

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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ENTITLED..... The Decline of Arms Control:

..... Roots in the First Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF..... Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences

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THE DECLINE OF ARMS CONTROL:
ROOTS IN THE FIRST STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS

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THESIS

for the
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS
IN
HISTORY

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois

April 1986

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Introduction

Detente is dead. SALT is discredited but START is not living up to its name. Reports continue of Soviet treaty violations and there are calls in the United States for the renunciation of SALT II. The ABM accords are increasingly threatened by enthusiastic plans for a "Strategic Defense Initiative." Leading experts remain pessimistic about the chances of any major breakthrough in negotiations and even fatalistically conclude that arms control has reached an "intellectual dead end."¹ The hopes and expectations raised by the signing of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty are gone.

What went wrong? Why have past arms control efforts proved so utterly unable to bring increased security, lower military spending, or a process of actual disarmament? Traditional explanations are often unsatisfactory.

One explanation might be termed the "irrational man" model. Successful arms control and disarmament, in this view, is only a matter of will. Since the control of weapons rather than their proliferation is the only rational course to take, the phenomenon of an arms race can be explained only by some gross ignorance

or neglect of the problem. The history of diplomacy in the twentieth century is described as a "history of lost opportunities."² The arms race today exists because of a "road not taken," as if there were a clear and easy choice between arms control and an arms race. Even the pitiful attempts that have been made in arms control are woefully inadequate because the limits are set too high and the restrictions only cover certain quantitative aspects of weapons arsenals, not technological advance, thus merely "institutionalizing" the arms race.⁴

The defects of this interpretation are many. For one, it is grossly simplistic. The decisions made to produce nuclear weapons and engage in arms races can't be explained primarily by some psychological abnormality or intellectual defect of political leaders. Nor can the explanation lie in the all-encompassing power of some "military-industrial complex." In fact, there are very rational reasons for producing weapons and engaging in arms races, and it is important to examine these. Equally important, any analysis of the failure of arms control must go deeper to get at the root causes and not the symptoms of the problem. That there were and are inadequate restrictions in arms control treaties is obvious; the question is, why?

Another view of the failure of arms control is

that of the "diplomatic mechanics." According to this group, the problems of arms control are technical and can be "fixed" by a more skillfull and intensive diplomacy. While there are real differences between the superpowers, the major difficulty lies in their different "conceptions," "perceptions," "definitions," and "perspectives." The solution consists simply of a "redefinition," "a common framework," "further dialogue," and greater "understanding."⁵ Security policy should be based less on military strength to cover worst-case scenarios than on diplomatic therapy sessions between the superpowers:

If a fraction of the effort given to calculating technical deterrence requirements were devoted to raising political awareness of the perceptions of the other side, there might be a substantial increase in security for both sides.⁶

This approach is also flawed. It avoids the real problems of U.S.-Soviet relations and arms control. Greater skill and expertise in diplomacy can have only a limited impact on the deep structural difficulties of U.S.-Soviet relations. Even assuming perfect diplomacy, a great deal of the security requirements of both sides are simply incompatible. There are elements of a zero-sum game involved which by definition cannot be resolved.

It is true that mutual misunderstanding can

exacerbate relations; on the other hand it could be argued that misunderstanding was actually an impetus to detente by hiding the real differences between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In other words, if Nixon had known at the beginning that detente would not preclude a growing threat to American land-based missiles and Soviet adventures in Angola and Afghanistan, and if Brezhnev had known that detente would mean public demands for better treatment of Jews in the U.S.S.R. and vehement American reactions against "progressive movements" in the Third World, then it is likely that detente would have never gotten off the ground.

Another explanation for the decline of arms control lays the blame primarily on the Reagan administration. In this view, there are two faults of the Reagan administration. One, it is too intransigent and offers only blatantly non-negotiable proposals to the Soviets. Two, President Reagan is uninformed and indecisive about arms control policy and allows bureaucratic conflict to sabotage any prospect of a unified policy.⁷

Both these criticisms have an element of truth, but they are wholly inadequate when used as an explanation for the sorry state of arms control. One must bear in mind that SALT was essentially doomed by the time the Soviets invaded Afghanistan--before the Reagan administration came along. And the fact that

the Reagan administration was elected is due in part to the failure of arms control to deliver all that was promised.

The criticism of an uninformed President and a divided arms control policy also falls short as an explanation; it makes the same mistake as the "mechanics" by assuming that greater tactical skill in policy-making can overcome deep structural problems. If a unified arms control policy were so important, then the problem could be easily solved by appointing Caspar Weinberger to the position of arms control czar; but one suspects that this would not exactly mollify the critics of the Reagan administration.

Misguided explanations for the failure of arms control are not limited to the left. The right often makes unfair accusations that the U.S. is consistently outmaneuvered in arms control negotiations, making concessions too easily and settling for poorly drafted, ambiguous agreements which the Soviets quickly exploit.⁸ Not only does this ignore the years of painstaking efforts of American policy makers and diplomats to bargain from strength and nail down specifics, but it assumes that arms control negotiations have tremendous power and influence to shape the security of the U.S. In fact, the negotiating process in itself is only one small aspect of the problems of arms control and reflects reality to

a greater extent than shapes it.

The actual causes of the decline of arms control are not difficult to discover; all that is needed is a more thorough analysis of the historical record. Thus, this study will examine the historical background of the SALT I negotiations and treaty. Potentially, any arms control attempt could be analyzed, but SALT I seems especially relevant, first, because it was the most far-reaching arms control effort yet attempted, and second, to show that the troubles which later rocked the entire arms control process did not suddenly appear out of nowhere, but in fact grew out of roots existing in the very period when the hopes for arms control were at their highest. This study will attempt to show that there were three main causes of the decline of arms control.

The first cause was the rejection of Mutual Assured Destruction as a strategic doctrine, in this case, primarily by the Soviets. While a war-winning strategy is not wholly incompatible with arms control, it exerts a destructive influence and prevents arms control from reaching its full potential. When Soviet doctrine translated itself into actual force deployments, it encouraged a shift in the U.S. away from MAD, accelerating the decline of arms control.

The second cause was the incompatibility between the American concept of "linkage" and the Soviet

concept of "peaceful coexistence." For the Soviets it was only natural and inevitable that their "class struggle" with the U.S. continue even while efforts were made to bring about arms control and disarmament. The United States, however, insisted on linking arms control with overall relations, and even when the policy was abandoned, linkage remained a reality.

The third cause was the enormous difficulty of arriving at that elusive goal of true "parity." Although worst-case planning is frequently derided, ambiguities in the military balance and the inability to predict the future make worst-case planning a necessary tool of policy. Because of the zero-sum nature of American and Soviet security concerns, it is nearly impossible to arrive at a reliable parity.

As the previous paragraphs have probably already indicated, the tone of this study is rather pessimistic. However, this does not mean that the decline of arms control was an inevitable process. There is some scope for human action and the concluding chapter will examine the possibility of using historical lessons as a guide to present policy. The problems of arms control encountered so far are not entirely intractable. But it is essential to recognize that many sweeping changes will be necessary, some of which may not be in our power to bring about.

Chapter One

In order to understand the problems of arms control, one must understand how those arms might be used. In other words, nuclear doctrine must precede nuclear arms control. Otherwise, any attempts at developing an arms control policy will become mired in confusion.

One theory which has been developed as to the role of nuclear weapons is Mutual Assured Destruction, or MAD, as it was coined by its critics.¹ It is partly a reflection of reality and partly a guide to action. It is also the nuclear doctrine which is most compatible with arms control. A war-winning doctrine, on the other hand, is rather hostile to arms control. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to understand what MAD is.

The "Mutual" in MAD is probably the most important component of the doctrine. It recognizes that there are two sides involved which are given equal consideration in determining security, unlike traditional military doctrine which seeks unilateral advantage in the pursuit of victory. Thus, MAD is well suited for diplomacy, which is in essence the search for mutual interests.

"Assured" provides the guarantee of mutuality. This guarantee is partly a reality but also a consciously sought goal. It provides for almost any imaginable contingency or worst-case, and also seeks to reduce worst-case fears through such concepts as the survivability of retaliatory forces and stability. By providing such a guarantee of mutuality, MAD facilitates arms control.

"Destruction" of people and industry is the criterion for the use of nuclear weapons should war break out. By making the criterion of use as simple and direct as possible, MAD increases the chances for successful arms control. Only a relatively low number of weapons are needed, and some weapons, such as the ABM, are completely unnecessary or even harmful, except to preserve a retaliatory force. A force deployment based on MAD makes it clear to the other side that no unilateral advantage is being sought.

The main goal of MAD is the prevention of nuclear war. It does this quite simply by guaranteeing that the consequences of such a war will be tremendously devastating for both sides. MAD cannot be described as a military strategy, for once war breaks out, only quick and effective diplomacy has any hope of limiting damage; there are no military options. It is, however, a strategy, even if its goals are limited to war prevention. If fully implemented, MAD can lead to a

more stable strategic and political environment which will be more conducive to attempts at actual disarmament, instead of mere control. Such is the ideal.

In practice, few people accept "pure" MAD as a doctrine; there are many variations and options which can be added. Some nuclear weapons may be targeted at opposing military forces instead of population centers, in order to restore some rationality in a policy which might otherwise result in mindless slaughter. Civil defense measures may be taken, if not for a full-fledged war-fighting capability, then simply for humanitarian reasons. A limited ABM system might be deployed to protect against third-country threats. These additions can still allow for the possibility of mutual deterrence, if not pure MAD. But if too many modifications are made, the policy is transformed into a war-winning doctrine.

The implications of a war-winning doctrine for arms control are not good. The requirements of such a doctrine dictate a vast proliferation of weapons systems to destroy opposing military forces and directly defend the homeland. Such an attempt at unilateral advantage makes a very poor prospect for diplomacy. And the emphasis on military virtues such as secrecy, surprise, and preemption creates an acceleration of uncertainties and worst-case concerns

which drive the competition even harder. But the prevention of an arms race is not the main goal of this doctrine anyway. The main objective of a war-winning doctrine is to limit damage to the state as much as possible should war break out.

Thus, there are two basic approaches to the problem of nuclear weapons. The doctrine of MAD aims primarily at war prevention. A war-winning doctrine aims at successful damage limitation. The proper choice is not necessarily obvious; the United States and the Soviet Union have each emphasized one approach over the other.

The Evolution of MAD in the United States

The man best known for the development of the MAD doctrine is Robert S. McNamara, the Secretary of Defense for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Initially, the objective of the U.S. in case of war was "Assured Destruction." American nuclear superiority did not allow for mutuality. Nevertheless, by rejecting victory as an objective and aiming simply at a retaliatory force capable of destroying 50 percent of Soviet industry and 25 percent of the population, it set the stage for the future emergence of Mutual Assured Destruction. In fact, Robert McNamara saw this

prospect in a favorable light, arguing the benefits of a "stable balance of terror."²

McNamara was by no means dogmatically committed to MAD. In order to provide an escape hatch in case war broke out, he toyed with the idea of aiming nuclear weapons only at military targets, and sparing as many Soviet civilians as possible. Concurrently, the Soviet leadership would be spared in order to communicate with them and keep the war limited.³ This was not really a war-winning doctrine; rather it looked like a mutual damage limitation strategy, or "MAD with a human face," to put it somewhat facetiously. Nevertheless, the capabilities for such a targeting policy would come uncomfortably close (for the Soviets at least) to a war-winning strategy. After much criticism, McNamara downplayed the idea of military targeting and declared that a full preemptive capability was not a U.S. objective.⁴

Civil defense was another deviation from MAD which Kennedy and McNamara started with great enthusiasm, but later downplayed because of the difficulties involved and the opposition it aroused. McNamara eventually came to place more and more emphasis on deterrence rather than damage limitation. He accepted a thin ABM defense reluctantly, only to protect against the small potential threat of the Chinese nuclear force.⁵

Despite all the academic theories of limited war and McNamara's efforts to obtain operational plans for limited retaliatory options, bureaucratic rigidity hampered attempts at attaining more sophisticated plans.⁶ The Nixon administration was intent on changing that. In his Foreign Policy Report to Congress, Nixon declared:

I must not be--and my successors must not be--limited to the indiscriminate mass destruction of enemy civilians as the sole possible response to challenges. This is especially so when that response involves the likelihood of triggering nuclear attacks on our population.⁷

The revised doctrine was to be known as "sufficiency," as part of an overall strategy of "realistic deterrence." The term "sufficiency" implied that there were no significant gains to be made by building ever greater numbers of nuclear weapons; this amounted to a repudiation of Nixon's campaign promise of restoring "clear-cut military superiority."⁸ Aside from the fact that there were to be "more comprehensive" plans for limited options, the fundamentals of McNamara's doctrine remained. The principle objectives of strategic sufficiency were listed as:

--Maintaining an adequate second-strike

capability to deter an all-out surprise attack on our strategic forces.

- Providing no incentive for the Soviet Union to strike the United States first in a crisis.
- Preventing the Soviet Union from gaining the ability to cause considerably greater urban/industrial destruction than the United States could inflict on the Soviets in a nuclear war.
- Defending against damage from small attacks or accidental launches.⁹

As matters turned out, the last objective was later dropped when the ABM system under development was switched to defend Minuteman sites in order to protect retaliatory forces, not people.¹⁰

Thus, at the time of the first Strategic Arms limitation Talks, U.S. nuclear doctrine was an embellished version of MAD. Ideally, for the purposes of arms control it should have been pure MAD.¹¹ Nevertheless, most major aspects of the Nixon administration's doctrine were still compatible with arms control. While the forays into counter-force targeting and ABMs could be the start of a trend toward a war-winning doctrine, the emphasis on second-strike retaliation and mutual efforts to limit damage provided a favorable groundwork for diplomacy.

Interpreting Soviet Nuclear Doctrine

Comprehending U.S. nuclear doctrine is not very difficult. Governmental policy is usually public knowledge, and even private thoughts and actions tend to become public knowledge a short time later. Moreover, doctrine is rooted in national character and we are certainly well-equipped to understand our own national character. The proper interpretation of Soviet nuclear doctrine is a more difficult task.

As with all attempts to understand the Soviet Union, there is a notable lack of information about Soviet internal policy-making. The information which can be gathered must be subject to an analysis of whether it is propaganda, a widely accepted policy, or a dissenting view of a certain group or individual. Such an analysis can be skewed by the political bias of the investigator. The selective use of evidence can "prove" a preconceived notion, or the same evidence can lead to different interpretations. Academic debates bog down because of the debaters' tendency to talk past one another, refusing even to come to an agreed definition of the terms being tossed about in all the rhetoric. Finally, there is simply a lack of effort to gather relevant information from all possible sources.

Thus, current interpretations of Soviet doctrine differ widely. One side, which might be loosely characterized as the "hawks," is led by Richard Pipes,

Joseph D. Douglass Jr., and Harriet Fast Scott. On the other side, of course, are the "doves," led by David Holloway and Raymond Garthoff.¹² The "hawks" assert that the Soviets view nuclear war in the traditional sense of strategy: the objective is victory, and the means of attaining it include superiority in armaments, surprise preemptive strikes, and the occupation of enemy territory, while defending the homeland.¹³ The "doves" counter that it is a mistake to take the Soviet collection of military writings as the main source of doctrine and that the Soviet leadership generally accepts mutual deterrence and parity.¹⁴

Since there does not seem to be full agreement on the nature of Soviet nuclear doctrine and its impact on SALT I, a fresh approach is necessary. This approach will rest on an examination of four indicators of Soviet nuclear doctrine in the specific historical period of SALT I. The first source will be the voluminous collection of Soviet military writings. Since, however, this may not reflect the entire range of views in the Soviet Union, there is a need for a second indicator: the internal political balance, that is, the relative weight of each of the different opinions in the Soviet leadership on nuclear doctrine. The third indicator will be the SALT I negotiating record; Soviet nuclear doctrine should reveal itself notably here. The fourth indicator will involve a look

at the forces built to fulfill Soviet nuclear doctrine and the degree of correspondence between these weapons and previous writings and statements. These forces should form a comprehensive record of the essence of Soviet nuclear doctrine at the time of SALT I.

The Doctrine of Soviet Military Writings During SALT I

Military thought is taken very seriously in the Soviet Union. Unlike the civilian-careerist education of officers in the U.S. military, Soviet officers are thoroughly drilled in military history and strategy in 140 military schools and eighteen academies. Many books on military theory are printed, some in over 25,000 copies.¹⁵ The classic work *Voyennaya Strategiya* (*Military Strategy*) appeared in three editions (1962, 1963, 1968) for a total of 90,000 copies.¹⁶ In addition there are the open military periodicals *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*) and *Kommunist Vooruzhennukh Sil* (*Communist of the Armed Forces*). Finally, there is *Voyennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*), a journal restricted to the highest military and political leaders in the Soviet Union, which has come to our attention only through the efforts of the CIA.

Soviet strategists are generally contemptuous of the "bourgeois military theorists" of the West.

Journalist James Fallows describes an encounter with one Colonel Kulish:

In 1971 John Morse met Kulish at a dinner party in Washington. 'He was very calm and collected,' Morse says; 'he answered everyone's questions very politely, until someone mentioned that American strategic thinking was not the best. He smiled at that. 'You are right,' he said. 'You Americans leave your strategic thinking to mathematicians and economists, and that's not good.' Then the other guy made a slighting remark about Soviet strategy. Kulish got mad. He said, 'You Americans forget that for two hundred years you've been over here invulnerable to invasion. We've been invaded every twenty or thirty years for centuries, so we think about strategy. We have had one institute thinking about it for at least a hundred years.'¹⁷

While American "mathematicians and economists" have constructed elaborate theories of deterrence and limited war, Soviet strategists have tackled the problem of nuclear weapons with the traditional military approach. This is not to say that they do not appreciate the enormous destructive power of nuclear weapons. In fact, they recognize that nuclear weapons have brought about a revolution in warfare. But this revolution does not make warfare obsolete; on the contrary, it makes warfare quicker, grander, more destructive, and more decisive:

As a result of the rapid development of productive forces, science, and technology,

the resources for waging war have become so powerful that, from the purely military point of view, the possibilities for attaining the most decisive political goals by the use of armed conflict have grown immensely.¹⁸

Soviet military writings indicate that a world war will lead to the complete destruction, not of the whole world, but of the capitalist system alone:

*In its political and social essence a new world war will be a decisive armed clash between two opposed world social systems. This war will naturally end in victory for the progressive Communist social-economic system over the reactionary capitalist social-economic system, which is historically doomed to destruction.*¹⁹

Despite the fact that the Soviets view victory as "inevitable," they feel there is no excuse for not adequately preparing for such a war. In fact, there must be immense efforts in every sphere to assure victory beforehand. "These efforts must be directed at attaining superiority in the "economic, scientific-technical, sociopolitical, moral and military spheres."²⁰ However, the "correlation of forces," as the Soviets put it, is not only an important peacetime calculation, but a factor to be changed decisively to Soviet advantage in the first stages of war. In other words, in a conflict between two equal opponents, one side can suddenly attain a

decisive superiority if it seizes the initiative as soon as the war begins:

The main factor in accomplishing tasks for changing the correlation of forces to our advantage is the effective application of nuclear weapons, that is the obtaining of such values for parameters as can bring about the maximum correlation of forces after nuclear strikes.²¹

The Soviets write that the most effective way to seize the initiative and bring about a decisive change in the correlation of forces is the attainment of surprise. Whereas Western theorists write only of the need to prevent surprise, Soviet strategists emphasize the need both to prevent surprise of the Soviet Union and to achieve surprise against the West. There are several ways to accomplish this. One type of surprise is the development of a new type of weapon, which if deployed quickly enough, can demoralize the enemy and deprive him of protection from the new means of attack.²² Or surprise can be brought about by the use of secrecy: camouflage, disinformation, and countermeasures against enemy warning systems can play a valuable role.²³ Finally, the advent of super-quick ballistic missiles provides the opportunity to achieve surprise by means of swiftness of attack.²⁴

The advantage of surprise, according to Soviet writings, must be exploited to the hilt, not simply

through the destruction of the opposing side's industry and population, but the destruction of the enemy's capability to retaliate. The first target will probably be the command, control, and communications centers of the United States. Due to their short flight times, SLBMs can be valuable in hitting Washington D.C. and other centers. Anti-satellite weapons can help cripple the U.S. warning system. High altitude nuclear bursts emit an electro-magnetic pulse which can ruin sensitive electronic systems all over the United States. There is also the possibility of covert attacks by the KGB to throw the country into disarray.²⁵ Modern industry, communications, and power centers are extremely centralized and vulnerable. Arkady Shevchenko, the highest ranking Soviet official ever to defect, describes an encounter with one KGB agent in the U.S.:

One Sunday at lunch on the New Jersey Palisades in the fall of 1965, he [the KGB agent] could not stop talking about New York's great blackout. 'All those shining towers,' he said, gesturing at the Manhattan skyline, 'they look so strong, so tall, but they're just a house of cards. A few explosions in the right places and do svidaniya [goodbye]. We're only beginning to realize how vulnerable this country really is.'²⁶

Minutes after the United States is paralyzed by such activities, the Soviets plan to destroy the

military forces of the West: "strategic aviation, ICBM's, IRBM's, tactical bomber aviation, naval forces." Followup strikes will destroy facilities that survived the first strike. Afterwards, secondary targets can be attacked, such as industrial centers, military storage areas, and reserves.²⁷

When the nuclear strikes are completed, the job is still far from finished. Ground forces are needed to defend the motherland as well as launch an offensive to clinch victory:

For final victory in this clearly-expressed class war it will be absolutely necessary to bring about the complete defeat of the enemy's armed forces, to deprive him of strategic bridgeheads, to liquidate his military bases, and to seize strategically important regions. Moreover, we must not allow enemy ground armies, air, and naval landing forces to invade the territories of the socialist countries. . . . All these and a number of other problems can be solved only by the Ground Troops in cooperation with the other services of the Armed Forces.²⁸

Despite the attempts of the "bourgeois specialists" to absolutize nuclear weapons, in the Soviet view the utility of conventional weapons is the same, or even greater, in the nuclear age. Tanks will serve an especially essential role. After the nuclear strikes create huge gaps in the enemy's defenses, the mobile divisions can roll right through with the armor protecting the troops from some of the effects of heat,

blast, and radiation. With nuclear barrages occurring all around, there will be no "front lines." Victory will go to the side which exploits opportunities the quickest: "Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the appearance of nuclear weapons not only failed to diminish, but on the contrary even strengthened the role of tanks in battle."²⁹

The idea of limited war appears rarely in Soviet military writings, and when it does, it is discussed in the context of unilateral plans for limiting nuclear strikes for the purpose of allowing troop movement, preventing organizational breakdown during the chaos, and protecting vital industrial and storage centers to be seized by advancing troops. The Soviets recognize the possibility of a purely conventional war, but usually only as a prelude to a nuclear war. In the conventional phase, Soviet forces are to advance deeply and put as much of NATO's nuclear capability out of commission as possible while bringing up its own nuclear strike forces secretly to deliver the final decisive blow later.³⁰ The Soviets remain very pessimistic about the possibility of keeping nuclear war limited through mutual agreement, whether tacit, or through intra-war diplomacy.

The only reliable method of limiting damage in case of nuclear war in the Soviet view is through one's own unilateral efforts. After a Soviet offensive has

damaged the opposing nuclear forces in a preemptive strike, there are several ways to absorb the weakened retaliatory force. ABMs were initially looked upon with much enthusiasm in the U.S.S.R., but later difficulties led to the decision to sign the ABM ban with the U.S., and Marshal Grechko was forced to declare: "there are still no reliable defensive means [against nuclear weapons]."³¹ Nevertheless, there is still a burning desire to use "scientific-technical progress" to correct this deficiency; the Soviets have developed enough of a head start in operational ABMs to deploy a nation-wide system in two years after abrogation of the ABM accords.³² In the meantime, efforts continue in civil defense, and in air defense against the Western bombing forces.³³

The concept of deterrence is not discussed very much in Soviet military writings. They consider the prevention of war as something that naturally follows from thorough preparation in war-fighting strategies. In their view, a world war will occur not through some miscalculation or destabilizing weapons system, but as a deliberate policy on the part of the "aggressive imperialists" to unleash such a war. There is only one way to prevent war, and that is through the further accumulation of Soviet military strength. The sophistication of deterrence theory in the Soviet Union could be summed up in one statement of Marshal

Grechko's:

The lessons of history teach that the stronger the alliance of peace-loving forces [read: Soviet forces and the not-so-voluntary alliance of the Warsaw Pact] and the greater their military might, the more stable is peace on earth and the more reliable is the guarantee of security for all the freedom-loving peoples.³⁴

Taken alone, perhaps this concept is not so ominous; it would seem to resemble the American idea of "peace through strength." But the Soviets have much more in mind. Since, in their view, war can begin only through the aggressive plans of the imperialists, it makes sense to use every means available to force concessions from them:

It is impossible to agree with the view that disarmament can be achieved as a result of peaceful negotiations concerning this acute and difficult question by representatives of opposing social systems. Disarmament cannot be the result of any utopian 'calming' of the class political struggle in the international arena. Quite to the contrary, it can be achieved only as a result of the most active pressure on their governments by the revolutionary forces in the imperialist countries combined with the flexible and principled policy of the socialist camp. Any other concept about the path to the achievement of disarmament is an illusion.³⁵

Another Soviet commentator notes:

The communist and workers' parties of capitalist countries mobilizing the masses to solve present foreign policy problems, to curb aggressions [sic], to preserve peace, and to strengthen international security. These parties' efforts are directed toward rallying the masses and toward ensuring that they are organized, socially conscious, and activated.

Under contemporary conditions, when the forces of reaction are trying to aggravate the international situation and threatening mankind with an annihilating war, the working class has a special responsibility for preserving peace. Through massive lobbying, it can have a substantial influence on the governments and parliaments of capitalist countries, thus disrupting the aggressive intrigues of the imperialist bourgeois.³⁶

In summary then, it is difficult to think of anything less compatible with arms control than the ideas expressed in Soviet military writings. However, these writings are not the only indicator of actual Soviet nuclear doctrine. There are others, and it is essential to examine them and discover whether there are significant modifications to the doctrine expressed in military writings or simply a reaffirmation of the concepts just reviewed above.

Soviet Nuclear Doctrine as a Result of the Internal Political Balance

Before I discuss the internal political debate over Soviet nuclear doctrine, I should point out that

there is a school of thought in the United States, generally associated with the "hawk" label, which would regard such an attempt as pointless. In that view, the Soviet leadership is in general agreement over the proper nuclear doctrine and communicates this doctrine through its military writings. Therefore, an examination of Soviet military writings is all that is necessary to arrive at the correct interpretation of Soviet doctrine.³⁷ There are significant arguments to support this view.

First, Soviet military writings do emphasize time and time again that doctrine is to be determined by the political leadership, since according to V. I. Lenin, "War is the continuation of politics by other means."³⁸ The authoritative book *Military Strategy* by Marshal Sokolovsky explains:

Military doctrine is the expression of the accepted views of a state regarding the problems of political evaluation of future war, the state attitude toward war, a determination of the nature of future war, preparation of the country for war in the economic and moral sense, and regarding the problems of organization and preparation of armed forces, as well as of the methods of waging war. . . . The basic principles of doctrine are determined by the political leadership of the state.³⁹

Thus, some people claim that attempts by Western theorists to make a distinction between military and civilian thought in the U.S.S.R. are simply

unwarranted.⁴⁰

That such a distinction is impossible to make may be argued partly on the basis that there is no clear line between civilian and military careers in the U.S.S.R.; Soviet society is thoroughly militarized. Party officials usually have some sort of experience in military work. Leonid Brezhnev, for example, served during World War II as Deputy Chief of the Political Directorate of the Southern Front and was later promoted to chief of the Political Department of the Fourth Ukrainian Front. After the war he helped in the development of long-range missiles.⁴¹ In addition, all the senior Soviet military officers are members of the Party; they make up 10 percent of the Central Committee.⁴²

Any attempt by the military to develop a doctrine at odds with the wishes of the political leadership would be impossible, according to several analysts. The Party has strict control over the military through an institutional apparatus known as the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army and Navy. The MPA consists of political officers who are completely integrated with the armed forces and lay down the Party line, watching carefully for any ideological deviations. In addition, they participate thoroughly in the formation of military policy. The Lenin Military-Political Academy functions as an MPA think

tank. Military books and articles are often written by groups of military and political officers acting in cooperation. In fact, some of the most hawkish positions in the Soviet Union are held by officers of the MPA. As an additional control, military writings cannot be published independently; all writings are subject to censorship by the Central Committee Propaganda Department.⁴³

There are many public statements by Party leaders and even military officers to the effect that the Soviet Union seeks only parity and does not believe a nuclear war is winnable. But this seeming difference of opinion, according to American "hawks," is actually only propaganda aimed at the West. The policy set forth in military writings is unchanged. As Richard Pipes puts it, if public Soviet announcements are taken at face value,

we would have to believe that Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in order to expel 'foreign interventionists,' that Solidarity is a product of the CIA, or that the Soviet submarine which wandered into Swedish waters did so because of a navigational error.⁴⁴

Since SALT and detente, the Soviets have become more circumspect in the publication of their nuclear doctrine. Several American analysts have noticed that articles in the open military press are more "oblique"

and "less informative" about military doctrine. The Soviets have apparently noticed the interest which Western researchers have taken in studying Soviet military writings.⁴⁵

Finally, the "hawks" say, the Soviet military forces built in the 1970s and 1980s have corresponded very well with the doctrinal pronouncements of the 1960s. The emphasis on heavy, accurate land-based missiles provides a useful tool for a preemptive strike. The investments made in air defense and civil defense are enormous, as is the conventional build-up.⁴⁶

The case of the "hawks" is a strong one. However, there is a great deal of evidence that there are significant differences over nuclear doctrine in the U.S.S.R. that are derived from different institutional approaches and divisions among individual leaders. The historical record shows that the Soviet ideal of unitary doctrinal formation does not work perfectly in practice. Military doctrine tends to be made more by the experts in the military than by a political leadership with less knowledge of military affairs and other pressing concerns to attend to. There is also considerable doubt about how well the MPA represents overall Party views and fulfills its function of controlling the military for the ends of the Party. Proving what the Soviet leaders really think is

extremely difficult, but the frequency of statements within the U.S.S.R. contradicting Soviet military writings suggests that one should not casually dismiss them as mere propaganda.

Although the scope of this paper is limited to the period of SALT I, one must go back further in the history of the U.S.S.R. to see how military doctrine was shaped by internal political struggles. Roman Kolkowicz, in his book *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, has noted that the Party generally has a firm grip on the military during stable periods, but during times of crisis, the military plays a prominent role. One such crisis arose after the death of Joseph Stalin. Details are sketchy, but it seems that the military was used as an ally to help eliminate Beria, the feared chief of the secret police, leaving Malenkov and Khrushchev as the main contenders. When Malenkov began to speak about the need for greater investment in the area of consumer goods, Khrushchev quickly sided with the military and heavy industrialists and, with their help, was able to oust Malenkov and achieve the dominant position in the Soviet Union. The rise of the military during the succession crisis was indicated by a number of factors: the rapid rise of the World War II hero Marshal Zhukov, the promotion or rehabilitation of numerous other military officers, and the loosened grip of the Main

Political Administration on the Army.⁴⁷ A particular example of the utility of the military as an ally can be seen by Zhukov's use of military transport to shuttle Khrushchev's cronies to Moscow in the middle of an attempt to oust Khrushchev.⁴⁸

As Khrushchev consolidated his power, however, the military's heyday was over. Zhukov was getting too big for his britches, so Khrushchev demoted him to obscurity. While Soviet military officers were developing the bellicose doctrine later expressed in *Military Strategy*, Khrushchev began to sound like a closet liberal: "the general trend is toward the reduction of tension in international relations"; "under present conditions war is no longer completely inevitable"; "modern means of waging war do not give any country the advantage of surprise attack." He directly contradicted the official military line by downgrading the importance of conventional forces and advocating a minimum deterrence posture.⁴⁹

Khrushchev evidently had a difficult time bending the military to his will, and succeeded in completely alienating his former supporters. It has been suspected that Khrushchev eventually came to place ballistic missiles in Cuba partly in response to critics of his relatively "soft" defense posture. Such a move, he may have thought, would bring increased military power while keeping budgetary allocations

low.⁵⁰ Unfortunately for Khrushchev, the end result was disastrous, and when added to his other failures, led to his ouster.

Khrushchev's later reminiscences confirm that, while he let the military have its way when he needed them, he was opposed to high military expenditures and a war-winning nuclear doctrine. Contrary to the ideal of a unified political-military leadership, Khrushchev was rather critical of the military:

[L]eaders must be careful not to look at the world through the eyeglasses of the military. Otherwise, the picture will appear terribly gloomy; the government will start spending all its money and the best energies of its people on armaments--with the result that pretty soon the country will have lost its pants in the arms race. . . . I'm not saying that there's any comparison between our military in the socialist countries and capitalist generals, but soldiers will be soldiers. They always want a bigger and stronger army. They always insist on having the latest weapons and on attaining quantitative as well as qualitative superiority over the enemy.⁵¹

The collective leadership that replaced Khrushchev in 1964 was more conservative and depended in part on the military support which Khrushchev lost. Brezhnev in particular had cultivated ties with Marshal Andrei Grechko and Admiral Sergei Gorshkov earlier in his career, and he apparently joined in a coalition of hardliners against a faltering group in the Party

pressing for a greater concentration on the consumer goods sector of the economy. The consequences of this political coalition soon became clear. The military gained more independence in determining doctrine and received a larger share of the budget.⁵² Khrushchev lamented this shift in priorities during his last years in retirement:

Now that I'm no longer active, I can't help noticing from my position as a pensioner that the economizing trend we started seems to have been reversed, that now money is being wasted on unnecessary items and categories, and that this new trend of military overspending is putting a pinch on some of the more important, but still underfinanced, areas of our country's life.⁵³

But Khrushchev no longer had any say in policy. The Brezhnev coalition was in charge. It is this leadership which will occupy the main attention of this study, since Soviet nuclear doctrine at the time of SALT I was the result of the combined views and influence of each of the groups and individuals composing the leadership. A detailed examination of each group follows.

Marshal Grechko and the Old Guard Military

The basic views of this group are well known,

having been expressed in the writings examined above. There are two other aspects of this group which are important: first, its influence on Soviet defense and foreign policies; and second, its specific views on the SALT process.

The military was not completely under the strict control of the Party as some analysts assert. It has been argued by Edward Warner that the instrument of control, the Main Political Administration, was coopted by the military and used for its own ends instead of the Party's. Political officers were often recruited from the corps of young military officers and given the same education and training as military officers. The MPA, Warner believes, has become an integral part of the military establishment and shares its views to such an extent that it is questionable whether its main loyalty lies with the Party or the Army.⁵⁴

Marshal Grechko was an early protege of Leonid Brezhnev, but that was not the only source of the military's power. In the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1968 and the war scare with China in 1969, the political leadership was forced to rely on a show of military muscle; this generally increased the prestige and influence of the Soviet military. In another case, it is rumored that Brezhnev was forced to appeal to Grechko for help in the middle of a leadership crisis. Supposedly, Brezhnev was attempting to attain more

control of the Council of Ministers when he was suddenly attacked by the rest of the Politburo leadership. Consequently, Brezhnev tried to reaffirm his authority by attending a display of military exercises under Grechko.⁵⁵

Arkady Shevchenko also speaks of the strong ties between Grechko and Brezhnev. He reports that Grechko often used his free access to Brezhnev to argue for a strong military build-up. Grechko also got into numerous disputes with Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko that had to be moderated by Brezhnev and Dimitri Ustinov.⁵⁶ By April of 1973, Grechko's rising influence was indicated by his promotion, along with Gromyko and KGB chief Yuri Andropov, to membership in the Politburo. It has been speculated that this was done to shore up Brezhnev's position against attacks by the Soviet opponents of detente,⁵⁷ but Brezhnev would have to pay a price to retain Grechko's grudging support of detente.

That the military had substantial influence in the Soviet leadership is unquestionable. The question is, what was the military's opinion on the SALT process and how did it affect the negotiations? Unfortunately for Brezhnev, the military evidently tended to be most unfriendly to SALT and detente in general. Shevchenko describes Grechko as "apoplectic" and "violently opposed" to the idea of negotiations with the United

States. Although he eventually came to accept SALT, he did much to stall the process and sabotage it.⁵⁸

The military's dislike of SALT was reflected in their writings. They could certainly not risk questioning Party policy by directly opposing SALT, so they usually ignored SALT in the military publications, or if they did mention it somewhat favorably, they added many qualifications as to the aggressive nature of imperialism, the need for vigilance, etc.⁵⁹ Marshal Grechko in *The Armed Forces of the Soviet State* ignored SALT completely and merely cited the need for vigilance to coerce the aggressive imperialists into more peaceful policies.⁶⁰ So it can be safely said that if the military was the only group in charge of arms control policy, there would have been no SALT. But of course, it wasn't.

Gromyko and the Foreign Ministry

Gromyko was the main counterpart to Grechko. Having been wise enough to cultivate Brezhnev's friendship on hunting trips in his earlier days, Gromyko became part of Brezhnev's trusted inner circle and probably had as much personal influence on Brezhnev as Grechko. Gromyko was sympathetic to the arms control process as part of a broader political

relaxation of tensions.⁶¹ He was joined in his coalition for arms control by the rest of the Foreign Ministry and the academics led by Georgii Arbatov.

When the SALT negotiations began, Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Semenov headed the Soviet SALT delegation. Yet this was by no means an indication of the power of the Foreign Ministry in arms control negotiations. The military had evidently gone to great lengths to control the information on Soviet military programs, to the point where the Foreign Ministry had to rely on Western sources to obtain data on Soviet weaponry. According to Kissinger, even Gromyko had only "rudimentary" knowledge of Soviet military programs.⁶² In addition, the Foreign Ministry was discouraged greatly from offering specific proposals for arms control.⁶³ The influence of other groups such as scientists and the scholars from Arbatov's Institute for the Study of the U.S.A. and Canada was minimal or even irrelevant. Shevchenko states that Arbatov's views were not avidly sought by the Soviet leadership and that Arbatov was used mainly as a spokesman and propagandist for Soviet policy in the West.⁶⁴

In the area of institutional power, the arms control coalition apparently had no chance against the entrenched Old Guard of the military. Not only did the military vastly outnumber the rest, but it had great influence as the muscle behind leadership successions

and foreign policy crises. That SALT ever got off the ground was due to two factors. First, as mentioned above, Gromyko had substantial influence with Brezhnev and Brezhnev himself was strongly committed to detente.

Second, Gromyko was able to draw in another important group to his arms control coalition.

Ogarkov and the "New Generation" of Soldiers

One of Grechko's personal advisers was the Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Ogarkov, noted by many for his sophistication and youth. During the 1969 crisis with China, while Grechko was advocating a massive nuclear barrage against the Chinese, Ogarkov rejected Grechko's plan and regarded even a surgical strike as too risky because of the dangers of world war. When the time came for Politburo consideration of SALT, Ogarkov was again more pragmatic and hinted that Grechko was rather "old-fashioned" in his thinking.⁶⁵

Gromyko took note of the more sophisticated attitude of the new generation of officers and decided to turn it to his advantage. He knew that a SALT agreement could not come about without at least the tacit consent of the military, and decided to coopt the military in the arms control process. As he remarked to Shevchenko, "the more they know, the more contact they have with the Americans, the easier it will be to

turn our soldiers into something more than just martinets." In fact, he even tried to put in a military man as the head of the SALT delgation, but this was too much for Grechko, and the job went to the diplomat Semenov.⁶⁶

The new guard of the military was hardly dovish. Yet, it was less bellicose than its predecessors. Ogarkov noted that it was possible to increase Soviet security through arms control agreements under "certain conditions"; he was made the principal military adviser to the SALT delgation. Later, an officer of similiar views, General Nikolai Alekseiev, was to serve in this position. Both of them were committed to SALT in order to restrain American economic and technological strength and use the "breathing space" to catch up.⁶⁷ Later, Ogarkov was to make favorable comments about SALT in the Soviet military press.⁶⁸

Brezhnev and the Politburo

It has been noted by some analysts that one should not take Soviet military writings too seriously since "the ideas of military officers do not necessarily reflect the convictions of political leaders."⁶⁹ Though there is no doubt a great deal of truth in this statement, it is often put forward without any evidence

or analysis of Soviet politics. This is partly forgivable, as it is nearly impossible to know what the Soviet leadership really thinks. Until some daring person manages to smuggle out the secret "Brezhnev papers," there are only two indicators of the political leadership's opinion on nuclear doctrine: their public statements and an insider's account from a Soviet defector. These two sources, with a little guesswork, can provide a fair assessment of what was going on in the leadership's mind at the time of SALT.

Brezhnev's public statements seem to indicate a less bellicose doctrine than would be surmised by the "official" doctrine expressed in the Soviet strategic literature. At times, Brezhnev even seems to be an advocate of MAD:

it is a dangerous madness to try to defeat each other in the arms race and to count on victory in nuclear war. . . .

I shall add that only he who had decided to commit suicide can start a nuclear war in the hope of emerging a victor from it. No matter what might the attacker possesses, no matter what method of unleashing nuclear war he chooses, he will not attain his aims. Retribution will ensue ineluctably.⁷⁰

In another statement he again contradicts the military view:

allegations that the Soviet Union is going beyond what is sufficient for defense, that

it is striving for superiority in armaments are absurd and utterly unfounded.⁷¹

Because the public forum is so often used by the Soviets for propaganda and disinformation, these statements should be approached with caution. Indeed, after Brezhnev declared the rejection of superiority as a goal, he loftily asserted "our country will never embark on the path of aggression and will never lift its sword against other peoples."⁷² Given the situation in Afghanistan, one wonders whether any public statements by the Politburo are indicative of actual policy.

However, there is good reason to suppose that under all the rhetoric, Brezhnev did believe that nuclear war was unwinnable and that nuclear superiority was not a practical prospect. It is important to note the audience of Brezhnev's remarks. If he had said these things directly to a Western audience or included such remarks only in propaganda publications such as *Whence the Threat to Peace?*, then his sincerity would be questionable. But he was addressing primarily Soviet audiences, and by denying the ability of the Soviet Union to emerge victorious from a nuclear war, he was telling the Soviet people that there was no use trying to achieve nuclear superiority and no point in preparing to win an all-out war. This would definitely be the wrong approach to take if one wished to prepare

for victory in case of nuclear war. If Brezhnev had merely wanted to score propaganda points, he could have made vague declarations about the Soviet Union's peaceful intentions. But he specifically declared nuclear war to be unwinnable and denied military superiority as a goal, thus undermining efforts at preparing the populace and army for victory. As Major General Bochkarev put it, in a critique of another commentator: "Surprising logic: to strengthen the morale of the troops on the basis of their recognition of the hopelessness of the struggle for which they are preparing."⁷³

Normally, it might seem that the statements of Brezhnev should be taken as the most authoritative indicator of Soviet nuclear doctrine; after all, he was the most powerful man in the Soviet Union during the SALT period. However, for a number of reasons, Brezhnev did not emulate Khrushchev's interventionist style and did not shape nuclear doctrine along the lines of MAD. The reality is more complex.

Soviet Nuclear Doctrine as the Result of Group Compromise

As was pointed out previously, the military can be a significant factor in Soviet politics; this seemed to be especially the case in the Brezhnev era. As

Brezhnev consolidated his power, he could have deliberately reduced the power of the military and attempted to control it in the manner of Khrushchev. However, the record indicates that he did not choose to do this. Perhaps he thought the risks were not worth the possible gain, or that his own power would be spent somewhat by confronting the military, or maybe he still felt a great deal of personal loyalty to his old comrade-in-arms, Grechko. Whatever the reasons, the Soviet military still had the influence to shape a doctrine at odds with arms control.

Part of the problem was Brezhnev's lack of knowledge of military matters and lack of desire to know. This meant that his decisions on military procurement policy and arms control had to be based primarily on information and advice provided by the experts in the military. The military more or less set the agenda for SALT decisions. The Foreign Ministry under Gromyko could act as a counterweight, but its influence was limited by the fact that crucial information on Soviet military programs was monopolized by the military and guarded very jealously. In fact, the military had almost complete control over all aspects of strategic thought. Unlike the situation in the U.S., in the Soviet Union strategic policy is not influenced by academics nor determined by civilian administrators. There was no influential school of

thought putting forth a theory of deterrence as an alternative to the policy offered by the military.

In addition, as Sovietologist Harry Gelman points out, the decision-making process of the Brezhnev regime must be considered as one of the factors in the decline of detente. The key objective of the Brezhnev leadership was consensus. Open debates were strictly forbidden; final decisions had to be accepted unanimously, if reluctantly. The purpose of this type of process was to ensure that most power remained in the very upper circle of Soviet leadership. Open disagreements would show weakness and increase the power of lower echelon bureaucrats to take advantage of the disputes and carve out a greater role for themselves in policy.⁷⁴ The consensus method had its roots in Lenin's concept of "democratic centralism," the outward show of unity as a means of protection from internal and external enemies. Its use by Brezhnev was confirmed by Geidar Aliev, who was promoted to the Politburo by Brezhnev in 1976:

Not a single decision of the Politburo in the period I have been a member was a case in which there was a majority vote with some against. We always found a way for joint, concentrated action.⁷⁵

While Aliev was able to view the Politburo since 1976 only, it is probably safe to say that this phenomenon applied to the earlier period of the

Brezhnev regime as well.

The great flaw in this type of decision-making was that it did not resolve real disputes; it merely hid them, and problems eventually emerged in one form or the other. Brezhnev paid a price for his consensus on SALT and detente. In order to mollify the military, heavy industrialists, and Politburo hardliners, he carried out his detente policy along with a continued heavy military build-up and a hands-off attitude toward internal military affairs. While SALT I supposedly ratified parity, the 1976 *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* still called for military superiority.⁷⁶ It was not until 1979 that the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia* rejected the goal of superiority. Raymond Garthoff sees this in a somewhat positive light, arguing that the Brezhnev regime modified its military doctrine in keeping with detente.⁷⁷ However, the changes that have taken place at the level of public pronouncements seem hardly indicative of a major shift of military attitudes and operational policy. In any event, the changes took place well after the historical period which this paper deals with.

The task of maintaining Brezhnev's consensus on detente sometimes came under strain. At one point in 1973, reports filtered into the West that Brezhnev was assuring East European leaders that detente was only a tactic to achieve superiority over the West in twelve

to fifteen years. The details of Brezhnev's comments are difficult to substantiate; he may not have meant military superiority specifically or set a deadline of twelve to fifteen years. Western analysts were split over the implications of these reports. Military commentators in the West stated that this was an indication of Soviet deviousness. Civilian commentators stated that Brezhnev's comments were meant to mollify Soviet and East European hardliners.⁷⁸ Actually, the difference in interpretation is probably moot. Whether Brezhnev meant detente to be a screen for attaining superiority or was pushed unwillingly to such a stance is irrelevant for American policy. After all, Brezhnev had to eventually back up his statements with concrete actions. The consequences for the West would be the same.

Given the consensus style of Soviet decision-making, Soviet nuclear doctrine is best viewed as a hodge-podge of conflicting views which was never subject to open debate, and consequently never quite resolved. It could be summarized as follows:

The Soviet leaders were most skeptical about the prospect of emerging victorious from a nuclear war and explicitly rejected the idea that a world war could serve any useful political goal. In that sense, they accepted mutual deterrence as a reality. Arkady Shevchenko, certainly no friend of the Soviet regime,

makes this point clear:

I have often been asked whether the Soviet Union would initiate a nuclear war against the United States. I know from numerous Soviet leaders, military and non-military alike, including members of the Politburo, that the answer to this question is an unequivocal no. . . . Soviet leaders are convinced that their victory will come in the course of the development of human society. And if they can speed up the process with a few small, limited conventional wars, so much the better. . . .

As long as the United States' strategic nuclear deterrent is strong enough, nuclear war is something Soviet leaders might contemplate only in the most extreme circumstances, if they were absolutely convinced that the country was in mortal peril and they could see no alternative. They consider the prospect of a worldwide nuclear war unthinkable, to be avoided at all costs, even at the expense of Soviet prestige. All Soviet leaders, the old as well as the new generation, understand perfectly that nuclear world war can bury both Communism and capitalism in the same grave.⁷⁹

However, while accepting mutual deterrence as a reality, the Soviets did not consciously seek to make mutual deterrence as a goal of policy. There were strong pressures within the leadership, especially the military, to attempt to overcome the prospect of mutual deterrence by deploying weapons capable of knocking out the American military force in case of war. The Soviets knew that a high-confidence capability for winning a nuclear war would not be within Soviet grasp in the immediate future. However, by reaching for such

a goal and approaching it over time, they raised a great deal of anxiety in the West.

The danger of Soviet doctrine was not that the Soviets might readily resort to nuclear war as a tool of policy. Rather, the main threat was that as the Soviet war-fighting capability grew, there would be a greater tendency to regard the initiation of nuclear war as a less undesirable option in times of crisis. Worse, if mutual deterrence eroded, the Soviet Union could afford to run more risks in its foreign policy and intimidate the West.

But of course, the main theme of this study is the impact of nuclear doctrine on arms control. So it would be best at this point to examine how Soviet nuclear doctrine revealed itself in the SALT I negotiations.

Soviet Nuclear Doctrine as Indicated by the SALT I Negotiating Record

The Soviets aimed for a number of objectives in the SALT I negotiations. First was the psychological need, difficult for the Americans to understand, to be regarded as the equal of the United States. Any agreement which was declared to be based on equality would come a long way in overcoming the Soviets' historical inferiority complex. Second, SALT was to ease fears of an unrestrained competition threatening

security and wasting valuable resources. American technology and economic strength were particular concerns. Third, there were the possible benefits of getting Congress to cut military spending and attaining the appearance of Soviet-American collusion at the expense of China and NATO.⁸⁰ The Soviets were partly successful in achieving the above objectives.

The Soviets, it seems clear, did not intend to make concessions at the bargaining table if they did not have to. Throughout the talks they would sometimes stall apparently in the hope that "peaceful forces" within the West would pressure the ruling circles to abandon weapons systems unilaterally or agree more quickly to a Soviet demand. A case in point was the American ABM system. In 1967, the Soviet position was that a ban on ABMs was the silliest thing they had ever heard of, since ABMs were only defensive weapons. But as the American ABM system revealed itself to be far superior to the Soviet system, the Soviets pushed hard for an agreement banning ABMs only. It took much prodding by the U.S. negotiators to link limitations on both defensive and offensive weapons.⁸¹

Soviet negotiators would not make or accept any proposals which interfered with projected military programs. The head of the Soviet SALT delegation himself, Vladimir Semenov, admitted that the main purpose of the Foreign Ministry was to draw up

proposals which did not interfere with Soviet military programs.⁸² It could be said that the same procedure was followed by the American side. But when one considers that projected Soviet military plans outstripped American programs at that time, arms control could hardly be expected to ratify parity.

The influence of the Soviet military at the negotiations was felt in other ways. The obsession with secrecy was a noticeable factor. The Soviets went so far as to use American names to describe their own weapons because they didn't want to let the U.S. learn the Soviet weapons terminology!⁸³ Throughout the negotiations the Soviets refused to disclose the number of their missiles until the very end, and the American side was forced to rely on its own intelligence estimates.⁸⁴ The Soviet diplomats knew even less about their own military forces.⁸⁵ Apparently the Soviet military was still concerned with the possible military advantages of retaining secrecy--and the disadvantages of losing it.

Brezhnev, while certainly able to get any kind of information from the military, did not know much more than the civilian delegation. At one point in the summit, he accepted the American request for a freeze on missile size, not knowing that Soviet programs were under way to expand missile sizes. This concession had to be later retracted by Soviet negotiators. As

Kissinger put it, "It was the last time we encountered him [Brezhnev] in a SALT negotiation without advisors."⁸⁶

Studying the overall Soviet negotiating record, one gets the impression that the talks were conducted not for bringing about a stable mutual deterrence, but in order to perform the role of the Soviet damage-limitation doctrine. The Soviets turned down an American proposal to make a mutual declaration of the desirability of retaining survivable nuclear forces on both sides, and the American side was forced to issue such a declaration unilaterally.⁸⁷

A specific concern of the American delegation was the potential vulnerability of ICBMs, but the concept of crisis stability did not seem to concern the Soviets, nor did they seem particularly concerned about the wisdom of placing most of their own nuclear warheads on ICBMs. They argued that the U.S. would have other means of retaliation such as bombers and submarine-launched missiles.⁸⁸ It was a good point, but ICBM vulnerability could be the first step in a process to make all U.S. forces vulnerable with Soviet advances in anti-submarine technology and air defense. If the Soviets were truly resigned to mutual deterrence, they would certainly not waste resources on weapons capable of destroying the entire American ICBM force.

Instead of working toward crisis stability (a

component of MAD), the Soviets aimed to limit any weapons capable of damaging the Soviet state. For example, they pressed for limitations on American strategic bombers and forward-based systems in Europe, despite American protests that these were not first-strike weapons.⁸⁹ It seems likely, then, that the reason the more sophisticated officers in the Soviet military favored SALT was because they saw how the talks could contribute to a damage-limitation doctrine; instead of deploying more ICBMs and ABMs to destroy American weapons, they could achieve the same objectives by negotiating to prevent American weapons from being deployed.

The manner in which SALT decisions were made in the U.S.S.R. ensured this approach in the negotiations. Shevchenko reports that "all key decisions [on SALT] were made by the Politburo on the basis of recommendations by Gromyko, Ustinov, and Grechko, with the aid of their professional assistants."⁹⁰ Because of the general ignorance of Brezhnev and the Politburo in technical military matters, they had to rely on advice primarily from the military. Gromyko and the Foreign Ministry were hampered by their lack of knowledge of Soviet military programs and their lack of knowledge or interest in crisis stability and other aspects of deterrence theory widely discussed in the West. Henry Kissinger notes:

Experience has shown that the Soviet bureaucracy may be structurally incapable of originating a creative SALT position. If Dobrynin was to be believed, each Soviet department was confined to issues in its jurisdiction. Thus the Foreign Ministry was not entitled to a view of strategic programs, which were within the competence of the Defense Ministry. Allegedly, the Defense Ministry could not comment on diplomatic proposals--though I had difficulty believing this when its head, first Andrei Grechko and then Dimitri Ustinov, was serving on the Politburo. In this view overall goals emerge from the Politburo or perhaps the General Secretary's personal office. This, Dobrynin claimed, was easier to do in response to an American proposal than as a Soviet initiative; the Soviet bureaucracy is apparently no exception to the rule that no one likes to volunteer for the role of having proposed a concession. Thus, Soviet proposals tend to be formalistic and outrageously one-sided. I know no instance in which a breakthrough did not result from an American initiative.⁹¹

Arms control in general did not seem especially important to the Soviets. Gerard Smith notes that while American negotiators seemed intent upon getting specifics and closing loopholes, the Soviets were mainly interested in attaining a broad political agreement setting forth vague principles.⁹² A major reason for this was to attain the benefit of lowered tensions (or at least the appearance of lowered tensions) while preserving Soviet freedom to maneuver. A case in point is the Soviet decision to sign a convention banning biological weapons. The military opposed such a step adamantly, but Gromyko wanted the

treaty at least for propaganda purposes, so a compromise was reached: the treaty was signed, but without verification controls. Consequently, Grechko was able to assure the military that it could safely continue developing biological weapons, while Moscow could receive credit for advancing the cause of disarmament.⁹³

Looking at Soviet attitudes toward other diplomatic agreements, the same phenomenon appears: the Soviets value broad statements of principle highly, while displaying less of an interest in specific arms control agreements. Brezhnev stated, much to Kissinger's surprise, that the Declaration on Basic Principles of Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States was even more important than SALT I. The Soviets valued the Basic Principles agreement highly because of the psychological need for being accepted as equals and also because the document recognized the Leninist concept of "peaceful coexistence" as the basis of relations between the two superpowers.⁹⁴ To the more pragmatic American mind, such a declaration was not a very concrete accomplishment--SALT I was. The later Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, described by Kissinger as a "somewhat banal statement that our objective was peace,"⁹⁵ was noted as an "important step" by Marshal Grechko in his book; he did not mention SALT I.⁹⁶

Thus, the Soviet negotiating record does not indicate the acceptance of MAD. Soviet security was primarily dependent on other tools of policy. These tools are the final indicator of Soviet nuclear doctrine during the SALT I period.

Soviet Nuclear Doctrine as Reflected in Their Deployment of Weapons

It is not within the scope of this paper to include an elaborate list of the numbers and types of Soviet weapons. The technical details are not so important as the general trend of Soviet deployments. For this purpose, it is necessary to jump slightly ahead of the SALT I period to examine the deployments which were planned beforehand.

The SALT I agreement had fairly strict quantitative restrictions; however, qualitative changes through technology were definitely possible and could decisively shift the strategic balance by directing investment towards improvements in existing weapons. Soon after the SALT I treaty was signed, the Director of the CIA, James Schlesinger, detected a "veritable explosion" of military research and development in the Soviet Union--research which had been previously delayed until the treaty was completed.⁹⁷ The focus of the build-up was on warheads; with MIRV technology, many additional warheads could be added to existing

missiles. American MIRV technology was ahead of the Soviets', but there was one problem. Soviet missiles, whether by chance or deliberate design, were huge and could carry many more warheads; this is known as the "throw-weight" factor.

With this advantage the Soviets were in a better initial position to develop a force useful for preemptive strikes. When the advances in MIRV technology and accuracy were added to a land-based force with the attributes of quick response and ease of coordination, the Soviets were able to achieve the capability of destroying nearly all U.S. land-based missiles.

That this proceeded according to previously set plans not amenable to negotiation is best demonstrated by the "heavy missile" issue of SALT I. While the treaty froze the number of missile silos, the Soviets could circumvent this barrier by replacing older missiles with new, heavier missiles able to carry more warheads. American negotiators tried to prevent this in a clause banning the introduction of heavy missiles. The Soviets agreed to this clause, but refused to include a specific definition of a heavy missile, despite American protests. Rather than end up with no agreement, the U.S. dropped the issue and later issued a unilateral definition of a heavy missile. As might be expected, the Soviets ignored the statement and

began replacing their old missiles with heavier ones.⁹⁸

Developing a survivable second-strike force was not as high a priority with the Soviets as it was with the United States. This may have been due to the emphasis in their military doctrine on striking first instead of holding back and losing the initiative. Whatever the reason, the Soviet bomber and submarine forces were never developed as fully as the land-based forces. By 1979, the total number of warheads on Soviet submarines was 1309 compared to the U.S. total of 5120. More importantly, Soviet subs were rather noisy and could be tracked. As for bomber-carried weapons, the Soviets had 260 while the U.S. had 1926.⁹⁹ It was somewhat short-sighted of the Soviets to have placed a lower emphasis on survivable forces, but they have tried to deal with the problem lately by superhardening their silos and deploying a mobile missile system in Siberia.

There seems to be one major gap between Soviet military writings and force deployments, and this is in the area of ABMs. Given the emphasis on damage limitation in Soviet military theory, it appears to be contradictory for the Soviets to have pushed for a ban on the primary defensive weapon, the ABM. However, it has been suspected by some analysts that the Soviet acceptance of a ban on ABMs enabled them to pursue damage limitation more effectively than if ABMs were

allowed to proliferate. In order to understand this, one must bear in mind that there is no essential difference between destroying enemy warheads in flight and destroying them while still on the ground. At the time of SALT I, the Soviet ABM system was running into problems and was no match for the superior American ABM system. However, a Soviet preemptive strike force could be much more effective at destroying American weapons as long as there was an ABM ban to ensure that a preemptive strike could get through. The assertion that the Soviets accepted MAD by agreeing to an ABM ban is the opposite of the truth.¹⁰⁰

The Soviet interest in damage limitation is indicated also by their continuing heavy investment in air defense and civil defense. The Soviet air defense system continues to be the most extensively developed in the world. It includes hundreds of radars and MIG interceptors, and thousands of surface to air missiles (SAMs); future plans are for systems capable of intercepting the American B-1 bombers and cruise missiles. The ability of this system to perform as planned in wartime is not clear; the Korean air liner incident has demonstrated considerable problems with the Soviet defense system.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, it is much better than the U.S. air defense system, which was neglected after SALT and has degraded to the point where it is difficult to detect drug traffickers.

Civil defense is another area of Soviet superiority. It has been estimated that civil defense preparation costs the U.S.S.R. two billion dollars per year and employs 100,000 people full time.¹⁰² Nevertheless, while their civil defense system may be capable of protecting most of the leadership, given several hours warning, there is little capability to protect the entire population. And the possible long-term environmental effects of a nuclear war could render civil defense efforts useless anyway.

In sum, then, the Soviet force deployments which were planned before and during the SALT I process indicate a strong correlation with a damage limitation doctrine rather than a MAD doctrine. Several caveats need to be stated, however. Neither past nor present Soviet capabilities give very much assurance to the Soviet leadership that they will be able to emerge victorious in a nuclear war; this has already been noted by Arkady Shevchenko. The widely publicized "window of vulnerability" scenario has been exaggerated by some American analysts. There is little evidence that the Soviets have ever conceived of such a scenario; if anything, the existing evidence suggests that the Soviets are more pessimistic than the Americans about the possibility of successfully taking advantage of this "window," especially since the scenario requires mutual restraint and intra-war

diplomacy in order to be viable.

Rather than a "window of vulnerability," the result of the Soviet military build-up is best described as a "foot-in-the-door" capability. The Soviets knew that threatening the American land-based deterrent would not be enough to provide adequate damage limitation. The hope was (especially in the military) that a preemptive strike capability against American ICBMs would be the first step in a process toward an effective damage limitation capability. After the attainment of this first step, they could make further progress in air defense and civil defense, while continuing research in ABM technology and anti-submarine technology. If they could combine future breakthroughs in these areas with Soviet peace offensives, the negotiated limitation of American systems, and a "deepening crisis of capitalism" (such as the Vietnam trauma), they might actually attain a strong damage limitation capability.

This interpretation of Soviet aims should not be mistaken for a Soviet "master plan" for attaining nuclear superiority. The Soviet drive for superiority stemmed not from a plan, but from a rather complex amalgamation of pressures from within the Soviet leadership and society. Whatever the cause, it resulted in a build-up directed toward a war-winning capability which had an injurious effect on the arms control

process embodied in SALT.

Possible Objections to the Preceding Analysis of Soviet Nuclear Doctrine

There are two possible counter-arguments that can be made with respect to the preceding evaluation of Soviet nuclear doctrine and its impact on SALT I. First, some have asserted that there was little or no difference between American and Soviet nuclear doctrine, that there were approximately equal elements of war-fighting in both. If this is true, then the preceding analysis has been exceedingly unfair by concentrating on Soviet nuclear doctrine and not giving credence to the strong elements of damage limitation in American doctrine. Second, it has been argued that Soviet nuclear doctrine is irrelevant; there is no way to "win" a nuclear war, and nuclear superiority is meaningless. Each of these objections will be dealt with one at a time.

First Objection: Soviet and American Nuclear Doctrines Have Been Equivalent

The notion of doctrinal equivalence has been raised several times, but the most comprehensive version is in a booklet by Fred Kaplan entitled *Mutual*

Delusions. The thrust of Mr. Kaplan's argument is as follows: Western analysts such as Pipes and Douglass have been biased in looking at Soviet military writings for indications of Soviet doctrine while dismissing the less aggressive statements by Brezhnev as propaganda. This bias is exacerbated by the fact that these same analysts treat public statements by American Presidents and Secretaries of Defense as the real doctrine while ignoring the "more arcane military manuals" of the U.S. armed forces. Of the plans for fighting and winning a nuclear war, Kaplan writes "this sort of tendency is a military tendency--and not a Soviet or an American one."¹⁰³

Kaplan attacks the idea that American nuclear doctrine has been based on MAD. He cites McNamara's advocacy of military targeting which was later translated into operational plans. These plans have never consisted of a simple retaliatory spasm aimed only at civilian centers. Kaplan also uses numerous quotations from U.S. Army tactical nuclear war manuals on the need to fight and win with nuclear weapons. Finally, he concludes: "In the business of fighting and winning nuclear wars, the Soviets and the Americans are equally susceptible to the dangers of self-delusion."¹⁰⁴

The problem with Kaplan's analysis is that in trying to correct the view that military writings are

the only source of Soviet doctrine, he goes to the other extreme and simplistically argues that American and Soviet doctrine are mirror images of each other. There is a good deal of truth in the assertion that it is a military tendency (Soviet and American) to develop strategies for fighting and winning a nuclear war. One can easily cite evidence demonstrating the elements of war-fighting which have existed in American nuclear doctrine. But such an analysis proves little if it is not accompanied by an attempt to quantify the prevalence of war-fighting elements in strategic doctrine, as this study has done with Soviet nuclear doctrine. The fact is that damage limitation has always occupied a much more prominent place in Soviet doctrine than American doctrine.

The notion of doctrinal equivalence assumes that the power of the military as an institution and the influence of military thought has been approximately the same in both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. This is clearly not the case. The military in the Soviet Union has played a powerful role in past succession crises and has been used by the political leadership as a means of support. The same cannot be said of the U.S. military. The extent of military thought in both countries has also been unequal. The U.S. Defense Department is pervaded by civilian analysts who often have more influence on the Secretary of Defense than

professional military officers.¹⁰⁴ Evidence of this influence has been demonstrated by the Defense Department's rejection in 1971 of a Congressional proposal to increase the accuracy of the Minuteman missiles.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, there is a substantial body of civilian thinkers in the U.S. who had previously developed theories of deterrence and arms control and later came to work for the U.S. government (Henry Kissinger for one). The Soviet Ministry of Defense consists almost entirely of military officers, and there is no influential civilian school of strategic thought in the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁷ It is not fair for Mr. Kaplan to imply that Brezhnev's public statements are just as valid as the annual posture reports of the American Secretary of Defense. The American Defense Secretary participates actively in the formation of doctrine, whereas Brezhnev, for whatever reason, did not choose to interfere extensively in the military sphere.

Even assuming that the influence of the military has been equal in both countries, it seems to be characteristic of Soviet society as a whole to reject MAD in favor of a damage limitation doctrine. This characteristic is rooted in the profoundly pessimistic view that the threat of mass destruction is not reliable for the prevention of war. Consider the views of the Soviet General Talensky, who has been widely

regarded by Western analysts as an opponent of war-winning doctrines and a supporter of a minimum deterrence posture.¹¹⁸ In an article in *International Affairs*, he argued strongly for ABMs, stating:

After all, when the security of a state is based only on mutual deterrence with the aid of powerful nuclear rockets, it is directly dependent on the goodwill and designs of the other side.¹⁰⁹

Apparently the prospect of massive destruction for the United States is not enough to deter the Americans; there must be goodwill as well, and this cannot be reliably forthcoming from the capitalists.

Georgi Arbatov has also been widely identified as a civilian "pragmatist," arguing against the idea of a winnable nuclear war and for lower military spending and detente.¹¹⁰ What does he think of deterrence?: "The concept of deterrence itself cannot be defended--it is a concept of 'peace built on terror,' which will always be an unstable and a bad peace."¹¹¹ Contrast this with Nixon's view that a "balance of terror" gives each side "an ultimate interest in preventing a war."¹¹²

The Soviet rejection of a stable balance of terror is indicated also in the SALT I negotiating record. It seems that the Soviet delegation could not understand how one could be against his own defensive weapons. The diplomat Semenov thought the debate in the United

States over the ABM system was over which cities should have the privilege of being defended; actually, the debate was over which cities should be saddled with the burden of having a weapons complex next door!¹¹³

Thus, the evidence does not support the assertion that there has existed a mirror-imaging of nuclear doctrine between the superpowers. The notion of doctrinal equivalence has more credibility at present with the Reagan administration's "countervailing" doctrine, but the evolution of U.S. doctrine throughout the 1970s and 1980s away from MAD must be understood as a series of reactions (and overreactions) to a Soviet military build-up revealing a doctrine not in accordance with American expectations.

Second Objection: Nuclear Doctrine is Irrelevant

A second objection often made is that it does not matter what the Soviets think or say, since nuclear war is inherently unwinnable and superiority is meaningless. Many have argued that only a small number of nuclear weapons is needed to fulfill the role of deterrence, and any attempt to assign a military value to such weapons is an illusion. In their view, MAD is not a doctrinal option but a fact.¹¹⁴ Leon Weiseltier has argued:

There is a sense in which 'Soviet' strategy is like 'Soviet' genetics. The United States would be as foolish to believe that the numbers any longer matter, or that a nuclear war can be won, as it would be to believe that winter wheat will grow in the spring. The strategy is determined by the weapon. The missiles have only to exist, and deterrence is the law of their existence.¹¹⁵

In a similiar vein, Paul Warnke, the chief American negotiator for SALT II, has said of Soviet nuclear doctrine:

In my view, this kind of thinking is on a level of abstraction which is unrealistic. It seems to me that instead of talking in those terms, which would indulge in what I regard as the primitive aspects of Soviet nuclear doctrine, we ought to be trying to educate them into the real world of strategic nuclear weapons, which is that nobody could possibly win.¹¹⁶

There are two possible rebuttals to this point of view. It could be argued that even if the idea of victory in a nuclear war were absurd, if one is dealing with an irrational opponent, one must appear just as irrational in order to deter him. In other words, the United States must have the same irrational military posture in order to prevent war. Educating the Soviets is not likely to work--after all, we've argued for years that democratic-capitalism is a better system than communism, but they still haven't listened.

However, it will be argued here instead that there is in fact a good deal of rationality in Soviet military doctrine. This position may seem difficult to support, for it requires that one demonstrate that it is possible to win a nuclear war. Actually, this position is not very difficult to support. The approach I will take here is in accordance with the old dictum that the easiest way to get someone to accept an idea is to persuade him that it is his own idea. Specifically, I will argue that those who deny the military value of nuclear weapons or the usefulness of nuclear superiority are actually of the view that it is possible to win a nuclear war.

Consider the views of the Swedish disarmament proponent Alva Myrdal. In some parts of her book she argues that "both sides have had more than enough for two decades" and that increasing military force is "ridiculously irrelevant." But in another part she argues that the American deployment of "Eurostrategic weapons" (Pershing and cruise) will be such a threat that the Soviets may immediately respond to remove the danger, even by launching a preemptive attack!¹¹⁷ There is obviously a great deal of intellectual confusion here. Are increasing numbers of nuclear weapons irrelevant or a threat? Alva Myrdal's unarticulated views are probably that as long as the superpowers continue to compete in a nuclear build-up, the

increasing numbers of weapons cancel each other out and make the increase pointless. But this is conditional upon the existence of an approximately equal competition between the superpowers; if one side decides to drop out or fall behind, the other side will gain meaningful superiority by deploying more and more first-strike weapons.

A related issue is that of arms control. The same people who argue that there is no military use for nuclear weapons and that both sides have more than enough are strong advocates of arms control or a nuclear freeze. But there is a contradiction in this kind of thinking. If building more and more weapons makes no difference, then there is no need for negotiated treaties to limit such arms. The U.S. can merely stop building such weapons, or even reduce to a "minimum deterrent" and let the Soviets foolishly waste money on a massive nuclear build-up. Since, however, anti-nuclear groups are most reluctant to advocate a unilateral freeze or unilateral reductions, it seems to show that they know subconsciously that there is something more to an arms race than merely a mindless accumulation of unnecessary weapons.

There is also much confusion over the utility of "first-strikes." Many people dismiss the Soviet threat and argue that a first strike by either side would be suicidal because there would still be more than enough

weapons by the defender to make a devastating retaliation. Carl Sagan has gone so far as to say that, because of the effects of nuclear winter, a first-strike by either side would be suicide even if the other side did not retaliate.¹¹⁸ However, these same people often argue that the first-strike weapons each side has now are destabilizing because they force the superpowers into a posture of "use them or lose them" should a crisis develop. But how can there be an incentive to strike first if it guarantees suicide? The only incentive to strike first comes from the possibility that one side will be able to destroy all or most of the other side's weapons and thereby significantly limit damage to the homeland. Once the possibility of successful damage limitation through a first-strike is admitted, then it follows that Soviet doctrine is not so irrational after all, that there is a military utility for nuclear weapons.

Consider the views of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a liberal anti-military lobbying group. For years they have argued that nuclear war is inherently unwinnable. But lately, the former head of UCS, Daniel Ford, has come out with a book claiming that both sides' leadership and communications systems are so vulnerable to nuclear weapons that a first strike against one side could render it incapable of ordering a retaliatory strike. Consequently, he fears

that the U.S. will feel pressured to launch first in a crisis situation.¹¹⁸ So here the former head of the Union of Concerned Scientists is arguing not only that it is possible to win a nuclear war, but that it is possible to emerge from such a war unscathed.

Of course, there are many fearful uncertainties connected with carrying off such a plan. I am not arguing that there is a good or even moderate chance that either superpower can win a nuclear war. My point is that since no one can be sure what the outcome of a nuclear war or a new weapons deployment will be, it is folly to assert dogmatically that a war-winning doctrine is irrelevant, just as it is folly to assert that a nuclear war can be reliably limited or guaranteed of a victorious outcome. Nuclear doctrine is an immensely important factor, and it is essential to know what Soviet nuclear doctrine is. Even if the chances of a successful first strike are small, we must know whether such a threat will increase in the future and we must know how to cover for possible contingencies so that our deterrent is the most reliable one possible.

Conclusion to Chapter One

The historical record indicates that one of the

main causes of the decline of arms control was the doctrine developed by the Soviets before SALT and held by them throughout the process. While the First Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty seemed a resounding success at the time, there was considerable turmoil beneath the surface of detente.

The U.S. was not completely aware of this turmoil and how it might emerge in the future to threaten to wipe out the accomplishments of SALT I. Journalist John Newhouse raised the hope that SALT could be the start of a new Congress of Vienna. He completely ignored the implications of a Soviet damage limitation doctrine, at one point asserting that the Soviets built up their forces without a formal strategic doctrine and elsewhere noting that the Soviets finally accepted MAD in SALT I.¹²⁰ Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and Gerard Smith have not made a single mention of Soviet nuclear doctrine in their memoirs. They apparently proceeded from the assumption that the Soviets had approximately the same views as they did on the nuclear problem.

That the Soviets did not think the same way became clear when their military build-up translated doctrine into reality. Only then came an American response. A long-standing Congressional policy to refuse budgetary requests for developing more accurate missiles was finally dropped in 1974 as the implications of the

growing Soviet war-fighting capability became noticed.¹²¹ Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger argued that such improvements in accuracy were necessary in order to provide targeting flexibility; once the Soviets acquired a counter-force capability, the U.S. had to have the capability to respond to limited strikes on the same level.¹²² Thus did U.S. nuclear doctrine shift further away from MAD.

On the diplomatic front, the Nixon administration attempted to reduce the prospect of Minuteman vulnerability through limitations on throw-weight and the number of warheads. But as Nixon put it, the Soviets "stonewalled us."¹²³ Kissinger felt continually beleaguered by demands from the American right to obtain an agreement with "equal aggregates," that is, approximately equal numbers and similar characteristics of weapons on both sides. In his view (proved correct by later events), it was pointless to expect to achieve exactly equal forces through negotiations when unilateral American build-ups were not aiming for such a goal. The best he felt he could do was push the Soviet preemptive capability as far into the future as possible; the Soviets simply had more "bargaining chips."¹²⁴ From then on, it became increasingly clear that the SALT process could not achieve its ultimate goal to stabilize the strategic balance along MAD lines.

Instead, MAD was left behind in favor of a shift toward a war-fighting doctrine. In the late 1970s, the Carter administration developed the "countervailing" doctrine, emphasizing the targeting of Soviet military capabilities and leadership. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown described the goal of this doctrine "to make a Soviet victory as improbable (seen through Soviet eyes) as we can make it, over the broadest possible range of scenarios."¹²⁵

Soviet military writings suddenly received great interest in the U.S., after a long period of neglect. Richard Nixon finally recognized Soviet nuclear doctrine in his 1980 book *The Real War*. Unfortunately, there was a good deal of overreaction to Soviet doctrine as well. Too much emphasis was placed on military writings as the sole source of doctrine. Soviet *desires* for a war-winning capability were mistaken for actual capability. The "window of vulnerability" concept in particular was exaggerated; the Soviets had no confidence that such an imbalance could provide immediate decisive results.

When the Reagan administration came into office, it developed the countervailing doctrine further and abandoned the traditional SALT process in favor of START: Strategic Arms Reduction Talks. The START proposal was based on the previous proposals from the right-wing critics of Kissinger. It called for deep

reductions leading to forces approximately equal in launchers, warheads, and throw-weight. Because it attempted to rectify the strategic balance by cutting deeply into Soviet capabilities while allowing American deployments, it was rejected by the Soviets. Eventually, the Reagan administration came to seek salvation from the nuclear problem through a "Strategic Defense Initiative." Arms control lay in shambles.

Unfortunately, there continue to be misguided explanations for the decline of arms control. The failure of SALT has been attributed to the failure to do enough, because of the lack of political intelligence and will to control technological advance. Specifically, the myth persists that the Nixon administration bears the primary responsibility for allowing American land-based missiles to become vulnerable to a first strike because it did not pursue a ban on MIRVs. It is true that Nixon and Kissinger did not push hard for such a ban, and that this was a mistake. But to claim that this was "one of the worst mistakes ever made in American diplomacy"¹²⁶ or another "lost opportunity" to stop the arms race is a gross misinterpretation. It ignores the effect of nuclear doctrine on arms control.

As has been demonstrated in this study, Soviet nuclear doctrine in the early 1970s tended heavily toward one of damage limitation through the traditional

military method of the destruction of the opposing forces. The Soviets could accept an ABM ban, and in fact desired it, because it would close off an area of American superiority and allow the Soviets to knock out more of the American nuclear force than if ABMs had been allowed to proliferate. A ban on MIRVs as well would have eliminated any chance at all for adequate damage limitation. That this was not acceptable to the Soviets can be seen by their continual rejection of post-SALT I American proposals to strictly limit the number of warheads and throw-weight. There was never a once-in-a-lifetime chance to prevent the destabilization of the strategic balance. The precondition for a MAD posture is a MAD doctrine on both sides; arms control negotiations reflect doctrine, not shape it.

An incompatible doctrine was not the only cause of the decline of arms control. There were deleterious effects on the SALT process from the international political environment. Whether by policy or reality, the geopolitical situation exerted a major influence. A discussion of its impact on arms control is the subject of Chapter Two.

Chapter Two

As the preceding chapter has shown, one cannot study nuclear arms control in isolation from the doctrine formulated for the use of nuclear weapons. But it is also a fact that one cannot understand arms control in isolation from the geopolitical environment. The American term for the connections between arms control and overall relations between the superpowers is "linkage." The term was developed by the Nixon administration to denote a policy whereby all the strands of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy, including arms control, were to be tied together in a web of relations. But linkage was more than a policy--as Nixon and Kissinger pointed out, it was also a reality, no matter how hard one tried to reject it as a policy. The linkage of political issues with arms control clashed with the Soviet concept of "peaceful coexistence" and contributed to the decline of arms control.

The American Concept of Linkage

For Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, linkage in

diplomacy was essential as a bargaining tool. They felt it was necessary to bring American areas of advantage to bear upon the Soviets to counterbalance areas of relative American weakness. In Nixon's view, the Soviets desired above all else the good public relations from a summit meeting, economic cooperation with the U.S., and a SALT agreement. The U.S. wanted mainly a settlement in Vietnam, Soviet restraint in the Middle East, and a Berlin agreement.¹ According to Nixon, to take the pragmatic approach and negotiate those agreements which seemed to be easiest to reach first would leave the U.S. with less than enough bargaining leverage to reach fair settlements in the areas of American concern. It would have been a one-sided detente. As Kissinger put it:

We proceeded from the premise that to separate issues into distinct compartments would encourage the Soviet leaders to believe that they could use cooperation in one area as a safety valve while striving for unilateral advantages elsewhere.²

Consequently, the Nixon administration linked arms control to overall political relations. But there was to be linkage within arms control as well. Specifically, the control of defensive weapons (ABMs) had to be linked with limitations on offensive weapons. At the beginning of SALT, the U.S. had an ABM system

which outclassed the Soviet system, while the Soviets had a growing lead in offensive systems. The pragmatic approach put forth at the time involved negotiating one package at a time; an ABM ban first, because it would be easier to reach with the Soviets. However, the prospects for real arms control would then be reduced, for the Soviets would have little incentive to limit offensive systems once the ABM ban was agreed to.

Nixon and Kissinger conceived of linkage as more than an essential bargaining tool--linkage was also a reality. It is this second aspect of linkage which Kissinger considers the most important:

significant changes of policy or behavior in one region or on one issue inevitably affect other and wider concerns. . . . It is inherent in the real world. The interrelationship of our interests, across issues and boundaries, exists regardless of the accidents of time or personality; it is not a matter of decision or will but of reality.⁴

Kissinger emphasizes that despite the American traditions of pragmatism, bureaucratic compartmentalization, and academic specialization, the interrelationships of world politics must necessarily be dealt with on a broad conceptual basis.⁵

Nixon asserts that arms control is not something that can be dealt with on its own merits. In his view, it is folly to think that one should temporarily ignore

political differences in order to pursue arms control. It is not the existence of weapons which causes war, after all, but political differences. Nixon summarizes his philosophy:

Trade and arms control must be linked with the settlement of political differences if the danger of war is to be reduced. Only if we use linkage in this way will we be attacking the root causes of war.⁶

There is much to be said for this approach to foreign policy and arms control in particular. However, as a later section in this chapter will demonstrate, the history of linkage in SALT I did not always conform with Nixon-Kissinger ideals, and there was a major flaw in the way the administration used linkage with arms control.

The Soviet Concept of "Peaceful Coexistence"

This study has already shown how Soviet nuclear doctrine was consistently ignored or dismissed by the U.S. until Soviet plans began to be translated into operational weapons. But it was not only the Soviet concept of war which was profoundly different; the Soviet concept of peace was also different, reflecting a different ideology, history, and political system.

In the Soviet view, a real absence of conflict can come about only when class differences have been eliminated, that is, when world-wide socialism has been achieved. That is the ideological component. The historical component is the enduring legacy of paranoia and insecurity which can be remedied only by the overwhelming superiority of the Soviet state; it has often been said that the Soviets search for absolute security, leaving absolute insecurity for everyone else. The Soviet political system, being based on "democratic centralism" and hostile to deviations from the Party line, also helps to ensure that the Soviet ideal of peace is not the Western concept of a pluralism of different states, but a world controlled primarily by the Party leadership. Paul Nitze describes his impression of the Soviet version of peace, "mir," from the 1955 Geneva summit:

Ambassador Bohlen took me to a session of the Supreme Soviet, at which Khrushchev and Bulganin were reporting on the "Spirit of Geneva," as the Western press had christened the apparent spirit of cooperation that resulted from that summit conference. Khrushchev and Bulganin took turns in making the presentation. As Bohlen translated for me, I found it fascinating to watch the faces of the delegates and their reactions to what was said. Whenever the speaker dwelled on the Geneva conference, its apparent success, and the "Spirit of Geneva," the audience was dead; people yawned, and some actually fell asleep. Whenever Khrushchev or Bulganin launched into an impassioned description of Western faults, errors and shortcomings, the necessity for *mir*, and the actions the party

proposed to take to achieve *mir*, the audience became animated and broke into loud applause.

I asked Bohlen for an explanation of this apparently contradictory behavior. He said that the primary dictionary meaning of *mir* was "the world and those who live on it" and that "concord among peoples and nations and absence of war" was only the secondary meaning. He explained that, as the Soviets used the word in Party statements and writings, it meant a condition in the world in which socialism, the first stage of communism, had triumphed worldwide, class tensions had thus been removed, and the conditions for true peace under Communist leadership had come to pass. The reaction of the Supreme Soviet to Khrushchev's and Bulganin's remarks therefore indicated a lack of interest in the relaxation of tensions exemplified by the "Spirit of Geneva" but enthusiasm for the continuing struggle for *mir*.

Since the Soviet concept of peace is so ambitious, it is not surprising that their much proclaimed (and sincere) desire for "peaceful coexistence" implies much more than an acceptance of the status quo or pluralistic tolerance. As Nikita Khrushchev defined it:

Peaceful coexistence of states with different social orders does not mean the end of the class struggle. Peaceful coexistence not only does not exclude the class struggle but is itself a form of the class struggle between victorious socialism and decrepit capitalism on the world scene, a sharp and irreconcilable struggle, the final outcome of which will be the triumph of Communism throughout the entire world.

When Leonid Brezhnev rose to the top of the Soviet hierarchy, he became the most active promoter of

detente within the Party while retaining the traditional Soviet concept of peace. In his speech to the 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, he outlined his foreign policy goals. He began by reiterating the traditional policy of peaceful coexistence and also stressing the need to prevent another world war by restraining the aggressors in the imperialist camp. He stated that "the general crisis of capitalism has continued to deepen," pointing out that the U.S. was beset by internal divisions and that the Third World was fulfilling Lenin's prediction by successfully engaging in national liberation struggles against the imperialists. Soviet foreign policy was to take advantage of these trends:

Conscious of its international duty, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will continue to pursue a line in international affairs which helps further to invigorate the world-wide anti-imperialist struggle, and to strengthen the fighting unity of all its participants.

The full triumph of the socialist cause all over the world is inevitable. And we shall not spare ourselves in the fight for this triumph, for the happiness of the working people!⁹

In Brezhnev's view, arms control was not incompatible with a continuing struggle with the imperialists. Instead, arms limitation and disarmament would play an important role in reducing the danger of

world war and saving economic resources for more constructive tasks. Thus,

The struggle for an end to the arms race, both in nuclear and conventional weapons, and for disarmament--all the way to general and complete disarmament--will continue to be one of the most important lines in the foreign policy activity of the CPSU and the Soviet state.¹⁰

It appears that from the start the Soviet Union and the United States had widely different views on the relationship between arms control and political settlements. In the American view, arms control made sense only when accompanied by an overall lessening of conflict. In the Soviet view, it was pointless to expect an end to conflict between capitalism and socialism; it was an inevitable historical process. What needed to be done was to lower the scope of the conflict so that the Soviets would be spared another world war while capitalism met its demise. Arms control was to play an important role in this area, although complete disarmament was probably not considered a serious prospect.

The Impact of Linkage on SALT I

Even before the Nixon administration had devised

the policy of linkage, international politics had already affected arms control adversely. The first SALT negotiations were originally to take place in 1968 under the Johnson administration, but just before the start of the talks, the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia in order to stamp out the stirrings of liberal reform. In protest, the U.S. cancelled the talks temporarily, and in the transition from Johnson to Nixon, the talks were delayed altogether for over one year. It has been asserted that this delay was partly responsible for the failure to achieve a MIRV ban;¹¹ given Soviet nuclear doctrine at the time, it is not likely that such a ban could have been achieved anyway. Nevertheless, it was a most inauspicious beginning for SALT I.

When the Nixon administration came into office, it dashed hopes for an early start to arms control talks. Nixon believed that the Soviets were more desirous of SALT, so he intended to delay the talks and pressure the Soviets for concessions on the Middle East and Vietnam while developing a strategy for approaching the talks. A series of domestic pressures and bureaucratic insubordination forced him to cut linkage short and agree to starting SALT without prior Soviet concessions.¹² Nevertheless, Nixon was still to use linkage throughout the talks--he would not sign a SALT agreement unless some progress was made in areas of U.S.-Soviet relations other than arms control.

The major flaw in the Nixon-Kissinger concept of linkage was the assumption that the Soviets needed SALT more than the U.S. did, and that the arms control talks could be used for bargaining leverage. In fact, as Nixon and Kissinger later claimed, the U.S. was in a weak bargaining position in the area of strategic weapons. Kissinger has noted a number of times how difficult it was to negotiate from strength in SALT while the American military budget was being slashed and the Soviet build-up relentlessly continued.¹³ His views have merit, but it would logically follow then that the U.S. needed SALT more than the Soviets. In that case, it was definitely unwise to attempt to use an area of weakness for bargaining leverage.

In any case, the Soviets made it clear from the start that they did not care for the concept of linkage. Arkady Shevchenko writes that many Soviet diplomats were "incensed" by Nixon's use of linkage. There were several reasons for this. First, the Soviets did not have as much control over North Vietnam or their Arab allies as the Americans thought; Soviet allies were rather stubbornly independent. Second, it was a Soviet ideological imperative to aid "progressive forces" in the Third World. To restrain these forces from advancing would destroy the very foundation of Soviet foreign policy. Finally, Gromyko felt that Soviet concessions to lower international tensions

before SALT could be finalized were a form of advance payment which could not be counted on to be returned--Gromyko is said to have repeated the cliché "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," whenever the subject of linkage was brought up.¹⁴

It was probably the ideological imperative which was the most important factor in the Soviet rejection of linkage. The problems of Soviet influence over its allies and the question of U.S. reciprocity were transient factors, but the ideological foundation of the Soviet state could not be tampered with. It would be like asking the U.S. to renounce the Constitution in order to improve relations with the Soviets.

As with nuclear doctrine, there was some diversity of viewpoints within the Soviet hierarchy concerning the application of ideology to foreign policy. However, the coalition of forces within the Soviet Politburo and Central Committee were all in general agreement that detente could be accepted only so long as the struggle for the triumph of world-wide socialism continued; any differences over policy were tactical. For example, Shevchenko notes that while Gromyko was a strong proponent of detente and even willing to accept the short-term division of Vietnam to get on with detente, he was hardly an advocate of a stable balance of power:

In 1970, at a meeting of diplomats in the Foreign Ministry in Moscow, Andrei Gromyko made a statement that was a model of clear intent which has in no way changed over the years: 'The foundations of our foreign policy built by Lenin remain fully and totally valid today, and detente in no way has changed our ultimate objectives. But Lenin also taught us to be clever in our dealings with leaders of capitalist countries.'

Gromyko pointed out that it was necessary to stress the importance of normal businesslike relations, not to frighten other nations by bluntly revealing Communism's real objectives. . . . Privately, in conversations at his dacha in Vnukovo, he was even more candid, advising us to pretend in our talks with Americans that we ourselves did not take some Marxist dogmas seriously.¹⁵

The search for unilateral advantage through delinkage was a Soviet policy within the sphere of arms control as well. When the U.S. finally agreed to the beginning of SALT talks, the Soviets stalled for several months in the hope of Congressional restrictions on the U.S. ABM system. Later, they pushed for an ABM ban only as a first step, rejecting Nixon's demand for a linkage of offensive and defensive weapons limitations. After a while, it was finally agreed to negotiate an ABM ban first but ratify it only at the same time as an agreement on offensive limitations.¹⁶ This kind of linkage made a great deal of sense, for ABMs were the main counter to the Soviet offensive build-up and it would be extremely difficult to get Soviet agreement on offensive restrictions otherwise. As it turned out, even Nixon's use of

linkage was not able to pressure the Soviets to substantially reduce their offensive threat, but the strategic position of the U.S. would probably have been worse had there been no attempt to link offensive and defensive restrictions in SALT I.

While the SALT talks progressed, various international incidents could not help but affect the negotiations. At one point during the talks, two U.S. Army generals accidentally crossed the Soviet border in an airplane and were forced down and detained by the Soviets. After a number of delays trying to get them back, General Allison of the American SALT delegation confronted Soviet General Ogarkov about the matter. Ogarkov denied knowledge of the incident and said that it was not related to SALT anyway. General Allison replied that this was difficult to reconcile with the "need for mutual understanding and cooperation to limit strategic arms." On a later occasion, General Allison protested the Soviet firing upon an American plane flying over international waters.¹⁷ While perhaps these incidents did not have a major effect on the conduct of the talks, they must have eroded the mutual confidence and cooperation that General Allison noted were required to work out the details of an agreement.

Another crisis in U.S.-Soviet relations arose during the India-Pakistan war, when the Soviets backed India's offensive while the U.S. sided with Pakistan.

SALT negotiator Gerard Smith felt that linkage was not a good idea and that arms control had an "independent value" of its own, but he does admit in his memoirs that linkage was in some sense a reality in the presence of this crisis in relations: "[C]learly world events were linked and he [Nixon] expressed some doubt that one could have confidence in the U.S.S.R. in SALT if it was aiming to outmaneuver us in other areas."¹⁸

Perhaps the touchiest linkage issue was the Vietnam War, and it is interesting to see how the linkage policy was applied, or rather not applied, here. Initially Nixon expected Soviet help in ending the war, but as this did not pan out and progress was made in a number of other areas of U.S.-Soviet relations, the Vietnam War was eventually delinked voluntarily by both superpowers. This did not come about easily, however. In the pre-summit negotiations with the Soviets, Nixon pressured Kissinger to make Vietnam the primary issue, but Kissinger practiced a judicious insubordination by downplaying Vietnam and discussing other issues. Kissinger believed that Vietnam was simply non-negotiable with the Soviets, and that to make this issue the main bone of contention would surely lead to a summit cancellation and the destruction of all the other areas of progress in U.S.-Soviet relations.¹⁹ Nixon was most skeptical of this delinkage, but later accepted Kissinger's view and

did not criticize him for his insubordination.²⁰

What Nixon and Kissinger did agree upon wholeheartedly was that while detente could proceed without Soviet help in achieving peace in Vietnam, it could not proceed while South Vietnam fell to a Soviet-backed offensive. Consequently, at the height of the 1972 North Vietnamese offensive, when South Vietnam was on the verge of collapse, Nixon made a momentous decision. He escalated the war with a massive bombing campaign against Hanoi and a mining of Haiphong harbor. Meanwhile, he ordered that summit preparations were to continue; the onus for cancellation would be shifted to the Soviets.²¹ The U.S. SALT delegation was ordered to do "business as usual" and "express regret" if the Soviets walked out.²² Thus did Nixon attempt purposely to unravel linkage. The question was, would the Soviets cooperate? There was a great deal of pessimism on the American side; most thought that the Soviets would cancel the summit in response to the escalation in Vietnam.²³

Actually there was no need to worry, for the Soviets had already decided that the summit would go through no matter what. They had invested too much time and effort into detente to see it all wasted.²⁴ There was some disagreement in the Politburo over this--Petr Shelest, the Ukrainian Party leader,

dissented vigorously and was sacked by Brezhnev. But the rest of the Soviet leadership believed a temporary setback in Vietnam would not eliminate the prospects of achieving world-wide socialism in the long term.²⁵

The American side could hardly believe the restrained Soviet response to the escalation in Vietnam. Gerard Smith describes a reception given to the SALT delegation at the Soviet embassy:

Here we were, bombing the capital of their socialist ally and mining its chief port, where Soviet ships were at anchor and tied up to docks. What should be said at such a social occasion by hosts and guests? The war was not mentioned. The silence about Vietnam was deafening. The hospitality seemed warmer than ever. Apparently SALT was to take priority. This was linkage in reverse. . . . We went back to work confident that the Soviets really wanted SALT agreements.²⁶

Soviet behavior at the summit was nearly similiar. Kissinger describes the meeting with the Soviet leaders as "jovial" and "congenial," except at one moment when the subject of Vietnam was brought up. While Nixon attempted to delink Vietnam from overall relations, describing it as a "collateral issue," the Soviets launched a three-hour shouting match against Nixon over Vietnam.²⁷ But as Kissinger notes, it only seemed to be an act; the Soviets made no direct threats and seemed to be making hostile comments just for the record. Afterwards, the friendly atmosphere returned, as if

nothing had happened.²⁸ SALT I was signed and the summit turned out to be a grand success. Linkage no longer seemed to be a factor. Or was it?

It must be noted that while linkage was flexible as a policy, it still remained as a reality throughout the summit and afterward. It appeared as if SALT I was delinked from Vietnam, but its successful completion was still conditional upon events in Vietnam. One must look at the context in which SALT I was signed. While there was an escalation of conflict in Vietnam, the important factor was that South Vietnam was holding and America's objectives in preventing the victory of a Soviet client were succeeding. Had South Vietnam been defeated in 1972 while the U.S. was still involved, the reality of linkage would have emerged and dealt arms control a serious blow. For it was necessary to have a psychological balance and an atmosphere of cooperation between the two superpowers where both sides respected the power of the other and worked together on the basis of equality. As Kissinger put it,

We could not fraternize with Soviet leaders while Soviet-made tanks were rolling through the streets of South Vietnamese cities and when Soviet arms had been used decisively against our interests for the second time in six months.²⁹

Nixon felt the same: "It was hard to see how I could go

to the summit and be clinking glasses with Brezhnev while Soviet tanks were rumbling through Hue or Quangtri."³⁰

It could be argued that SALT had only tenuous connection to events in Vietnam and could proceed as usual no matter what happened there--and in fact, arms control efforts did continue after the fall of Saigon in 1975. But it is a mistake to think of arms control as some unemotional technical exercise. Arms control is a form of diplomacy--it lies at the juncture of military and diplomatic strategy--and relies on the very things which traditional diplomacy has always relied on: a calm dialogue, trust, and mutual respect. Although the impact is difficult to measure, the Vietnam War and other "national liberation movements" backed by the Soviet Union contributed to an American disillusionment with Soviet-American diplomatic agreements, among them, arms control.

The need for trust in diplomacy does not mean a naive faith in the goodness of one's counterpart; rather, each side must perceive that the other prefers the benefits of cooperation to the benefits of unilateral advantage. It is not always clear which set of benefits the other side prefers most; various events can bring doubt upon prevailing perceptions. Despite the conventional wisdom that all arms control agreements with the Soviets have been verifiable, there

is still a factor of trust which cannot be ignored. Due to the ambiguity of the strategic balance, the difficulty of determining real intentions, and the non-verifiability of many qualitative aspects of weaponry and laboratory research, there has been and will always be a need for trust that the other side approaches arms control in earnest and not as a tactic in achieving superiority. Attempts to gain unilateral advantage in the geopolitical sphere cannot help but raise fears that one side is seeking strategic superiority as well.

Mutual respect is another factor that cannot be quantified or verified by satellite, but is essential to the diplomatic atmosphere of arms control. If one side suffers a number of international setbacks at the expense of the other, then it is difficult to deal in the sphere of strategic weapons on the basis of equality. The first side will be at a psychological disadvantage and the other side will be emboldened to become more intransigent. Again, it must be stressed that there is a strong human element in diplomacy which cannot be wished away. If anyone doubts the necessity of a stable international environment for arms control, consider the impressions of Arkady Shevchenko:

After the fall of Saigon, I and many other Soviets were deeply surprised at America's acceptance of this final humiliation. Others, especially the party ideologues, were

elated. They saw in Vietnam the proof of the decay they long claimed was sapping Western strength and will. It seemed a resounding argument for a much tougher line with the capitalist world, especially the United States.³¹

This kind of development was hardly conducive to an arms control process based on mutual respect with the aim of strategic parity.

Conclusion to Chapter Two: The Impact of Linkage on Arms Control

While linkage can be used or discarded as a bargaining tool, Nixon and Kissinger were correct in asserting that linkage would always remain, even in a diminished form, as a reality. The reality of linkage did not prevent the completion of SALT I because relations in many areas were good at the time and Vietnam was stalemated. What is important to note, however, is that the superpowers still had profoundly different conceptions of detente which formed the basis for later actions inimical to arms control.

As with nuclear doctrine, the U.S. did not fully perceive that the Soviets had different conceptions about the ideal international order. Kissinger was not sure whether the Soviets were turning over a new leaf with detente or using it as a tactic to expand

further.³² This ambivalence about Soviet aims was reflected by the treaty of Basic Principles of Relations Between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. It was an innocent-sounding document extolling the principles of "equality," "mutual accomodation," "peaceful means," etc., but the U.S. made a mistake by agreeing to include the concept of "peaceful coexistence" in the treaty. For the Soviets, "peaceful coexistence" had always been defined as a tactic in the ultimate overthrow of capitalism--this is surely not what the U.S. wanted. Even the relatively dovish Raymond Garthoff has remarked that the U.S. should have at least provided its own definition of "peaceful coexistence" in the treaty.³⁵ The Soviets were quite happy with the seeming acceptance of peaceful coexistence by the U.S. Brezhnev regarded the Basic Principles agreement as more important than SALT I.³⁴

That the Soviets had fundamentally different ideas about detente was demonstrated soon after the signing of SALT I. Hopes for Soviet "restraint" or "help" on the Middle East or Vietnam were in vain. Instead, the Soviets provided massive amounts of military aid to North Vietnam, enabling it to disregard the peace accords and launch a final offensive against South Vietnam in 1975. The Soviet military build-up proceeded at a quick pace in all areas. The newly acquired naval transport capability was used to ship

25,000 Cuban troops to Angola and boost Soviet influence in the region considerably. The absence of an American response led many Soviet leaders to believe that the U.S. had an "Angolan syndrome" as well as a "Vietnam syndrome."³⁵ But while the U.S. was not willing to get involved in another far-flung engagement, it was also becoming very skeptical about the benefits of detente. A debate in the U.S. over relations with the Soviets arose and put SALT on hold until the 1976 elections.³⁶

The Soviets did not demonstrate any sympathy for American concerns. If anything, they were more adamant than ever about supporting "national liberation struggles." As Brezhnev stated at the 25th Party Congress in 1976:

Some bourgeois leaders affect surprise and raise a howl over the solidarity of Soviet Communists, the Soviet people, with the struggle of other peoples for freedom and progress. This is either outright naivety [sic] or more likely a deliberate befuddling of minds. It could not be clearer, after all, that detente and peaceful coexistence have to do with interstate relations. This means above all that disputes and conflicts between countries are not to be settled by war, by the use or threat of force. Detente does not in the slightest abolish, nor can it abolish or alter, the laws of the class struggle.³⁷

The rhetoric of "class struggle" was emphasized even more in the secret sessions of the Central Committee.³⁸

The final straw for the U.S. was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. While the Soviets considered it a prudent act of ensuring the march of socialism throughout the world, nearly all Americans considered it the most blatant act of Soviet military intervention of the post-World War II era. President Carter, who had previously been rather naive about the Soviets, suddenly became a hawk. The SALT II treaty, which was already under attack with detente, was withdrawn from Senate consideration. Not officially ratified, the treaty has still been observed to this day. The important point, however, is that the numerous Soviet geopolitical offensives contributed to the discrediting of the SALT process and paved the way for an administration with substantially different ideas about arms control--ideas which have not exactly brought greater benefits than SALT.

Arms control suffered from problems other than linkage. Even assuming benign relations between the superpowers, there are inherent limitations to the human ability to devise an objectively "fair" agreement. The difficulties of devising a reliably equal balance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three

In the abstract it might not seem so difficult to devise a treaty based on parity; one merely allocates approximately equal numbers of weapons on both sides. In the case of nuclear weapons, many point out that equal levels are irrelevant due to the overkill factor; once a certain number of weapons is reached, then there is no point in adding more to keep up with the other side, for there is already enough to destroy the other side one or more times. Worst-case analysis has been frequently derided as being based on unjustified fears or a secret desire for more weapons--witness the mythical "missile gap," "bomber gap," and "window of vulnerability."¹ Stalemates and breakdowns in arms control negotiations are attributed to either intransigence by both sides or mutual paranoia based on misunderstanding.

Such an interpretation is not justified. A computation of the strategic balance involves a myriad of factors, many of which are difficult to quantify. The doctrine of overkill is grossly simplistic--after all, nuclear weapons do not necessarily have to be used for the mass extermination of civilians but may be used to destroy an enemy's nuclear weapons in a first strike

and thereby protect one's own homeland. That is why even the strongest believers in the overkill doctrine destroy their own argument when they express concern about the destabilizing qualities of new weapons systems. It is an unavoidable fact that worst-case analysis is a legitimate tool of security policy.

The Case for "Worst-Case"

Physicist Freeman Dyson tells of an argument he once had with the civilian strategist Herman Kahn in which he couldn't seem to convince Kahn that the Soviet civil defense system posed very little threat. After referring to Kahn as "paranoid," Kahn replied:

Of course I'm paranoid. Didn't you know that? I make it my business to be paranoid. You had to be paranoid in 1933 to believe Hitler would exterminate the Jews, and you had to be paranoid in 1941 to believe the Japanese would attack Pearl Harbor.²

The point Kahn was making was expressed earlier in his book *On Thermonuclear War*: "History has a habit of being richer and more ingenious than the limited imaginations of most scholars or laymen."³

This point is well worth consideration, for it illustrates a perennial problem of national security:

dealing with the unknown. History is replete with examples of worst case fears that turned out to be true, or not "worse" enough. Sometimes a situation arises which does not fit any previously considered possibilities.

Consider a hypothetical military balance between two sides, A and B. Side A is equipped with 136 divisions, 4000 armored vehicles, and an extensive system of fortifications. It is superior in artillery and is widely considered to be the best army in the world. Side B has 98 divisions and 2800 armored vehicles, but is superior in air power. It might seem that side A has a slight edge, but in fact sides A and B correspond to France and Nazi Germany respectively in 1940.⁴ Considering that France was overrun in six weeks with only minimal German losses, it is clear that calculating a military balance is not an exact science. France's "worst-case" was not predicted beforehand and even the Germans were rather surprised by their own success.

The problem lies not only in attempting to calculate the quality of men and equipment on both sides. In the case of World War II, the French troops were rated rather highly by the German panzer general Heinz Guderian, and French tanks had better armor and firepower, while their German counterparts had the advantage of speed.⁵ So the Battle of France in 1940

was not decided primarily on the basis of qualitative differences. A more accurate assessment would be that the German advantage lay in their strategic and tactical concepts: factors which are most difficult to quantify. But even then, the Battle of France was not a foregone conclusion; the German blitzkrieg could have been stopped, given the right conditions.

Contrary to popular impression, the French did not lose because of their "Maginot Line complex." As the apostle of armored warfare himself, Basil Liddell Hart put it, the Maginot Line might have succeeded in braking the German advance but for the fact that it did not extend far enough and the Germans were able to burst through the gap between the Anglo-French armies in the north and the Maginot Line in the south. The French thought this gap was covered by the "impassable" Ardennes forest, but the Germans discovered that it was in fact quite passable to tanks. Were it not for this gap in the French defenses, Liddell-Hart and German General Manstein conclude, the German attack would probably have been stalemated.⁶ That there was a gap in the line which the Germans discovered and exploited can perhaps be attributed to that most elusive factor, luck.

Some may object that nuclear weapons have brought a vast increase in destructive power which makes traditional military-historical analyses like the one

above obsolete. This is a good point, but the break with the past is not complete. Nuclear weapons have certainly made the prevention of world war the highest priority. Only a madman could have the same confidence in winning a nuclear war as Hitler had in his blitzkrieg. Yet, there is still the possibility of a situation arising in which the international situation is extremely tense, military forces are fully poised, and while nobody wants war, it may seem to one or both sides that getting in the first blow would be the least undesirable alternative. It is the task of worst-case analysis to determine all the possible situations in which the opposing side might resort to nuclear war, as well as to imagine all the forces that side might acquire in the future to increase the chances of its recovering from such a war. As I have pointed out before, one cannot consistently argue that it is impossible under any circumstances to win or survive a nuclear war and at the same time criticize destabilizing weapons systems such as the Pershing II, MX, and Strategic Defense Initiative. For it is in the very nature of destabilizing weapons to increase the chances of surviving a nuclear war through a first strike.

That worst-case analysis is a legitimate tool of policy cannot be denied. However, some might question whether this tool has been misused by the United

States. Has the U.S. usually exaggerated Soviet intentions and capabilities and accelerated the arms race to meet nonexistent threats? The historical record does not support such a contention.

The most celebrated case of worst-case analysis gone haywire is the "missile gap." Yet the continual references to this "gap," as well as the "bomber gap" and the "window of vulnerability" demonstrate only the selective use of evidence. First of all, the record shows that American intelligence was approximately correct in estimating how many missiles the Soviets would deploy in the early 1960s. What was wrong in the calculations was the estimated mixture of various types of missiles. Instead of concentrating on intercontinental ballistic missiles, the Soviets directed most of their resources toward intermediate and medium-range ballistic missiles, since the European theater of war was so much more important to them. So while the U.S. overestimated the number of Soviet ICBMs that would be deployed, it underestimated the number of Soviet IRBMs and MRBMs and did not grossly exaggerate Soviet capabilities.⁷ It should also be remembered that what inspired fears of a Soviet advantage in ICBMs was the quite unexpected Soviet launch of Sputnik--unexpected because the U.S. had underestimated Soviet technical capabilities.

There are other examples of underestimations of

Soviet military capabilities. In 1945 it was widely thought that the Soviets would not acquire an atomic bomb for twenty to fifty years.⁸ The Soviets tested their first A-bomb in 1949. From 1962 to 1972 the Defense Department continually underestimated the number of ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers that the Soviets would build. Some of these American errors were due to ethnocentric assumptions about Soviet nuclear doctrine. American planners thought at first that the Soviets would accept a MAD posture and settle for a smaller nuclear force than America's. As the Soviet buildup continued to the level of the U.S. arsenal, they then predicted that the Soviets would settle for equality.⁹ But Soviet ICBMs exceeded those of the U.S. by over 500 when the levels were finally frozen by SALT I. Later, military planners predicted that the accuracy of Soviet warheads would not threaten the American Minuteman force until after 1985; that estimate had to be moved up by three years. Henry Kissinger testified before the U.S. Senate in 1979:

As one of the architects of SALT, I am conscience-bound to point out that--against all previous hopes--the SALT process does not seem to have slowed down Soviet strategic competition, and in some sense may have accelerated it.¹⁰

My point here is not to prove that the U.S.

usually underestimates the Soviet threat. Rather, I hope the above examples demonstrate that there has not been a consistent exaggeration of the Soviet strategic capability through worst-case analysis. American defense planners have, on the whole, been prudent in estimating the other side, given the unknowns involved. The existence of unknowns is inherent in the ambiguous nature of the military balance, in perceptions of Soviet intentions, in predictions of future military deployments, and in predictions about the international situation several years hence. It is the American and Soviet attempts to deal with such unknowns through worst-case analysis and the impact of these attempts on SALT I, which will be the subject of the rest of this chapter.

American Worst-Case Concerns in SALT I

It has always been difficult to discern accurately what lies behind the Iron Curtain. The highly secretive nature of Soviet society is seen particularly in the sphere of security. Satellites can take highly magnified photographs of what is happening on the surface but they cannot see what is happening underground or inside a building. Despite the tremendous strides in verification technology made by

the time of SALT I, there was still no foolproof method of preventing all Soviet cheating. If the Soviets wanted to cheat badly enough, they could find ways to do it--but fortunately, there were limits to the amount of cheating that could be accomplished before eventual U.S. discovery. Thus, before the Nixon administration began SALT negotiations, it instructed the CIA to study the verifiability of various types of weapons limitations, how much cheating could occur before discovery, and whether this cheating would affect the strategic balance substantially. The Defense Department was charged with the task of drawing up contingency plans for rectifying the balance quickly should cheating occur.¹¹ In this way, worst-case fears were alleviated.

However, there were limitations to this approach. As a general rule, the more qualitative restrictions that are sought, the greater are the problems of verification. It is easy to count up the numbers of weapons, but it is difficult to determine with confidence the capabilities of such weapons systems and it is impossible to verify the nature of technological research unless there is universally open on-site inspection. Complaints that arms control treaties have been restricted to quantitative limits and that technology is not being controlled reflect inadequate understanding of the problem of verification. It takes

an extraordinary amount of time and effort to hammer out a treaty with even relatively simple restrictions.

In the absence of widespread qualitative restrictions, the defense planner has only one recourse: he must continue research and development on new weapons systems or risk falling behind. He cannot know for sure the nature of an opponent's research; he may be surprised, as in the case of the first Soviet A-bomb or Sputnik. The Secretary of Defense during SALT I, Melvin Laird, discussed the problem in a report to Congress:

Because the Soviet Union is a closed society, they can conduct their military research and development programs behind a thick veil of secrecy, making it very difficult for us to assess their progress in a timely manner. . . . We cannot base our own research and development effort solely on an estimate of the Soviet technological threat. We simply do not have enough knowledge to assess the threat properly. The only prudent course is to advance our knowledge at a reasonable pace in every area of significance to our future military strength.¹²

Thus it was inevitable from the start of SALT that the arms race would continue in the technological sphere. The only way to put an end to technological competition would be for the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to establish a degree of openness and cooperation rivalling the "special relationship" between the U.S. and Great Britain. And if that were the case, there would be no

need for arms control because there would be no arms race.

The restrictions on arms which are verifiable cannot provide full confidence either, for security planning must involve looking at the future. One problem is the possibility of breakout, that is, the scrapping of arms control treaties in favor of a full scale mobilization and strategic build-up in all areas. Breakout would most likely occur during a period of high international tension. In such a sudden acceleration of the arms race, one side may jump ahead significantly because of better advance planning, prior cheating, and an industrial base that can be switched quickly for military purposes. It is generally regarded that the Soviet Union is in a better position to jump ahead early in a breakout.¹³

The problems of technological advance and breakout had a negative impact on SALT I. The Defense Department was adamantly opposed to the pursuit of a MIRV ban in SALT, for it felt that MIRVs were needed to provide extra insurance against future Soviet advances. The feared advances lay in a number of areas. While Secretary of Defense Laird believed that the fleet of Poseidon submarines would be invulnerable throughout the 1970s, he also noted that he could not guarantee the invulnerability of any weapons system more than five to seven years in the future.¹⁴ Predicting the

possibility of an ABM breakout was even more difficult. The Soviets already had an extensive defense system against aircraft, and many American defense planners feared that the Soviets could adapt this system of radars and SAMs within a short time to shoot down incoming missiles as well. This was known as "SAM-upgrade." To this concern was added the difficulty of verifying limitations on a qualitative system such as MIRVs.¹⁵ The American defense planner's nightmare was that a breakout in a number of areas could result in a Soviet capability to launch a preemptive attack and use an ABM system to absorb the weakened retaliatory strike. MIRVs were intended to provide insurance against this possibility by allowing more warheads to survive a preemptive attack and penetrate Soviet defenses.

The most unpredictable factor was Soviet intentions. The debate over the true nature of Soviet nuclear doctrine is a reflection of this uncertainty. American SALT negotiator Gerard Smith had his concerns:

I never stopped worrying during SALT about the Soviets possibly using the negotiations to mask deployment of a much larger missile force than the United States. . . .

Each time photographs from satellites were flown over to us abroad and we saw the relentless build-up of ICBM silos, the delegation wondered when the Soviet build-up would stop. My concern about what the Soviets are aiming for has never been entirely dispelled.¹⁶

The natural response of the defense planner is to deploy more weapons as a hedge against the uncertainties over the other side's intentions.

A particular concern of American strategists was the potential vulnerability of the United States to a phenomenon known in analysts' jargon as "escalation dominance." Escalation dominance has been defined as the ability to prevent an opponent from escalating a conflict by demonstrating the adverse consequences of such a move. The capability of escalation dominance allows one side to coerce an opponent while keeping the conflict limited. The concern over a Soviet capability to coerce the United States in a limited war was the basis of the embellished MAD doctrine of the U.S. in the early 1970s, described earlier in this paper. A doctrine of pure MAD would be sufficient to deter an all-out Soviet attack, but there was a possibility of a less than total attack occurring. In such a situation, the U.S. needed more options than massively escalating or doing nothing.

The typical worst-case scenario went as follows: An international crisis arises in which the Soviets are pressured to launch a nuclear strike against the United States. The Soviets carefully limit their attack to military targets, destroying much of the American deterrent in the process. After the attack, the U.S.

does not have enough weapons left to make an effective retaliatory strike against Soviet military targets. There are enough weapons to devastate Soviet cities, but the Soviets threaten to destroy American cities in return should the President make such a move. Rather than choose mutual suicide, the President decides to cave in to whatever demands the Soviets make.¹⁷ This scenario is made more credible by the fact that there are a number of cases in which the U.S. has been using its nuclear deterrent to protect far away interests and allies, but might not be willing to commit suicide for these less than absolutely vital concerns.

The American strategist's response to escalation dominance is to deploy forces capable of responding on any possible level of attack. Frequently, the terms "ladder of escalation" or "spectrum of deterrence" are used. The key requirement of military force, then, is flexibility. The 1973 Defense Report to Congress headed its section on strategic nuclear forces with a quotation from President Nixon stressing not only the need to deter an all-out surprise attack:

Our forces must also be capable of flexible application. A simple 'assured destruction' doctrine does not meet our present requirements for a flexible range of strategic options. No President should be left with only one strategic course of action, particularly that of ordering the mass destruction of enemy civilians and facilities.¹⁸

There is also an ethical worst-case argument that in case of nuclear war, one should not resort to the extermination of innocents but should restrict targeting for a militarily useful purpose. One of the earliest advocates of tactical nuclear weapons was not a bloodthirsty hawk, but Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, who was sickened by the Strategic Air Command's plans for the destruction of Soviet cities as a response to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. More recently, strategists such as Albert Wohlstetter and scientists such as Robert Jastrow have been arguing the moral superiority of military targeting.¹⁹

The concern over escalation dominance in limited nuclear war has been roundly criticized by a number of analysts. The window of vulnerability scenario in particular has a number of flaws. There are enormous difficulties in envisioning a credible limited nuclear war scenario. Yet, while the concern has been exaggerated, one should not dismiss the possibilities of escalation dominance completely. As long as the Soviet Union retains a large number of accurate nuclear warheads, it would not be wise to reduce the American deterrent to a force capable only of mass extermination.

In sum, during SALT I there were a series of worst-case concerns on the American side arising from

uncertainties over Soviet intentions and the future possibilities of war. Most of these concerns were legitimate; they reduced the scope for a successful cooperative effort to limit strategic weapons. Meanwhile, the Soviets had their own worries.

Soviet Worst-Case Concerns During SALT I

Soviet fears were in part parallel to U.S. fears but also different in many respects. The openness of American society meant that there would be less chance of a surprise development, but the American mood was somewhat unpredictable and the Soviets could never know for sure whether the U.S. might fully use its two main assets, technological superiority and economic strength. Despite the repeated boasts in Soviet military writings of the scientific-technical and economic superiority of the Socialist bloc, in private the Soviets had an inferiority complex--and with good reason. While they were occasionally able to spring a technological surprise on the U.S., the Soviets were able to do this only by a tremendous concentration of minds and resources on one project. Across the board, American technology was usually ahead. In particular, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Soviet ABM system was doing poorly in tests compared to the

American system. The Soviets took note of this disturbing development and quickly switched their previous position rejecting an ABM ban.²⁰

The Soviet concern over an American breakout in ABMs was evident in SALT. They could not accept a thin ABM system, and even a few sites could provide the core for a nation-wide system. Long, tedious negotiations were necessary to pin down the exact requirements for an ABM site that would not pose an immediate threat of breakout.²¹

The Soviets were also concerned about the substantial economic power of the United States. The U.S. had a GNP twice that of the Soviets; if Western Europe and Japan were added to the U.S. side, the ratio was five to one. In the early 1970s, the Soviet leadership was already being warned by its economic experts about the setbacks in agriculture and consumer goods that would come about with the going rate of military spending.²² They must have seen that an all-out arms race could put a very heavy strain on the Soviet economy.

A major worry of the Soviet Union was the "third country threat." While the U.S. was worried for a time about the Chinese nuclear force and was preparing to deploy a thin ABM system because of it, Nixon's opening to China practically eliminated such fears overnight. The Soviet Union, however, could not rest so easily.

Not only did they have to deal with the Chinese threat, but there were the French and British nuclear forces, as well as the NATO nuclear bombers. The major Soviet objective in SALT, therefore, was "equal security," that is equal protection from the threats each side perceived.²³ As the Soviets had more enemies than the United States, this raised a number of problems in the talks.

One of the primary stumbling blocks in the SALT I negotiations was the "forward-based systems" issue, or FBS. These systems were the American fighter-bombers of NATO capable of carrying nuclear weapons to Soviet territory. While American negotiators argued that these weapons posed no first-strike threat and were not a major cause of the arms race, a general on the Soviet delegation replied that when the hospital he had been in during the war was bombed, it gave him no comfort that the culprit was a fighter-bomber rather than a heavy bomber. The debate dragged on.²⁴

Both sides had a valid point. The Soviets felt they faced a real threat from American nuclear forces based in Europe; it is likely that these forces would be used in the event of a major war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The Soviets claimed that their own nuclear forces in Europe could logically be excluded from negotiations based on equal security, since these forces did not have the range to threaten

the United States. On the other hand, the American side could not risk upsetting the alliance by negotiating limits on NATO nuclear forces while excluding the Soviet forces which threatened Western Europe; it would demonstrate a lack of commitment to the alliance and result in a lopsided nuclear balance in Europe.

The FBS dilemma plagued the SALT negotiations throughout. It prevented a more comprehensive set of limitations on offensive weapons in time for the 1972 summit and proved to be a sticky issue thereafter.²⁵ Today the problem has emerged in the form of the Pershing missiles issue.

Another threat the Soviets faced was the Chinese military force. In some ways, the Soviets seemed to fear the Chinese even more than the Americans. During the border clashes of 1969, the two powers were on the brink of war and the Soviets seriously considered a nuclear strike against the Chinese, but were dissuaded by the prospects of a long drawn-out war and warnings from the Nixon administration that the U.S. would not stand idly by. So instead, they deployed a huge contingent of military forces equipped with nuclear weapons all along the Soviet-Chinese border.²⁶ And they would not be satisfied with notions of parity or stability; the ability to retaliate against a Chinese attack was not as important as the ability to destroy

Chinese military and nuclear forces before they could threaten the U.S.S.R. This was the essence of Soviet damage-limitation doctrine. It meant that the Soviets had to have a large first-strike force poised against the Chinese. This they accomplished; despite assertions to the contrary, the Soviet first-strike threat against China is greater now than ever before.²⁷

At the SALT talks, the Soviets never mentioned China by name, but in Gerard Smith's words, it often seemed a "specter at the table".²⁸ In discussions with Nixon and Kissinger, the Soviets continually tried to work out an arrangement of Soviet-American collusion against the Chinese. Brezhnev underlined his fear of China in one conversation with Nixon:

Ten, in ten years, they will have weapons equal to what we have now. We will be further advanced by then, but we must bring home to them that this cannot go on. In 1963, during our Party Congress, I remember how Mao said: 'Let 400 million Chinese die; 300 million will be left.' Such is the psychology of this man.²⁹

More recently, it is reported that Brezhnev expressed similiar sentiments to Prime Minister Thatcher: "Madam, there is only one important question facing us, and that is the question whether the white race will survive."³⁰

The ultimate Soviet nightmare was a coalition of

the Western countries and China against them, either in a Cold War or a real war. They could easily imagine a two front war against economic-technologically superior enemies on one side and numerically superior enemies on the other. And despite the rhetoric about the great unity of the Socialist camp, the Soviets were probably also aware of the potential fragility of their empire in a crisis. There was always a fear in the back of their minds that Eastern Europe, the Baltic nationalities and the Central Asian nationalities could rise in revolt if given the opportunity.

Finally, while the Soviets, like the U.S., were concerned with the possibilities of a surprise first-strike, they could not assuage their worries by developing a survivable second-strike force along American doctrinal lines. For the Soviets could never quite be convinced that the threat of retaliation could prevent war. Their tragic history told them otherwise, and the conspiratorial nature of Soviet politics did not encourage a less paranoid attitude. Recall the comments made by the so-called pragmatists in the Soviet Union about the inadequacy of basing security on a stable balance of terror.³¹

The numerous Soviet worst-case concerns did not bode well for arms control. Many of their fears were legitimate, but the United States could not accommodate them without reducing its own security. China could

hardly be counted on as a reliable ally of the United States. There was a real possibility that the Chinese would stay clear of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, leaving the U.S. to face the full force of the Soviet military. There was also the possibility that the Western European allies would disassociate themselves from the U.S. in the event of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation over a peripheral issue. The unpredictability of the future does not allow for an objectively "fair" military balance. Even mathematical models and scientific analysis cannot provide greater certainty. Consider the following assessment of the military balance in Europe:

A NATO worst case would be a surprise attack by Russia's European forces and Warsaw Pact allies on Germany. The combat value of Russia's land forces is 676. Let's assume 500 could be quickly committed to the attack and they obtained a 400 percent surprise bonus, producing an effective combat value of 2000. Defending would be NATO forces with a value of 600. This gives Russia a 3.3-to-1 ratio. If French forces are included, the ratio declines to 2.6 to 1. These ratios make a quick victory possible but not certain. . . .

From the Russian point of view, the worst case is a collapse of their Eastern Europe hegemony, followed by a NATO invasion. This leaves Russian forces without their allies as well as the portion of their own forces to cope with the ex-allies. The net Russian forces available for defense might have a combat value of only 300. NATO could muster a value of 500 for an attack. With surprise, this could be at least doubled, for a forces ratio of 3.3 to 1. This is a worrisome prospect, especially exacerbated by the political tensions within Russia.³²

Uncertainties over security have driven the Soviets to actions at odds with arms control, in particular, the damage limitation doctrine discussed in Chapter One. They have attempted to acquire military superiority against any possible combination of enemies; parity with the U.S. was simply not enough. Doubts over their ability to wage a long war successfully drove them to rely on a first-strike capability as a better guarantor of security than crisis-stability. While viewing arms control as a useful way to limit American weaponry, they did not feel a stable balance of terror was a desirable goal from the standpoint of security. As their doctrine became clearer in the SALT negotiations and military build-up, American worst-case concerns became aggravated and the arms race continued.

Conclusion to Chapter Three: The Impact of Incompatible Security Concerns on SALT I

There is much to be said for mutual cooperative efforts to bring about increased security for all sides, but it has not been said often enough that there are limits to this approach which make arms control less successful in practice than in theory. The fact

is that there can be no reliably stable balance between the superpowers or any set of powers.

Given the limitations of verification, it was inevitable that the arms race would continue even if the strictest limits were agreed to in SALT I. As it turned out, after the signing of SALT I, Nixon and Brezhnev noted to each other that each side would naturally proceed in building weapons not covered by the agreement.³³ There was no other choice and both sides recognized it, unless they were willing to base their security on the good intentions of the other side.

The Soviet and American build-ups were motivated by generally legitimate concerns, some of them similar, some different. For the U.S., a continued build-up was required for insurance against a preemptive strike and escalation dominance. Consequently, work went ahead after SALT I on the Trident submarine, the B-1 bomber, and the MX. As the Soviet capability for knocking out U.S. Minuteman missiles grew, American worries increased. Paul Nitze, who was involved in the original SALT negotiations, raised the prospect of a "window of vulnerability" for the U.S. in a 1976 article in *Foreign Policy*.³⁴ While exaggerating the stakes for the U.S., he did point to an imbalance that needed to be corrected before further Soviet advances did have a decisive effect.

The way the U.S. attempted to correct the imbalance, however, tended to cause a corresponding decrease in Soviet security. The problem was not merely that the U.S. intended to foreclose the first-strike option to the Soviets. For to prevent escalation dominance, the U.S. decided it needed a substantial counterforce capability. But the Soviets could not trust the U.S. to use a counterforce capability only in a second strike; reading their own doctrine into U.S. intentions, they perceived a growing first-strike threat from American forces. In the meantime, China's economic and military might continued to grow.

By the early 1980s, the military competition between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. continued unabated, despite the fact that the most comprehensive arms limitations in history were in effect. While it could be argued that the competition would be even worse without SALT II, it was an unfortunate fact that the world did not feel substantially more secure because of arms control. It was not the first time that the limitations of the nation-state system frustrated the ingenuity of man.

Conclusion: The Lessons of History?

In a recent attempt to uncover the "lessons of Vietnam," two authors concluded in the pages of *Foreign Affairs* that it was impossible to reach any conclusions about Vietnam since the topic was too close to the present and none of the various observers could agree as to the correct lessons.¹ Actually, even this assessment may be too optimistic--it is entirely possible that once we all agree on the lessons of Vietnam we will all be wrong.

Be that as it may, no historical study is complete without at least some tentative conclusions, and the subject of arms control is of great importance to the present. Before this last chapter offers some possible solutions to the problems which have plagued arms control, we should decide what it is about arms control which makes it so desirable--in other words, what is the purpose of arms control, or what should it be? The answer is not necessarily obvious.

"Stopping the arms race" is a simple way of defining the goal, but it is too simple. For there are circumstances in which a partial arms race may be preferable to control. Arms control advocates should reconsider their praise of the ABM ban in SALT I.

Instead of preventing a destabilization of the strategic balance, it may have made the prospect of a first-strike greater by leaving missile sites undefended. The world might actually be safer today if ABMs were allowed to proliferate.² So instead of aiming for the vague goal of stopping the arms race, it would be better to make distinctions among various types of weapons as to stability, verifiability, destructiveness, etc. and to determine which set of limitations would be most practical and desirable.

The goal of saving money for humanitarian concerns is often raised as a goal of arms control. However, sometimes better opportunities for preventing nuclear war can be achieved by spending more money than normal. For example, the development of a triad of nuclear forces was certainly more expensive than a concentration on one mode of delivery, but this investment was worthwhile for protecting our deterrent. The Midgetman missile is a more costly missile than normal, being based on a mobile system with only one warhead per missile, but it is well suited for crisis stability. Finally, if we wish to move away from nuclear weapons and rely more on conventional weapons and manpower as part of a "no first-use" declaration, we must realize that conventional forces will be much more expensive than nuclear weapons.

The primary goal of arms control should be to

increase security for the nations involved. In particular, the purpose of nuclear arms control should be to prevent nuclear war and, if possible, reduce the potential destruction of such a war. If a more secure international system can be achieved, then secondary objectives, such as the savings in resources, may follow. And the stage will be set for actual disarmament instead of mere control. But the primary concern should be security; the other goals cannot be achieved without this.

With a clearer view of our objectives, we can now proceed with a discussion of how to overcome the problems of arms control. Nuclear doctrine is the most important factor. Not only must we know how the Soviets are planning their nuclear forces, we must know how to plan our own forces as well.

First, a caveat. Although this study deals with a very contemporary subject, it is already somewhat obsolete. There are indications that Soviet nuclear doctrine has undergone some changes since the early 1970s. Open Soviet pronouncements at least no longer call for superiority and victory, but parity and detente. General Ogarkov and the new generation of Soviet military officers is coming to power and appear to have different views on the utility of nuclear weapons. Ogarkov has reportedly said that an all-out nuclear war is not a practical military option; he is

currently leading a major revision of Soviet military doctrine which concentrates primarily on the ability to win a quick conventional war on the Eurasian continent.³ It is not clear whether this implies a greater acceptance of MAD as a doctrine; it could mean that the Soviet military is still waiting for further technological breakthroughs to reduce the destructiveness of all-out war. A great deal depends on how far the Soviet political leadership is willing to go to shape doctrine and on how the United States shapes its doctrine.

The U.S. has a number of doctrinal options, each with different approaches to security. In examining each option, we should determine which doctrine would provide the most security for the present and which doctrine would be most desirable for the future.

Current U.S. doctrine is known as "countervailing." It relies on a large number of highly accurate weapons to carry out prompt counterforce retaliatory strikes and target the centers of Soviet leadership and control in order to ensure that the Soviet Union would not be able to survive as a state. This doctrine also includes a number of limited war options. This countervailing doctrine came about as a response to the Soviet build-up and the revelations of Soviet military writings, but it is also an overreaction in which the cure may be worse than the

disease.

As I have noted before, while the Soviets may desire a war-winning capability, they have little confidence that their present capability can achieve such a goal. A substantial American counterforce capability can ensure that the U.S. will never be vulnerable to escalation dominance and that the Soviet state will never survive a nuclear exchange, but this added insurance creates a new problem. The Soviets can never be persuaded that the U.S. counterforce capability will be used only in a second strike; they fear that the U.S. may use its forces in a preemptive attack. Given that the Soviet leadership (like the American) would probably resort to nuclear war only in the event of a very grave threat to the existence of the state, it seems likely that a U.S. counterforce capability will increase the risk of nuclear war.

Current plans for the Strategic Defense Initiative are not apt to provide greater security either. There appear to be two conceptions of space-based defenses. The first uses SDI in a doctrine of strategic superiority and damage limitation--similar to the ideas expressed in Soviet military writings. It calls for the deployment of highly accurate weapons to destroy Soviet military and leadership targets and space-based ABMs to limit damage to the United States. In the abstract, a position of U.S. nuclear superiority

would be desirable; the problem of crisis stability could be overcome if enough ABMs were deployed to protect U.S. forces from a preemptive attack and the U.S. could have more confidence in deterring the Soviet Union. The problem with the doctrine of nuclear superiority lies in the difficulty of attaining it safely. The Soviets will certainly try to keep from falling behind and the competition will accelerate greatly, increasing worst-case fears, adversely affecting U.S.-Soviet relations in other areas, and possibly making the strategic balance worse than before. The potential benefits of nuclear superiority are not worth the costs and risks of attempting to attain it.

A second doctrine put forward with respect to the Strategic Defense Initiative is a "defensive transition." Supposedly, a movement to a more stable balance with increased protection from the threat of nuclear weapons can be achieved through technological advance in defensive systems. It is unfortunate that many otherwise intelligent conservatives have become enthusiastic supporters of this concept;⁴ their fantasies are as naive as many liberals' undying faith in international law and world organization. There are so many ways to overcome, outflank, or outsmart a defense--MARVs (maneuverable reentry vehicles), decoys, low-trajectory submarine-launched missiles, bombers,

cruise missiles, suitcase bombs--that most experts agree that there is no reliable way to protect our cities if the Soviets wish to make us vulnerable.

The justification that many then give for SDI is that it will provide more stability by protecting our deterrent from a first strike. However, SDI is not necessarily the best answer to the first-strike threat. We can achieve the same results by improving our submarine fleet, increasing the penetration capability of our bombers, and building mobile land-based missile systems. Should these systems become vulnerable, we can deploy a ground ABM defense protecting missile silos. Deploying a space-based system prematurely may bring up more problems than it solves, for such a defense can deflect a retaliatory strike as well as a first strike and may itself be vulnerable to a preemptive attack. Even Edward Teller, hardly a dove, has noted the vulnerability of space systems and advocates a "pop-up" laser system instead.⁵

Most of the drawbacks of the Strategic Defense Initiative could be overcome by a cooperative defensive transition, but given the sorry state of arms control and U.S.-Soviet relations today, pushing for such a goal is most premature. A negotiated defensive transition would probably be the most complex diplomatic undertaking ever attempted; preventing a destabilization of the strategic balance during the

transition would require a scale of cooperation between the two superpowers that is unprecedented. Our efforts would be best directed toward building a base for cooperation first instead of rushing headlong into a weapons development and hoping for Soviet compliance.

A frequently-offered alternative to the above doctrines is a nuclear freeze. Its main virtues are simplicity and comprehensiveness; these are also its main defects. By attacking the problem of the arms race, it ignores the real problem, which is security. Not all weapons are detrimental to security. Because of the non-verifiability of limitations on air defense systems, ABM research, and anti-submarine research, in the event of a nuclear freeze, the arms race would still continue in those areas and raise the prospect of a breakout upsetting the balance. A better policy would be to continue developing stabilizing weapons such as bombers, submarines, and mobile single-warhead missiles, while negotiating to reduce destabilizing systems such as accurate MIRVed land-based missiles. A nuclear freeze is an emotional statement, not a good policy.

In my view, a posture of "MAU-plus," that is, a capability for destroying cities but also a military targeting option which falls short of a significant first-strike threat, is the best option. For this purpose, our current military build-up should proceed

without the MX missile and a good portion of the D-5 warheads for the Tridents, but continue with the Midgetman missile and the accurate air-launched cruise missiles for the B-1 and Stealth bombers. The resulting force would provide a great deal of insurance against escalation dominance while providing less of an incentive for the Soviets to preempt.

For the future, the U.S. should keep a two-track policy in mind, one of cooperation through arms control, and the other a unilateral military build-up. These paths should be pursued simultaneously, with greater concentration on one or the other depending on the circumstances. Our military build-up should concentrate on maintaining a state of mutual deterrence and frustrating any unilateral attempts on the part of the Soviets to gain a war-winning capability. However, this goal should be only temporary; we must explore the option of reducing and eliminating our vulnerability to mass destruction. This can come about only through a cooperative effort on the part of the U.S. and the Soviet Union to limit and reduce nuclear weapons while allowing defensive systems to proliferate and provide insurance against the non-verifiable aspects of a negotiated agreement.⁶

As I have noted above, a cooperative defensive transition would be immensely difficult, and it is most premature and irresponsible to expect to achieve it

with the current state of affairs. What is needed first is a more stable strategic balance with a greater confidence in the security of both sides. For this purpose, it may be best to negotiate first down to a position of pure MAD, that is a mutual capability to target each other's cities only. A unilateral move to a posture of pure MAD would not be desirable, for there are legitimate fears of escalation dominance. But if both sides can simultaneously achieve a pure MAD posture, then the strategic balance will be much more secure.

Some may argue that it would be unwise and immoral to base our nuclear policy on the mutual destruction of civilians. But this objection does not hold up to logic. No matter how many military-targeting options are added to strategic plans, there will always be the option of aiming them at cities. Even with the best of intentions, there is not much cause for confidence that a nuclear war would significantly spare civilians from the destruction. Removing the military-targeting option through MAD merely removes a rung from the ladder of escalation; as long as nuclear weapons exist, there is always the possibility of the mass annihilation of civilians. Besides, once a MAD posture were achieved, the chances would be better for a cooperative defensive transition.

Assuming that both superpowers can agree on the

desirability of stabilizing the strategic balance with an eye toward a defensive transition, there are still two other obstacles to arms control, linkage and worst-case. Linkage would appear to be an unresolvable problem, given the superpowers' vastly different conceptions of the ideal international order. However, there may be a way to outflank the problem. Looking at the Vietnam example, if progress can be made in a number of areas of U.S.-Soviet relations, it may be possible to let some of the contentious issues fall to the side, and agree to disagree. In this case, some geopolitical competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union would continue, but the two sides would choose to compete on a lower level and at the same time make it clear to each other that they do not seek superiority in the sphere of nuclear weapons. For this purpose, negotiations should proceed on two fronts: one to deal with political issues and the other to discuss nuclear doctrine. Naturally, both sides cannot be expected to discuss the details of their war plans, but since Soviet military writings and Defense Department reports eventually become public knowledge, both sides might as well engage in discussions over how to prevent war and what will be done if war breaks out. Perhaps there will be no agreement over the basics of nuclear doctrine between the two sides, but at least the discussions could reveal the real differences and not

raise unreasonable expectations.

The final obstacle to arms control is the worst-case fears which come about whenever there are uncertainties involved in calculating the strategic balance. This obstacle is so tremendous, there seems to be little chance of attaining an arms control agreement with stricter limitations than SALT II. Yet, if worst-case planning is a problem for arms control, arms control itself is a partial solution. Negotiated agreements provide better knowledge of forces on both sides and can help to make the strategic competition more predictable. This case is illustrated best by the MIRV ban issue of the early 1970s. While the U.S. military did have legitimate concerns about Soviet breakout in preemptive capabilities, it did not take note of the fact that a mutual ban on MIRVs would go a long way in preventing a Soviet preemptive capability. Although Soviet military doctrine at the time would have probably blocked a combined ban on MIRVs and ABMs, the U.S. military should have been on the record as supportive of a MIRV ban.

In fairness to the U.S. military, they have been generally supportive of SALT II, recognizing the many worst-case fears that would arise if SALT II were scrapped and the competition became completely unrestrained.⁷ Many do seem to recognize that arms control can reduce the uncertainties in security

planning. It is still an open question as to just how far arms control can go in reducing uncertainties in the strategic balance.

In the introduction to this study, I set out a rather pessimistic view that the decline of arms control was an inevitable process brought about by deep structural problems existing in SALT I. In the interest of maintaining some hope, I do not wish to imply that all our efforts in dealing with the nuclear problem will be as unsuccessful as our past efforts. The scope for human action is limited, but we do not know our exact limits unless we continue to strive for the utmost. Just as it was impossible to predict a hundred years ago that we would eventually learn to release the tremendous energy of the atom, it remains to be seen whether we can discover a way of controlling this power for constructive ends.

Notes

Introduction

1 Thom Shanker, "Superpowers lower sights on slowing arms race," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 April 1985, sec. 6, p. 6, col. 1. See also Henry A. Kissinger, "The case for nuclear defense," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 23 Sept., 1984, pullout sec., p. 1, col. 1 and William R. Hawkins, "Arms Control: Three Centuries of Failure," *National Review*, 9 Aug. 1985, pp. 26-32.

2 Alva Myrdal, *The Game of Disarmament* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), pp. 66-110.

3 Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 65.

4 Myrdal, pp. 103-108.

5 Raymond L. Garthoff, *Detente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1985), pp. 1068-1126.

6 Garthoff, p. 1094.

7 See Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984). Although Mr. Talbott does not directly criticize the Reagan administration, his book is often used as ammunition by those who blame Reagan for the failure of arms control.

8 See Henry M. Jackson, "SALT: An Analysis and a Proposal," Speech delivered to the U.S. Senate, 4 Dec. 1973, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 40, No. 6 (1974), pp. 169-171.; Edward N. Luttwak, "Why Arms Control Has Failed," *Commentary*, 65, No. 1 (Jan. 1978), p. 27.

Chapter One

1 In the interest of a more reasoned debate, one

analyst argues that it would be useful to avoid using "pejorative slogans" such as MAD or NUTS (Nuclear Use Theories). He says that there is no one on the left who really desires "mutual destruction", nor are there right-wingers who are enthusiastic about fighting a nuclear war. Consequently, he favors the use of the term "Mutual Assured Vulnerability" instead. This would be a useful way of purging some of the emotional rhetoric from the nuclear debate, but the use of the term "MAD" has become so widespread, I feel it would be best to stick with the more familiar term. See Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and Strategic Planning* (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 1984), pp. 58, 61.

² Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 85-88.

³ Mandelbaum, pp. 108-109.

⁴ Mandelbaum, pp. 112-113.

⁵ Mandelbaum, pp. 113-128.

⁶ Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), pp. 216-218.

⁷ *The President's Foreign Policy Report to Congress*, 25 Feb. 1971, as quoted in *Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird on the FY 1972-1976 Defense Program and the 1972 Defense Budget* (Washington: U.S. GPO, 1971), p.32.

⁸ John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 133-134, 140.

⁹ *Statement of Secretary of Defense on the 1972 Defense Budget*, p. 62.

¹⁰ Mandelbaum, p. 118.

¹¹ This is not to say that arms control should be pursued as an end in itself; I am merely attempting to assess the impact of nuclear doctrine on arms control. Whether it is best for security purposes to rely primarily on arms control or unilateral military efforts is an issue to be discussed later.

¹² There are, of course, numerous other contributors to the debate. Only the most prominent will be cited here.

¹³ See Joseph D. Douglass Jr. and Amoretta M.

Hoerber, *Soviet Strategy for Nuclear War* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979); Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War," *Commentary*, (July 1977), pp. 21-34 and "Soviet Strategic Doctrine: Another View," *Strategic Review*, 10, No. 4 (Fall 1982), pp. 52-58; Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Soviet Art of War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

14 David Holloway, "Strategic Concepts and Soviet Policy," *Survival*, (Nov. 1971), pp. 360-372; Raymond Garthoff, "Mutual Deterrence and Strategic Arms Limitation in Soviet Policy," *Strategic Review*, 10, No. 4 (Fall 1982), pp. 36-51 and "A Rebuttal by Ambassador Garthoff," in the same issue, pp. 58-63.

15 Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, pp. 2-3.

16 Harriet Fast Scott, trans., ed., *Soviet Military Strategy*, by Marshal V. D. Sokolovsky (New York: Crane, Russak, 1975), p. xvi.

17 James Fallows, *National Defense* (New York: Random House, 1981), pp. 74-75.

18 Sokolovsky, p. 176.

19 Sokolovsky, pp. 208-209.

20 Marshal A. A. Grechko, "The Soviet Armed Forces--The Dependable Guard of Socialist Achievements," in *Selected Soviet Military Writings 1970-1975*, trans. U.S. Air Force, ed. William F. Scott (Washington: U.S. GPO, 1976), p. 167. See also Lt. Col. V.M. Bondarenko, "Military-technical Superiority: The Most Important Factor of the Reliable Defense of the Country," in *The Nuclear Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs*, trans. and ed. William R. Kintner and Harriet Fast Scott (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 351-366.

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⁶ The originator of the arms control/defensive transition concept was the late Donald Brennan, who had worked at the Hudson Institute and was one of the few people advocating a ban on MIRVs and a proliferation of ABMs at the time of SALT. Lately, Freeman Dyson has become the most vigorous proponent of this concept in his book *Weapons and Hope*.

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