, you're next.

STARODUBOV: I would like to say couple of words about lost opportunities, in regards to the Secretary of State's visit to Moscow in March 1977. First, let me comment on the proposals themselves. Yes, apparently, there was some irritation about the human rights issues. We cannot deny it. But we also had information that the U.S. president did not want to be

May 7--Morning Session 2

associated with the previous negotiation, and that provided an additional negative impulse for our top leader, who, as we knew, considered himself--and maybe rightly so--very active in Vladivostok. He felt that it was primarily because of his efforts that the results were achieved there.

But there was a third cause of our failure to respond: our evaluation of the proposals which we were expecting to receive. We knew about them approximately a week beforehand, although we did not know whether they would become the final version. But later we saw that they were pretty close to what we actually received. And our evaluation led to the conclusion that both proposals--the comprehensive, and the alternative one--represented a departure from the Vladivostok positions, and moved away from that balance which was achieved in Vladivostok, toward a bias in favor of U.S. interests. And Brezhnev received our evaluation report also. So, those were facts.

Now, let's talk about the lost opportunities. We have just found out, maybe accidentally--I don't know how reliable this information is, but I think it is reliable, because it came from several sources--that there was a third proposal from the American side. And that third position, as I understand, was clearly different from the first two. And what we now know about it, from what had been said here, is that if it had been presented at that time, as a third proposal, it is very likely that the secretary of state would have left Moscow with a more positive result. Yes, I can understand the reaction of the American side when they received such a negative response from the Soviet side. I can understand that they decided not to put the third proposal on the table. But maybe that was the mistake. Maybe it would have made sense to

May 7--Morning Session 2

put the third proposal on the table. Maybe it was exactly the type of lost opportunity which everyone mentions when speaking about the March 1977 visit of Cyrus Vance to Moscow. Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Cy is next on the list, and then Ilia.

VANCE: First of all, in terms of lost opportunity, it's very clear that if we had had any response other than a wet rag in the face, we would have come forward with proposals dealing with new systems that were very important to you: namely, the MX and [Trident] D-V. We were prepared to sit down and talk about limits on those. But you cut it off completely by refusing to listen, to pay any attention to what we were saying and what we had attempted to do. That had a further impact in that it led to a delay--not an exorbitantly long one, but to a delay nonetheless--that meant that we presented the agreement for ratification later than we had hoped. If we had gotten there earlier, I think we might have had a better chance on ratification.

LEGVOLD: Before going on to Ilia, let me ask a question of the American side. To what degree did you have fairly elaborate assessment of what the Soviet response might be? Les Gelb has said that even Bill Hyland, who had been part of the Vladivostok talks, did not think that you would get this decisive across-the-board rejection. But what range of estimations did you have on the American side, and what were the risks in going forward with this proposal? How did you calculate those risks? Ilia, you're next.

May 7--Morning Session 2

GAIDUK: There seems to be a thread that has been going through all of our discussion, and this is the question of how the two sides perceived each other, each other's plans, each other's intentions, and each other's capabilities. The question that we have just heard discussed also relates to the topic of perceptions. And if we talk about the perceptions on both sides of the other's plans, it is clear that on both sides intelligence services played a very important role. However, we know many cases from history when intelligence services provided the information which their bosses wanted to see; or the intelligence information did not reach the leadership; or when the leadership saw the information and then put it aside; or sometimes the intelligence information clearly reflected the general prevailing mood in the leadership or in society.

I have a question for Admiral Turner concerning this problem: how do you now evaluate the information that you received at the time about the Soviet plans and intentions during the very early period--let's say, during the transition period, and during the period leading up to Secretary Vance's 1977 visit to Moscow? To what extent did the information which you supplied to the administration take into account those various influences? Thank you.

LEGVOLD: Stan, do you want respond on that now?

TURNER: I will try. [Laughter.] Without trying to make excuses, I was late coming in to the Carter administration and had been in office only little more than a week when we had the last meeting preparing Cy for the trip to Moscow. I did not--even to myself--ask the question of how the Soviets would respond to this. CIA professionals had not offered me that as

May 7--Morning Session 2

background in preparation for the meeting.

In retrospect, I've always looked back and felt personally guilty. I felt that the CIA was remiss in not making that contribution. I doubt whether we would have made the right assessment. I mean, if Bill Hyland didn't, I don't think we would have. It also happened that at the CIA at that time we were in transition between two Soviet experts as the principal adviser to the Director. We didn't have a new one in place, and the old one was transitioning out. So I didn't have a principal Soviet analyst on whom to rely. But again, that's not an excuse, because there certainly are more people in the CIA than just the one principal analyst of the Soviet Union.

So, I think I am trying to say to you that I don't think we did a good job here. A little later than this we produced an analysis--a national intelligence estimate--of Soviet intentions in a broader sense. I haven't read it for a long time; my recollection is that it took a middle ground here between seeing an "evil empire" and imputing benign intent. Certainly we did not renounce the possibility of an aggressive Soviet military move, and we did endorse the general idea that the Soviet Union was bent on aggrandizing its position in the world. But I think we also tempered this with a feeling that your resources were limited, and that you did not intend to move aggressively soon.

LEGVOLD: Before turning to Zbig and Bill who want to say something about this, a question to Anatoly. Why didn't you warn Cy in your conversation that this would likely be the outcome? You were an even greater expert on the Soviet Union than our professionals were;

May 7--Morning Session 2

were you surprised by how absolute the response was when it came?

DOBRYNIN: I told Cy, when I met with him, that it was absolutely unacceptable, and that it would be rejected.

LEGVOLD: And did you say that there would be no further negotiations?

DOBRYNIN: Well, I couldn't explain the whole position.

VANCE: The issue was a counterproposal.

DOBRYNIN: The issue was really--

GELB: The issue was counterproposal, not acceptance. You did say to Cy: "This is unacceptable." But what about a counterproposal? What about putting something else on the table?

LEGVOLD: I am talking about the wet washcloth over the head.

DOBRYNIN: This was a decision made in Moscow. All I knew was that the proposals were unacceptable.

May 7--Morning Session 2

LEGVOLD: Bob Pastor.

ROBERT PASTOR: Let me pursue the question that you've just asked. Ambassador Dobrynin, you are a long-time expert in Washington. You saw a political campaign over an extended period of time, in which the person who won in part had criticized severely the style and the approach of the previous administration, particularly Secretary Kissinger. Did you tell Moscow that this would be an administration that would need at least some slight difference, and therefore that even if you rejected the comprehensive proposal, you needed to come back with something additional? And secondly, did you factor into your own analysis the timetable of ratification? I mean, assume for the moment that the United States did go back to Vladivostok, or some variation on that. Did Moscow have any awareness that that would be a tough debate extending over a significant period of time, and would have to be completed in practice before Congressional elections in 1978, or the presidential elections in 1980?

DOBRYNIN: Have you ever been an ambassador? [Laughter.]

PASTOR: It was an ulterior purpose of my question. [Laughter.]

DOBRYNIN: I am sorry, your question comes exactly from the fact that you are not. So, coming back to your question. Of course I made my observations; but what kind of observation could I make in, say, December of 1976? What kind of observation? The election? I knew that

May 7--Morning Session 2

an election campaign is an election campaign. So, we had to wait a little bit. What did I know before? Very little about Carter. Just what I read in his statements. I didn't know much about Vance or Zbig; just what I read about them. But first of all, it was not clear who would occupy what office. So, at that particular time it was very difficult to predict the situation.

What is interesting is that, historically, for ten years--maybe even twelve years--there had not been a single case when a new administration came to power, and we--the Soviet government--took a harsh position from the very beginning. In March, when we rejected the proposal, it was the first time we had taken such a harsh position with a new administration. Usually there was a lengthy period of give and take, so to speak, where we felt each other out, carefully negotiating, forming our opinion.

The question that we faced, when Cy Vance arrived in Moscow, was whether we were going to continue détente by pursuing Vladivostok, or whether we were facing a situation of having to accept an agenda that we thought at the time represented a major departure: a revision of the Vladivostok agreement, human rights, and many other issues which were until now unacceptable. That was really the problem as we saw it at that time. And we wanted from the very beginning to know where the new administration stood on our relationship.

Gromyko did later on accept that we made a mistake by not answering Cy Vance. That's another story; and I agree with him. But we are speaking about history as it was. We wondered why Cy arrived with this proposal. It was not the particular proposal that made people mad there, but the fact that during the whole previous month, the administration had been pushing its Sakharov, Bukovsky, Ginzburg, Sharansky. Now it sounds ridiculous, but at that

May 7--Morning Session 2

time, the telegram from the White House to Sakharov was very offensive. We considered this a departure from the normal diplomatic relations between two countries. Those people Brezhnev very sincerely considered enemies of the regime. How should one react to this? It's a psychological point. At that time, it stirred very strong emotions. I am explaining to you the psychological state of mind of our government.

LEGVOLD: Very quickly, Harold, and then Zbig is next on my list.

BROWN: From what you've just said, Anatoly, it becomes clear that the linkage with human rights was not solely a positive linkage in Soviet view. You have just described a very negative linkage.

The other point I'd like to make is that Vladivostok had been more than two years before, and no movement had occurred toward completing it or toward ratifying it. In retrospect, wasn't it a little naïve on the part of the Soviet side to think that the new administration would come in and just accept and move on an agreement which the previous administration had not been able to do anything with for two years?

DOBRYNIN: It was in '74, and in '76--

BROWN: But Vladivostok--

May 7--Morning Session 2

DOBRYNIN: Yes, but '76 was a continuation of Vladivostok.

BROWN: But there had not really been any attempts to ratify--

DOBRYNIN: The question isn't ratification; you're wrong. The question was whether there was continuity in our discussions. And indeed, until the very moment of the last administration--

BROWN: Yes, but Kissinger had tried to get the administration to complete the endgame, and it had failed because the Joint Chiefs and Don Rumsfeld had essentially vetoed it.

DOBRYNIN: Harold, we had to deal with the administration which was in power.

BROWN: I understand; but--

DOBRYNIN: But we continued to discuss Vladivostok with Kissinger. We continued to discuss it.

BROWN: But wanting a continuation of discussions on something that had stalled is really quite different from asking a new group simply to sign what you say had been completed.

May 7--Morning Session 2

DOBRYNIN: But what had already been completed, you rejected. This is the point. It's not a question of continuation or no continuation, because there was no continuity. This is exactly the point you are raising. The trouble we had with you at the time was that there was no continuity in the process. You may agree or disagree, but as we felt it, for many years, although there had been much back and forth, still we moved in one direction. Then suddenly-- suddenly, it all changed.

BROWN: My point is that Vladivostok was not as complete on the U.S. side in the previous administration as you thought at that time.

DOBRYNIN: But there was a continuation of the discussion. There was no disruption.

BROWN: But what Cy went forward with was a continuation of the discussion on number two.

DOBRYNIN: Discussion yes; not a promise, as we saw it in the previous administration.

LEGVOLD: Okay, now the next person on the list is Zbig. His hand went up when Ilia Gaiduk had posed his question about American sources of the information and Stan Turner was responding. Zbig, and then Bill Odom.

BRZEZINSKI: Just a footnote to that. Someone raised the question whether we had a reason

May 7--Morning Session 2

to expect that the Soviet side might consider positively this more ambitious proposal. And among people consulted was a person who conducted extensive negotiations with the Soviet side: namely, Henry Kissinger. The president invited Henry Kissinger to supper in the evening sometime early in 1977--I was there--and Henry was asked by the president whether he thought the Soviet side would accept this more ambitious proposals. And Henry rolled his eyes, took a deep sigh, thought for a while, and then said "Yes." He thought that the Soviet side would actually accept.

The one point about Vladivostok which I think really is important to consider is the relationship of the cruise missile issue to the agreement. If my memory serves me right, the Soviet interpretation of what was agreed at Vladivostok was that each cruise missile would count as a single missile.

DOBRYNIN: And you were not prepared to accept that.

BRZEZINSKI: And we were not--yes, we were not prepared to accept that. And when SALT was completed finally, that idea was abandoned, because it really was quite unrealistic and very one-sided. So you bought a year later, unfortunately very late, the position that we were maintaining regarding Vladivostok: namely, that it simply was not practical to count every cruise missile as equivalent to a missile.

LEGVOLD: Bill Odom.

May 7--Morning Session 2

ODOM: I want to return to the question of intelligence. I don't believe in speaking into a microphone. [Long laughter.] I don't want to look at the micro situation, or the assessment at the particular time, but to expand it a bit, and ask for a reaction of the other side. I was following the larger intelligence picture, and in some of the technical detail, if you look at the U.S. side, we had dropped a real amount in our defense spending: 38% in a decade. In other words, we had gone down rather dramatically in our defense allocations. Your programs were really beginning to come on line. Your forces were beginning to look much more modern; your T-72 tanks were beginning to come on line; the second and third models of your ICBMs were there; your accuracy was beginning to appear more effective; and for those of us who looked at it closely--who followed your open literature and data, and also the intelligence--we saw an employment attitude--call it military doctrine, or whatever you want to--that was completely at odds with the assumptions that we brought in.

Now, I looked at those bits of data and at the NIEs. Some of that material really didn't come into general use on the policy side for some time--I've always suspected that Henry didn't want to see some of the bad news in the technical aspects of the intelligence. That stuff really didn't surface early, and it was not really on the agenda. And I think toward the end of the Carter administration a lot of that stuff was in there and began to change people's views a little bit on exactly what your forces were.

Now, here's my question to you: was there an assumption--and I almost sensed it--that the correlation of forces between the two camps in the late 1970s was favoring the Soviet Union, and that the U.S. was in decline? Did you think you could afford to slap the U.S. Secretary of

May 7--Morning Session 2

Defense in the face when he came to Moscow, with only trivial consequences? And I wonder if you could have done it in 1968.

LEGVOLD: The next speaker is Nikolai Detinov.

DETINOV: I would like to say several words about the proposals that Secretary Vance brought to Moscow from the point of view of the military experts who evaluated those proposals. I will not speak now about the political side of the question; I will speak purely in military terms.

As was well-known, there were differences of opinion between the United States and the Soviet Union from the very beginning about exact definition of strategic weapons. The United States believed that strategic weapons consisted of ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers. And the Soviet Union believed that the forward-based systems should be included in the definition. Those were: airplanes stationed in Europe; missiles on the respective American bombers; and submarine bases which were located near Soviet territory. Besides the Soviet Union, when we calculated the balance, we believed that the nuclear weapons of Britain and France should be included in the calculations, which in a certain way increased, or strengthened, the strategic arms balance in the U.S. favor. That's why when we in the Soviet Union agreed in Vladivostok to limit the calculation to the heavy bomber, ICBMs, and SLBMs, and to leave the forward-based systems and the weapons of Britain and France out of it, the Soviet Union made, from its point of view, a major concession. And in Moscow they received the news about such a decision with less than full support. There were people who disagreed with that.

May 7--Morning Session 2

Why did the Soviet Union make such a decision then? Because the general levels of armament were sufficiently high. They were: 2,400 on carriers and 1,320 in MIRVed missiles. With numbers of strategic weapons so high, the role and the importance of the so-called forward-based systems was, in way, diminished, and in a percentage calculation, they did not present any substantial threat. That is why the Soviet Union agreed to that.

Now, what did the United States propose? The new administration proposed, first, to cut the overall levels substantially. This immediately raised the importance of the forward-based nuclear systems in the overall balance. More than that: the United States proposed, in essence, very far-reaching proposals for reductions of ground-based ICBMs. They, in essence, would give the priority to the development of the sea-based weapons in comparison with ground-based missiles. As you know, they proposed to limit the heavy missiles, the mobile missiles. This was considered, as were other ideas. Our experts saw all this primarily as efforts by the U.S. to achieve some one-sided advantages, and to destroy the strategic balance which had been achieved between our two countries by that time. That is why, from our point of view, to accept the substantial cuts proposed in the strategic weapons, without counting in some way the forward-based systems, was impossible.

Now, we have touched upon the *Backfire* and the cruise missiles. Why was this unsatisfactory to us? Well, first, a proposal to defer the discussion of the *Backfire* until the third stage of the negotiations in essence would have meant that the Soviet Union was admitting the *Backfire* problem. We did not consider it a problem. *Backfire* was a tactical bomber, and had no relevance to any negotiations concerning SALT. The Soviet Union could not accept that.

May 7--Morning Session 2

With regard to cruise missiles, we had known the U.S. plans of expanded production of land-based, air-borne, and sea-based cruise missiles. You were talking about deploying thousands of these missiles, and we thought it absolutely impossible to leave them out of any agreement we were discussing. That's why for us--for our experts--those proposals were, in essence, unacceptable. And this is how we came up with our evaluations of the proposals as they were presented by the U.S. side.

LEGVOLD: Thank you. Now, an observation on my part, and then I will turn to Marshall who has a general comment on the discussion. And then we are going to go to lunch. First, Bill Odom and Nikolai Detinov's last comments are a nice bridge to this afternoon, when we'll be looking at each side's version of what the problem was that we were trying to deal with through arms control, and then what our respective arms control answers were in the strategic sphere. The further observation I have as I listen to these exchanges this morning is that the issues that each side is raising with the other, and the arguments with which each is responding, appear to me almost a direct duplication of what you did at the time. There is no indication that there are further second thoughts about this at this stage. Now, maybe that's the important reality; maybe there aren't second thoughts to be had about it. But this conversation is essentially the conversation you had at the time. Cy, you disagree.

VANCE: Yes, I disagree with you.

May 7--Morning Session 2

LEGVOLD: Okay, put your mike on.

VANCE: What we have been talking about is the question of missed opportunities, and therefore, I think it's really quite different from what you're saying.

LEGVOLD: You don't think there was a recognition of missed opportunities at the time?

VANCE: At the time, we had different views with respect to whether there was a missed opportunity. But clearly when you are looking back in a retrospective fashion, you are talking about what the missed opportunities were at that time.

LEGVOLD: Okay. Marshall.

SHULMAN: First, in response to a question you asked earlier, Robert, about what our assessments were at the time about the acceptability of the proposal: I can recall vividly that my own feeling was that I had no doubt at all that the preferred proposal of the United States would draw a rejection. I thought that the possibilities ranged from "no, but" to "no". That is, there might be a rejection, but then there might be some kind of dialogue which would follow. That was the most optimistic assessment. At the other extreme, there might be a total "no." But this raises a more general point that seems to me not yet adequately represented in our discussions this morning: and that is that in an effort to consider what was happening on the other side,

May 7--Morning Session 2

there were dimensions in the positions of the two sides that arose from the context in which they were taken. That is to say, it's a mistake simply to look at numbers and ask whether the Soviets would accept it or not. It depends very much on the context in which it was done. And I want to illustrate this briefly with reference to two issues: one is human rights, and the other is the comprehensive proposal in the March package.

To some extent I am repeating a little bit what I said at Pocantico, at the previous meeting with regard to human rights. That is, it seemed to me that it is important to bear in mind that human rights was not a homogeneous issue. It represented a confluence of a number of streams in American politics. At one level there is President Carter's own strong feelings about civil rights--the experience he had had--which he was then projecting onto an international plane. It was simply a projection of the same values that he had fought for, believing in them very deeply. He was logical and consistent enough in projecting those values on the international plane.

At another level, there was a stream of thought in American life that was reacting negatively to the Kissinger period, the *realpolitik*, and the feeling that the absence of moral considerations in international politics was a serious deficiency. Therefore, there was an effort to restore a sense of values in American policy as the reaction against the policies of the previous administration.

At a third level, there were those who saw the human rights issue as an instrument in the political offensive. They saw the Soviet Union as being vulnerable on this issue, and thought that it was an issue that could put the Soviet Union on the defensive, and could be used to

May 7--Morning Session 2

discredit it. This was not unmixed with feelings of compassion and concern for the people involved; but it was also an instrument in political combat. So, it was not a thing that had a unified existence. It had complex dimensions to it.

Now, to some extent, there are also dimensions involved in the comprehensive proposal. For some--and I think this included the president, as I understood it at the time--there was a real concern about getting the numbers down: a feeling that the numbers were too high; that it wasn't rational to have so many nuclear weapons. This was illustrated by the fact that he was willing at least to consider, in a preliminary way, what the world would look like if you got down to very low numbers. But to some others who fed into the discussions of the comprehensive proposal, the reasoning was a little different. I think, for example, in the briefing books there is a contribution by Senator Jackson--a memorandum written for Senator Jackson by Richard Perle. And it seems to me that at the time, there was a feeling--probably stronger in the case of Perle than in the case of Scoop Jackson--that the arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union essentially were disadvantageous to the United States: that they had the effect of disarming the American public, of creating a false impression that things were better than they were, and of reducing support for necessary military appropriations. It seems to me that when the comprehensive proposal had the effect that it did have--drawing rejection--from the point of view of people who thought in this way, it was a success. It had done whatever it was intended to do. Now, I am not saying that that was the view of the administration, or that this was the intention in putting it forward. But it had various dimensions in American political life, just as the human rights issue had various dimensions in American political life.

May 7--Morning Session 2

When we are thinking of the process of interreaction, we should not just look at a simple mathematical formula, but take into account the deep and complex political context of the times.

LEGVOLD: Thank you very much. We are now going to break for lunch. We resume at 2:15. Lunch is here, as dinner was last night, so make yourself comfortable. At 2:15 we go on. Thank you very much.