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# THE REYKJAVÍK SUMMIT AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

*David S. Yost*

Many West Europeans have agreed in retrospect that the most disturbing feature of the Reykjavík summit was the apparent "indifference or quasi-indifference" of the United States regarding European security interests.[1] This judgment is based on the specific arms-control arrangements that President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev discussed in Iceland in October 1986, plus the subsequent explanations of the U.S. administration. The Reykjavík summit also provided fresh evidence of the Soviet Union's more imaginative diplomatic style under Gorbachev and, more substantively, of enduring Soviet preferences regarding security in Europe.

Although West Europeans have expressed concerns about Soviet motives and about U.S. competence and long-term reliability, they have reached little consensus about practical steps that governments should take. In public declarations the West Europeans have generally professed to be pleased with the arms-control measures discussed at Reykjavík. The Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), which includes all the allies except France and Iceland, asserted in October 1986: "We extended our warm appreciation to the President on his conduct of the talks and fully endorsed his bold attempt to seek far-reaching arms control agreements

1. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, "Pour une expression de solidarité européenne," *Le Monde*, 8 November 1986, 4.

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with the Soviet Union. We fully endorsed the President's programme presented in Iceland and stressed that this programme provides the opportunity for historic progress."[2] Subsequent reports and Alliance deliberations have made it clear, however, that this communiqué language overstated West European support for the U.S. positions. According to Robert O'Neill, the director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, "We have got into an absurd situation, where everyone in the alliance is saying exactly the opposite of what he thinks."[3]

West European misgivings concern four main topics: the tentative agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF); the proposals for strategic force limitations, especially the U.S. plan to eliminate all ballistic missiles in ten years; the goal of complete nuclear disarmament; and conflicting views on future limitations on ballistic missile defense (BMD).

### *Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces*

According to a standard Western definition, there are two basic categories of INF missiles: shorter-range INF (SRINF) with ranges between 150 and 1,000 kilometers, such as the Soviet SS-12/22 and SS-23 and longer-range INF (LRINF), with ranges between 1,000 and 5,500 kilometers, such as the Soviet SS-20 and SS-4 and U.S. Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles. Missiles with ranges below 150 kilometers, such as the U.S. Lance and Soviet FROG/SS-21 systems, are not SRINF but simply short-range nuclear forces (SNF).

At Reykjavík the United States accepted a Soviet offer to endorse a version of the global zero option for U.S. and Soviet LRINF missiles that was first proposed by the United States in 1981. The Soviet-proposed zero option called for the elimination of all U.S. and Soviet LRINF missiles on European soil. The Soviet Union would retain no more than 100 warheads on LRINF missile launchers in Asia, the United States no more than the same total on U.S. soil. Despite their presummit indications, the Soviets announced at Reykjavík that no LRINF agreement could be firmly concluded unless the United States and the Soviet Union had also come to terms on a package of limits on strategic forces and space and defense systems, including new constraints on U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) research.

Soviet spokesmen added that the Soviet Union could not return to the pre-Reykjavík possibility of a separate LRINF agreement without reverting to the pre-Reykjavík Soviet conditions for such an accord: no

2. Paragraph 2 of the communiqué of the NATO Nuclear Planning Group, 22 October 1986.

3. Scott Sullivan, "Reykjavík Whiplash," *Newsweek*, 10 November 1986, 44.

reductions in Soviet LRINF missiles in Asia, no renunciation of the demand that British and French forces be counted with U.S. totals, and no ceilings on Soviet SRINF missiles.[4] At Reykjavík the Soviets agreed that SRINF missile launchers could be frozen at current levels, with a commitment to undertake negotiations on reductions. Given the large Soviet advantage in SRINF missile launchers,[5] the United States has affirmed a right to match Soviet SRINF levels.

The December 1986 North Atlantic Council communiqué stated that "the Allies concerned fully support the envisaged elimination of American and Soviet land-based LRINF in Europe."[6] The communiqué reportedly employed this wording because France could not support the LRINF zero option. France is not technically one of the allies concerned because France does not host any of the U.S. LRINF in Europe or even contribute to the NATO infrastructure fund for their maintenance. But French officials have been most candid in expressing their concern that implementation of the zero option could result in "a situation of diminished security for Europe."[7]

Although U.S. and NATO policy has called for a global zero option in LRINF missiles since 1981, in early 1986 the Western allies agreed that it would be preferable to settle for the lowest number of LRINF consistent with the maintenance of stable deterrence. British Defense Minister George Younger has said that, while Britain "could live with" the zero option in LRINF missiles, his government would prefer the arrangement discussed prior to Reykjavík—100 LRINF missile warheads in Europe for the United States and the Soviet Union.[8]

Many West European officials and experts would prefer that some U.S. LRINF missiles be retained in Europe for deterrence purposes. As long ago as 1983, West German state secretary for defense Lothar Ruehl pointed out that the "optimal solution of the [LRINF] problem for arms control" (that is, the zero option) might not be strategically desirable: "It is imperative for the security of those countries in the Western part of the continent, which. . .are only a few early-warning minutes away from missiles stationed in West Russia, that an effective counter-threat

4. Valentin Falin cited in Michel Tatu, "Les ambiguités de l'après-Reykjavík," *Le Monde* 6 November 1986, 1, 3.

5. The Soviet total of 765 consists of SS-23/Scud and SS-12/22 launchers and does not include the reload missiles for these systems or the 143 Scud launchers with Warsaw Pact allies. The United States has no missile systems in this range category. The 72 Pershing IA launchers are owned by the West German air force and therefore have not been involved in the U.S.-Soviet negotiations. *The Military Balance 1986–1987* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1986), 202, 205-6.

6. Paragraph 5 of the communiqué of the North Atlantic Council, 12 December 1986.

7. Jean-Bernard Raimond, French foreign minister, speech in Berlin, 8 December 1986, 7.

8. Steven Erlanger, "British Defense Chief Criticizes Elements of US Arms Stance," *Boston Globe*, 29 October 1986, 11.

exerts a reliable influence on the military success and risk calculations made by the Soviet leadership."[9]

This deterrence requirement was in fact the main rationale for NATO's December 1979 decision on LRINF modernization and arms control. The decision satisfied three closely related deterrence needs: to replace obsolescent airborne delivery systems with reliable modern systems that could penetrate improved Soviet air defenses; to recouple U.S. nuclear guarantees in the presence of the intercontinental force ratios negotiated during the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) process; and to deploy U.S. land-based systems in Europe of roughly the same type as the SS-20 missiles the Soviet Union had begun to deploy in 1977. However, in their public defense of the decision during the INF controversy (1979-83), Western governments stressed only the latter purpose. As the French foreign minister noted, this position implies that "coupling is a political, not a military affair. On this view, the new systems are not indispensable, and logically the 1979 double-track decision would entail abandonment of deployment."[10]

But this view overlooks how a U.S.-Soviet agreement on an LRINF missile ban in Europe could undermine the security of Western Europe. The SS-20s and SS-4s threatening Western Europe from the western Soviet Union would, in principle, be eliminated; but the United States would no longer retain any missiles on European soil capable of striking the Soviet Union, while the Soviet Union would retain SRINF missiles and other systems (including sea-based and intercontinental forces) capable of attacking all of the militarily significant targets in Western Europe from Warsaw Pact territory. Because of the elimination of a key part of the U.S. nuclear presence in Europe, it may be argued, Western Europe would become more vulnerable to Soviet intimidation.[11] Moreover, it would be politically difficult—if not impossible—for the United States to return LRINF missiles to Europe if the Soviets violated the agreement by failing to destroy the agreed numbers of missiles or by redeploying part of the residual force of mobile SS-20s within range of Europe.

Nor are critical West European observers satisfied with the U.S.-Soviet understanding at Reykjavík about SRINF missiles. As Karl Kaiser

9. Lothar Ruehl, "Das strategische Angebot an die Sowjetunion," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 4 March 1983.

10. Jean-Bernard Raimond, speech at the Atlantic Conference at Saint-Paul de Vence, 7 November 1986, 7.

11. General Bernard Rogers, the supreme allied commander in Europe, was widely quoted in the West European media: "If medium-range missiles were cut to zero, and nothing were done to reduce the Soviet superiority in shorter-range nuclear and conventional forces, then we would be worse off than in 1979," when NATO took the decision on LRINF modernization and arms control, owing to the growth in Soviet conventional and SRINF capabilities in the intervening period. David Buchan, "Western military fears deal on medium-range missiles," *Financial Times,* 3 March 1987, 2.

of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik in Bonn pointed out, the U.S. right to match Soviet SRINF deployments may be "purely theoretical," since no West European government is willing to risk a repeat of the early 1980s LRINF controversy.[12] The Soviets have not even acknowledged a U.S. right to equal SRINF deployments and have proposed a freeze on current SRINF levels, pending negotiations.

Some West European analysts have noted that the Soviet Union justified its forward deployment of new SRINF missiles in Czechoslovakia and East Germany in 1983 with the claim that this was a response to the initial U.S. LRINF deployments. In their view, these Soviet missiles should therefore be subject to reduction in conjunction with any U.S. LRINF withdrawals.[13] Others have added that it would have made more sense to link LRINF reductions to adjustments in SRINF and in the NATO-Warsaw Pact conventional force balance. Unfortunately, however, a large number of West Europeans probably would see any proposal to make the LRINF zero option dependent on specific SRINF limitations as an attempt to sabotage arms control and hinder the realization of the zero option.

The agreement to negotiate SRINF reductions is also less than fully satisfactory because the Soviets have few incentives to bargain away their preponderant advantage in SRINF missiles. The LRINF missile removal could therefore be followed by an indefinitely protracted negotiation, during which the Soviet Union would retain a significant numerical superiority in SRINF launchers (and continue to manufacture reload missiles) while the United States might find it politically difficult to build and deploy any comparable capabilities. The result of the negotiation might be an agreement confirming and codifying Soviet superiority in SRINF or a SRINF zero option, leading toward more extensive denuclearization in Western Europe and increased political-military utility for Soviet conventional force superiority.

However, when Gorbachev announced on 28 February 1987 that the Soviet Union was prepared to negotiate the LRINF zero option "without delay" and without any linkage to the unsettled issues of strategic offense and defense, West European governments felt they had little choice but to endorse such an accord.[14] Their rationales include a judgment

12. Karl Kaiser, "Ist eine Welt ohne Kernwaffen möglich?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 December 1986, 6-7.

13. Ian Cuthbertson and Joachim Krause, "Elimination of Missiles Is Unsound," *The New York Times*, 14 November 1986, A35.

14. This decision was especially difficult for the French government. Minister of Defense André Giraud and other prominent politicians of the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF) described the LRINF zero option as a "Munich." But President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Chirac emphasized the previous Alliance commitment in principle to the zero option and the need for policy unity in Western Europe. Jacques Amalric, "L'affaire des euromissiles divise la majorité," *Le Monde*, 6 March 1987, 1, 5.

that the 1979 two-track decision has been vindicated, a reluctance to be seen as blocking movement in arms control, a concern that opposition parties (such as Labour and the SPD) might benefit from any recalcitrance, and a fear that explicit reservations about the zero option could undermine their credibility with public opinion and revive anti-nuclear protest movements. Many have decided that other U.S. nuclear forces should be sufficient for deterrence and that an LRINF zero option agreement might be made more acceptable with suitable complementary terms on SRINF and verification—though European-American disagreements about both of the latter issues may arise.

*Strategic Force Limitations*

At Reykjavík, the Soviets agreed to abandon previous claims about U.S. carrier-based aircraft and other so-called "forward-based systems" and to accept the same definition of "strategic" as in the SALT negotiations—systems with a range exceeding 5,500 kilometers. On this basis the United States and the Soviet Union agreed that cuts of roughly 50 percent during a five-year period should result in equal ceilings of 1,600 strategic nuclear launch vehicles (intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBMs], submarine-launched ballistic missiles [SLBMs], bombers, and air-launched cruise missile carriers) and 6,000 warheads on launchers. (A separate accord would cover sea-launched cruise missiles outside the 1,600/6,000 ceilings.) Although the two governments disagreed on many crucial provisions of the prospective 50 percent reductions (for example, sublimits on heavy ICBMs and the future of mobile ICBMs), West Europeans were especially impressed by the disagreement regarding objectives for a second five-year period. The United States proposed the elimination of all ballistic missiles, and the Soviet Union advocated the abolition of all nuclear weapons.

West European reservations about the U.S. proposal to eliminate all ballistic missiles in ten years were implicit in the December 1986 NATO communiqués, which refrained from mentioning the proposal. The two principal misgivings concern the overall strategic situation that might result from implementation of the proposal and the implications for the British and French nuclear forces, which depend heavily on ballistic missiles.

Some U.S. officials have argued that a ban on ballistic missiles would benefit the West because the Soviet Union has a numerical and throw-weight advantage in every category of ballistic missiles (ICBMs, SLBMs, LRINF, and SRINF), while the United States leads in numbers of high-quality long-range bombers and cruise missiles. They have suggested that ballistic missiles are particularly destabilizing because of their rapid flight

times and their irrevocability. Many West European experts and officials, however, have replied that deterrence of Soviet conventional aggression in Europe could not be assured without the survivability, penetration capability, and destructive potential of ballistic missile systems.

West Europeans have argued that the U.S. proposal is ill-founded on several grounds: (1) Ballistic missile-launching submarines are the least vulnerable nuclear retaliatory systems and therefore the most stabilizing. Cruise missile-launching submarines probably would be less survivable because range limitations would force them to operate closer to the Soviet Union. (2) Eliminating ballistic missiles would mean abandoning two legs of the traditional U.S. strategic triad and placing heavy reliance on a single leg—bombers and cruise missiles—that would become the principal focus of Soviet countermeasures, offensive and defensive. (3) The Soviets have an enormous investment and infrastructure advantage in air defenses. (4) Soviet air defenses would be even more difficult to penetrate if ballistic missile precursor strikes could not be used to open attack corridors for bombers and cruise missiles and if the Soviets were free to invest additional resources in air defenses. (5) The verification of a ban on ballistic missiles for military attack purposes would be impossible when similar boosters would still be required to launch satellites—to say nothing of the space-based elements of the U.S. SDI. But any significant Soviet violations of such a ban could have profound consequences for Western security. (6) The Western Alliance is intrinsically more vulnerable than the Soviet Union to attack by sea-launched cruise missiles because of the coastal location of many targets the Soviets would threaten. (7) A ban on ballistic missiles would encourage the Soviets to invest more in bomber and cruise missile forces that are already capable of overwhelming the inadequate air defenses of the Western Alliance. (8) The costs of a comparable nonballistic capability to hold Soviet targets at risk would be very high, and at any rate only ballistic missiles can attack time-urgent targets. (9) Finally, as the French foreign minister asked, "Given the nearness of the Soviet adversary, what reassurance is there for Europe in arguments based on bomber and cruise missile flight times?"[15]

The Reagan administration's attitude toward the independent nuclear forces of Britain and France also evokes West European concern. Immediately after Reykjavík, Secretary of State Shultz commented on the U.S. proposal to abolish all ballistic missiles: "You would, if you agreed to a program like this, obviously, you would then have to go to the British and the French and the Chinese and persuade them to join you in ending these particular kinds of weapons. . . . We and the Soviets aren't going

15. Raimond, speech at the Atlantic Conference, 9-10.

to get rid of all of our ballistic missiles and leave some other countries with them."[16]

This statement and similar ones by U.S. authorities irritated British and French strategists and officials, who have long been concerned about the risk of their forces being portrayed as the obstacle to arms-control agreements and being somehow taken into account in a U.S.-Soviet bargain without their participation. Raymond Barre warned, "If the Russians and the Americans agree to dismantle a large part of their ballistic means, strong pressure will be exerted on the countries retaining such means—notably France, which intends to keep her missiles and to modernize their nuclear warheads. . . . We will require great resoluteness to keep the instrument of our independence, if the Soviet-American negotiations are successful."[17]

Similarly, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declared that Britain needed an independent nuclear force. During her November 1986 visit to Washington she persuaded President Reagan to reaffirm U.S. plans to continue the Trident SLBM program and to support fully the plans to modernize the British deterrent force with these missiles. According to Thatcher, even if the United States and the Soviet Union do agree on 50 percent strategic force reductions, the subsequent limitation of British and French forces is "not at all certain" because of the need for "a minimal deterrent force."[18]

Moreover, the 50 percent reductions in U.S. and Soviet nuclear forces might have problematic implications for overall strategic stability and West European security, depending on the specific terms and implementation of the agreement. French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac has suggested that the 50 percent goal for the first five-year phase is so "vast" that it should be properly verified and tested through experience "before one can reasonably foresee supplementary steps."[19] Even if the specific terms were balanced, the risk of releasing Soviet resources for an even larger conventional force buildup would remain.

*Nuclear Disarmament*

The U.S. aims for nuclear disarmament during the second five-year period remain controversial. In the days following the summit, various U.S. officials—including the president, the secretary of state, and the

16. "Shultz: 'You've Got To Be Patient,' " *The Washington Post,* 15 October 1986, A24.

17. "M. Raymond Barre définit les cinq conditions de' l'indépendance nationale," *Le Monde,* 25 November 1986, 8.

18. Thatcher cited in Michel Colomès and Marc Roche, "Thatcher joue l'Europe," *Le Point,* 1 December 1986, 60.

19. Jacques Chirac, speech before the Assembly of the Western European Union, 2 December 1986, text in the French Foreign Ministry's *Bulletin d'Information,* 4 December 1986, 6.

White House chief of staff—made statements implying that the United States had either proposed or agreed to the elimination of all strategic offensive nuclear weapons or all nuclear weapons. In the written proposals presented by the president at Reykjavík, however, the U.S. plan called for the elimination of "all remaining offensive ballistic missiles of the two sides" during the second five-year period.[20] According to White House spokesman Larry Speakes, the abolition of nuclear weapons was discussed only as an "ultimate goal."[21]

The Soviets maintain, however, that the United States agreed to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. According to Mikhail Gorbachev, "The President did, albeit without special enthusiasm, consent to the elimination of all—I emphasize—all, not only certain individual, strategic offensive arms, to be destroyed precisely over 10 years, in two stages."[22] Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze summarized the Soviet Union's position.

> [T]he highest point in the talks was the convergence of positions of the Soviet and U.S. leaders concerning the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We give credit to the President of the United States for agreeing to do this within an even shorter time span than the one that was originally proposed in our statement of Jan. 15 [1986].[23]

Some U.S. officials encouraged the public impression that large-scale nuclear disarmament was at hand by emphasizing the need to build up Western conventional forces. Secretary of State Shultz said that, although "deterrence based on conventional forces is sharply more expensive" than nuclear deterrence, "it's a safer form of deterrence."[24] According to Senator Sam Nunn, Shultz "defended the concept of eliminating all strategic offensive arms by 1996. . . he insisted that NATO could find the will to provide a conventional balance with the Warsaw Pact."[25]

Many West European experts and officials would disagree with the judgment that conventional deterrence is safer and more effective than nuclear deterrence. Since the late 1940s West European strategists have rejected nuclear versus conventional formulations in favor of a deterrent

20. "Text of U.S. Offers in Iceland," *The New York Times*, 18 October 1986, 5, and President Reagan, *Report on Reykjavik*, Current Policy no. 875 (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State, 13 October 1986), 2.

21. Gerald M. Boyd, "U.S. Says 2 Leaders Discussed Ending All Nuclear Arms," *The New York Times*, 24 October 1986, A1, A12.

22. "Excerpts from Gorbachev Speech on the Reykjavík Talks and 'Star Wars,' " *The New York Times*, 23 October 1986, A12.

23. "Address by Soviet Foreign Minister," *The New York Times*, 6 November 1986, A16. The Soviets had proposed in January 1986 complete nuclear disarmament by the year 2000.

24. Bernard Gwertzman, "Shultz Details Reagan's Arms Bid at Iceland to Clarify U.S. Position," *The New York Times*, 18 October 1986, 1, 5.

25. Sam Nunn, "The Reykjavík Summit: What Did We Really Agree To?" *Congressional Record* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 17 October 1986), S16575–77.

posture based on both types of capabilities. Moreover, they have emphasized the necessity of nuclear threats for reliable deterrence. West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Thatcher, and others have warned that conventional war in Europe must not be allowed to become more feasible and probable.

The key NATO communiqués of December 1986 called attention to Warsaw Pact conventional force superiority and the chemical threat and declared that "nuclear weapons cannot be dealt with in isolation."[26] French officials were particularly forthright in warning against "very distant, probably utopian, [and] perhaps even dangerous" proposals that could "weaken the foundations of today's security."[27] There is, they have added, no alternative to nuclear deterrence for the foreseeable future—not only because nuclear threats alone can deter Soviet aggression, but also because the Western Alliance (including the United States) is unwilling to pay "the economic and social costs of conventional rearmament to meet Warsaw Pact superiority."[28]

*Limitations on Ballistic Missile Defense*

As suggested above, West European governments have been more concerned about apparent U.S.-Soviet agreements at Reykjavík (particularly about INF) than about the sharpest disagreement—ballistic missile defense. Some West European strategists even assessed the U.S.-Soviet discord on SDI as beneficial because it prevented the formalization of agreements that could have been harmful to Western security interests. West European doubts about the Reagan administration's approach to strategic defense and arms control are, however, perhaps even more profound than their misgivings about the nuclear force policies pursued at Reykjavík. Five main disagreements are evident: the value attributed to the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; interpretations of its constraints on research and development activities; allegations of Soviet noncompliance; the treaty's importance for the credibility of the British and French nuclear forces; and the prospect of a transition—cooperative or noncooperative—to large-scale U.S. and Soviet BMD deployments.

The merits of the ABM treaty in West European eyes can scarcely be exaggerated. Most West Europeans consider the ABM treaty a bulwark against the destabilization of a tolerable situation of mutual vulnerability. They view this situation of mutual vulnerability as the soundest basis for

26. Paragraph 6 of the communiqué of the North Atlantic Council, 12 December 1986, and paragraph 3 of the communiqué of the Defense Planning Committee, 5 December 1986.

27. Raimond, speech in Berlin, 16.

28. Raimond, speech at the Atlantic Conference, 8-9.

long-term East-West political accommodation and cooperation. Without the ABM treaty, it is feared, an offense-defense arms race would endanger prospects for arms control and détente and increase the risks of war. West Europeans were therefore generally gratified by the U.S. decision at Reykjavík to accept a mutual commitment not to withdraw from the ABM treaty for ten years.

Conversely, many West Europeans have been disturbed by changing U.S. definitions of allowable research and development activities during the ten-year period of treaty compliance. At Reykjavík the Soviets proposed a definition of permitted research that the United States found even more confining than the restrictive U.S. interpretation of the ABM treaty. The U.S. administration did not make clear then whether it would observe its restrictive interpretation of the treaty during that period or whether it might at some point adopt the broader interpretation that it regards as legally correct. U.S. officials have subsequently indicated that if the United States were to drop the goal of eliminating all ballistic missiles, the Soviet Union would have to accept the broader interpretation of the ABM treaty set forth by the United States in October 1985.[29] This position would place the United States at odds with the declared policies of some of its allies. Kohl, for example, said that the United States should continue with the restrictive interpretation and that, in any case, the United States and the Soviet Union should both conform to "an agreed interpretation. . . until such time as a new agreement is concluded between them."[30]

U.S. allegations of Soviet noncompliance with the ABM treaty represent a third broad area of U.S.-West European disagreement. From a U.S. perspective, Soviet behavior under the ABM treaty has been discouraging and has undermined the confidence essential to an effective arms-control process. The United States has found the Krasnoyarsk radar to be a clear violation of the treaty. The U.S. government has judged other Soviet activities—the development of readily transportable BMD system components, the testing of air defense radars and surface-to-air missile components in an ABM mode, and the preparation of infrastructure for national territorial defense—as potential or highly probable violations. As the president noted, such noncompliance "increases doubts about the reliability of the USSR as a negotiating partner," especially as the Soviets have failed to provide satisfactory explanations or to take corrective actions to alleviate U.S. concerns.[31]

29. Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Confirms Move to Push for Ban on Ballistic Missiles," *The New York Times*, 20 November 1986, A1, A13.

30. David B. Ottaway, "Kohl Points to Soviet Superiority in Conventional Forces," *The Washington Post*, 23 October 1986, A36.

31. *The President's Unclassified Report to the Congress on Soviet Noncompliance with Arms Control Agreements* (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 1 February 1985), 1, 7-9.

West European comments have usually been limited to the Krasnoyarsk radar and to broad statements of principle. The essential difference between the Reagan administration and the West European governments seems to be one of degree: the West Europeans generally display higher confidence that arms-control regimes, such as the ABM treaty, can prevent the emergence of one-sided advantages. Therefore, they are reluctant to take irrevocable steps in response to violations that do not seem to them militarily significant enough to justify the abandonment of a treaty.

A fourth area of disagreement concerns the future of the British and French nuclear forces. The 1986 British defense white paper repeated London's long-standing conditions for nuclear force reductions: "If Soviet and U.S. strategic arsenals were to be very substantially reduced, and if no significant changes occurred in Soviet defensive capabilities, we would want to review our position and to consider how best we could contribute to arms control in the light of the reduced threat."[32] The French government has outlined a more complex and precise set of conditions. But, like Britain, France has recently reemphasized the central importance of "the potential defensive systems that might in the future be opposed to these nuclear forces."[33]

This condition means that traditional British and French policy is inconsistent with the U.S. strategic concept for relating SDI to arms control. The U.S. strategic concept maintains that radical reductions in offensive nuclear forces would take place in tandem with substantial increases in U.S. and Soviet defenses against such weapons. The British and French reject the idea that they could be expected to reduce their offensive forces in the face of dramatically improved Soviet defenses; indeed, they probably would have to increase their forces to maintain the technical credibility of their deterrent threats. The U.S. position at Reykjavík—that the United States and the Soviet Union would require only limited "insurance policy" BMD capabilities after the elimination of all ballistic missiles—could not be an improvement from the British or French viewpoint.

Nor do the fundamental transition issues show any sign of resolution. The U.S. strategic concept for a cooperative transition is one that the Soviets may seek to exploit for their own purposes, while the concept of a noncooperative transition provokes even greater anxieties in Western Europe. The goal of both concepts—a U.S.-Soviet relationship of defense dominance—does not appeal to Western Europe because of the strategic

32. *Statement on the Defense Estimates 1986*, Cmnd. 9673-I (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1986), 11.

33. "M. Raimond: 'Une disparition totale d'Europe des armes nucléaires américaines serait redoutable,' " *Le Monde*, 17 October 1986, 4.

implications of radically diminished Soviet vulnerability to long-range nuclear attack.

West Europeans who have examined the concept are concerned that other means of competition could become more prominent if technical advances in active defenses (against air and missile forms of attack) reduced the credibility of long-range nuclear threats. An arms-control regime of defense dominance, even if it included active defenses in Western Europe, would not necessarily extend to other means of nuclear attack (such as Soviet nuclear artillery) or Soviet conventional and chemical weapons advantages. Given that the Soviet Union probably would continue to seek political advantage in the contiguous regions of Eurasia, the United States and its allies would have to increase substantially their local defense and deterrence capabilities to compensate for the decreased credibility of U.S. extended deterrence guarantees based on long-range nuclear strike assets. Western Europe might have less security at higher cost, some have argued. There is some concern that even if a relationship of mutual U.S.-Soviet invulnerability to nuclear attack did not lead to conflicts limited to third party territories, it could imply a U.S.-Soviet condominium or an increase in West European dependence on U.S.-Soviet relations for their security.

The U.S. proposals at Reykjavík also bewildered many West Europeans because SDI seemed to be transformed from a research program intended to determine the technological feasibility of cost-effective defenses into a practical certainty. U.S. officials implied that SDI deployments would take place in 1996 to defend against any Soviet cheating or attacks by third parties after the nominal elimination of all ballistic missiles. The U.S. willingness to bargain away its entire ballistic missile force in favor of SDI went far beyond the rationales for SDI that West Europeans are more disposed to support: above all, the need for a vigorous U.S. BMD research program in view of the Soviet ballistic missile threat and Soviet BMD activities, to say nothing of the Soviet BMD deployments around Moscow and the Soviet development of tactical BMD capabilities.

*Interpretations of Soviet Behavior*

The two principal themes of Soviet policy at Reykjavík were promoting a process of denuclearization, first in Europe and later globally, and seeking new constraints on U.S. BMD research by portraying SDI as the principal obstacle to substantial reductions in nuclear weapons and ultimate denuclearization. Neither of these themes surprised West European governments because both would advance traditional Soviet aims regarding security in Europe. Since World War II the Soviet Union has

sought the following situation: Eastern Europe under direct Soviet control and Western Europe militarily weak and divided, without any effective alliance joining the West European states to each other or to the United States. The Soviet Union could then dominate the whole of Europe with a minimum of violent coercion.

A process of denuclearization would advance these aims in various ways. The LRINF zero option could in itself have political and strategic effects asymmetrically damaging to the Western Alliance. If the LRINF zero option also encouraged the withdrawal of all remaining U.S. nuclear weapons from Western Europe, it would remove key instruments of U.S. security guarantees to NATO. Indeed, because of its dependence on U.S. nuclear forces, the Alliance would be deprived of much of its substantive military content. The Soviet denuclearization proposals at Reykjavík were consistent with Soviet proposals for nuclear-weapons-free zones in Europe since the late 1950s and with proposals pledging "no first use" of nuclear weapons since 1982. All are intended (in conjunction with Soviet nuclear counterdeterrent capabilities) to degrade the political credibility of U.S. nuclear guarantees, thereby increasing West European vulnerability to Soviet coercion.

A process of denuclearization also would advance Soviet interests because it would attach a stigma of illegitimacy to the West's other nuclear forces—those maintained by Britain and France. The Soviet interest in building up political pressures against these countries (and, incidentally, causing divisions among the West Europeans) has been evident for years. The French foreign minister recently called attention to a statement made by the Soviet foreign minister that "the reason why France and Great Britain are so worried about the zero option and the post-Reykjavík climate is because they want to cling to their nuclear privileges, with no thought to the overriding interests of the rest of Europe."[34] The pre-Reykjavík Soviet proposals that the United States break its Trident missile agreement with Britain and that the British and French agree to freeze their forces or negotiate directly with the Soviet Union about them appear to be intended to give the Soviets a means of managing and eventually eliminating all nuclear obstacles to the Soviet dominance of Europe.

In other words, the priority that the Soviets attach to nuclear disarmament measures is partly explained by their desire to make the Warsaw Pact's conventional force superiority more useful politically. In the context of Reykjavík and earlier Soviet proposals to reduce and otherwise restrain Western nuclear options, the Soviet initiatives for conventional arms control in an Atlantic-to-the-Urals framework appear to be intended to advance the Soviet Union's denuclearization aims in Europe

34. Raimond, *speech at the Atlantic Conference*, 6.

by neutralizing Western recognition of the Warsaw Pact's conventional force superiority. The U.S. nuclear presence in Europe historically has been justified by the Soviet conventional preponderance. If the Soviets could use a new arms-control forum to persuade Western publics that the existing conventional force relationship in Europe is one of overall parity (as they have asserted for years in their public diplomacy), they could deprive the U.S. nuclear presence in Europe of its main political-military rationale. The Soviets appear to favor the establishment of a new conventional arms-control forum to promote a negotiated withdrawal of the U.S. military presence in Europe while pursuing a *droit de regard* over Western Europe's conventional defense arrangements.

The Soviet interest in perpetuating the ABM treaty's constraints on U.S. BMD research and in establishing new limitations on related U.S. research and development activities was obvious at Reykjavík. The Soviets appear to be looking beyond the uncertain fate of SDI to the likelihood that SDI-related research could spur technological advances in various armaments. For example, confining SDI tests to the laboratory could hinder the West's development of detection and guidance technologies and associated applications of information processing for nonnuclear long-range offensive and defensive systems. New limits on nuclear tests could inhibit the development of means of hardening these new technologies against nuclear effects. In other words, the Soviets may see the selective slowdown of SDI-related technologies as a means to make SDI itself more vulnerable to political and arms-control interdiction and to circumscribe U.S. research and development in key areas of advanced technology relevant to both nonnuclear and nuclear military operations.[35]

SDI-related technologies affect West European security interests in both BMD and advanced military systems. Technological quality and innovation, along with nuclear weapons, have been the West's main means of compensating for the Warsaw Pact's numerical advantages in conventional military power. Although West Europeans have various reservations about the Reagan administration's advocacy of SDI (for example, the vision of defense dominance making nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete), they recognize that the United States should maintain a robust BMD research program and be prepared to counter Soviet breakout or creep-out from the ABM treaty's constraints. Soviet BMD programs have origins and purposes distinct from those of the United States, and a large unilateral Soviet advantage in BMD could pose grave problems for Western security.

Moscow has been disappointed with the West European reservations about the U.S. and Soviet proposals at Reykjavík. Some observers have

35. François Gorand, "Piège pour le high tech militaire," *Le Figaro*, 31 January-1 February 1987, 22.

even detected scorn and sarcasm in Soviet comments about the West European analyses of the Reykjavík summit. According to Shevardnadze, "The position of some European leaders on nuclear disarmament is illogical. Now that a real opportunity has finally emerged to rid the continent of missiles, they have begun to talk of the need to retain U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe and to protect their own alleged privileges as nuclear states."[36] Gorbachev said, "What was being thoroughly disguised previously is now becoming more clear: among U.S. and West European ruling circles, there are powerful forces which seek to frustrate the process of nuclear disarmament. Some people began to assert again that nuclear weapons are almost a boon."[37]

The Soviets appear to have made a formal agreement on an LRINF zero option dependent on new restrictions on U.S. SDI-related research at Reykjavík because they hoped to translate West European support for an LRINF zero option into pressure on SDI. When it became clear that this strategy would not work, the Soviets decided to follow through with the LRINF zero option, thereby advancing several aims: to create a climate of arms-control progress unfavorable to SDI, to remove all U.S. missiles capable of striking Soviet soil from Europe, to provoke doubts in Western Europe about U.S. deterrence commitments, to promote a process of denuclearization in Western Europe, and so forth. The Soviets have in recent years made it clear that they expect that a new phase of détente in East-West relations would result in a general slowdown in Western defense efforts and an increase in Western loans and technology transfers to the Warsaw Pact. The Soviets apparently judge that such benefits would justify the elimination of the major part of the SS-20 force.

*Interpretations of U.S. Behavior*

West European assessments of U.S. behavior at Reykjavík vary. Socialist and social democratic parties have condemned generally the U.S. position on SDI as blocking "progress towards an arms control agreement of historic proportions."[38] Labour foreign-policy spokesman Denis Healey said, "It is tragic that [SDI] wrecked the whole thing at the last minute because President Reagan must have known this would be the central issue before he left for Reykjavík." One of the Social Democratic party's (SPD) spokesmen, Horst Ehmke, described the end of the summit as "a black Sunday for humanity."[39] The leader of the SPD parliamentary group

36. "Address by Soviet Foreign Minister," A16.

37. "Excerpts from Gorbachev Speech on the Reykjavík Talks and 'Star Wars,' " A12.

38. Neil Kinnock cited in Joseph Lelyveld, "Reykjavík Was a Shock At 10 Downing Street," *The New York Times*, 9 November 1986, E2.

39. Karen DeYoung, "NATO Allies Avoid Criticism, but Seek SDI Compromise," *The Washington Post*, 14 October 1986, A20.

in the Bundestag accused the government led by Chancellor Kohl of bearing part of the responsibility for the failure of the Reykjavík summit because of its support for SDI.[40] In contrast, while apportioning most of the blame to Reagan's SDI, Neil Kinnock and other socialist and social democratic observers in Western Europe deplored the Soviet linkage of SDI and the LRINF zero option from October 1986 until February 1987 as "illogical."[41] Reykjavík has tended to encourage those who believe that nuclear disarmament might be accomplished rather easily and those who are inclined to suspect the United States of being the main obstacle to this goal.

More centrist and conservative political observers have reproached the United States for incompetence and hasty improvisation and, more fundamentally, for failing to recognize the long-term dangers in radical arms-control proposals. The charge of incompetence is rooted in several circumstances: the way the Reykjavík summit emerged from the Daniloff affair, the impression of insufficient preparation or Alliance consultation, the U.S. acceptance of the Soviet agenda, the U.S. decision to accept a complete LRINF zero option for Europe (despite previous decisions in the Alliance to retain a certain number of U.S. LRINF in Europe), the U.S. proposal to abolish all ballistic missiles, and the postsummit uncertainty as to President Reagan's statements. The Iran-*Contra* affair and developments directly related to the Reykjavík proposals have encouraged a post-Reykjavík image of U.S. unreliability and ineptitude.

For example, the U.S. joint chiefs of staff have determined, on the basis of preliminary studies, that it would be "virtually impossible" to make all the required changes in the U.S. force posture within the ten years that the U.S. proposal to eliminate ballistic missiles would require—deploying air defenses, increasing U.S. cruise missile forces, converting ballistic missile-carrying submarines into cruise missile carriers, and so forth[42]—and that NATO "would be worse off militarily in relation to the Warsaw Pact after ballistic missiles were eliminated."[43] In November 1986 some U.S. officials stated, perhaps in response to domestic and allied criticism, that the proposal to eliminate all ballistic missiles in ten years had been "deemphasized" and that the United States might retain a small

40. Hans-Jochen Vogel cited in Henri de Bresson, "L'opposition social-démocrate critique vivement le chancelier Kohl," *Le Monde*, 15 October 1986, 3.

41. Joseph Lelyveld, "Kinnock Prepares for a U.S. Mission," *The New York Times*, 23 November 1986, 11.

42. George C. Wilson, "Crowe Confirms Joint Chiefs Not Consulted," *The Washington Post*, 26 November 1986, A12.

43. George C. Wilson, "Rift Seen Between Reagan, Joint Chiefs," *The Washington Post*, 25 November 1986, A14. The joint chiefs of staff accepted the idea of eliminating all ballistic missiles when the president proposed it to Gorbachev in a letter in July 1986; the idea was then regarded as a distant aspiration. At Reykjavík the U.S. delegation decided to propose a ten-year period for this purpose. Don Oberdorfer, "At Reykjavík, Soviets Were Prepared and U.S. Improvised," *The Washington Post*, 16 February 1987, A1, A28.

"insurance policy" ballistic missile force.[44] These statements were contradicted by other U.S. officials, and the United States has formally introduced the zero ballistic missile proposal in Geneva.[45]

The charge that the United States has not recognized the dangers in far-reaching arms-control proposals is related to concerns about the long-term implications for Alliance policy. The essence of this vein of criticism is that the LRINF zero option, the zero ballistic missile proposal, and the ultimate goal of abolishing nuclear weapons all have the de facto effect of stimulating a process in which the Western force posture is delegitimized in public perceptions. The Soviets have the flexibility to advance and accept utopian proposals, thereby placing the burden of proof on the West. These utopian proposals contribute to a disorienting popular impression that the problems in East-West relations stem from weapons. The focus on weapons diverts attention from Soviet political aims and activities—a perverse result that is self-defeating for the West.

Some West Europeans find it all the more disconcerting that the U.S. Reykjavík proposals seem part of a pattern evident over the past decade. Since the late 1970s antinuclear movements and slogans have burgeoned in the United States across the political spectrum—from the freeze and no-first-use movements to the Catholic bishops to SDI and the LRINF zero option. To critical West European analysts there appears to be a general trend in the United States toward nuclear disengagement—a groping to withdraw from nuclear vulnerability, to return to the security of the prenuclear and pre-ICBM era. Some critics hypothesize that the United States "feels free to sacrifice fundamental European security interests in order to salvage its own"[46]—that is, the United States is suspected of trying to reduce the nuclear and ballistic missile threat to the U.S. homeland at the price of security in Europe.

Other West European experts see a more fundamental problem—a lack of political and strategic vision in the United States. They maintain that the Americans have failed to recognize that nuclear weapons constitute one of the foundations of Western security. In their view, the West has no choice but to rely on nuclear threats, given the nature of the Soviet political challenge and Soviet conventional and chemical force advantages, and the West must find the fortitude to maintain a balanced deterrent posture, including nuclear strike options. They reject the view, articulated by some U.S. officials, that Western public opinion is incapable of accepting nuclear deterrence over the long term.[47]

44. Gordon, A1, A13, and David K. Shipler, "More U.S. Changes on Arms Proposed," *The New York Times,* 18 November 1986, A11.

45. Jim Hoagland, "First Steps of Progress Noted Since Reykjavík," *The Washington Post,* 9 February 1987, A13, A17.

46. Pierre Lellouche, "Let's Go Slow on 'Zero Zero,' " *Newsweek,* 17 November 1986, 20.

47. Raimond, speech at the Atlantic Conference, 4.

Objective West European critics will admit that West European governments and political movements have encouraged the United States in certain policies. For example, the LRINF zero option was invented in Europe and has been endorsed at one time or another by all the governments of the Western Alliance—even France. With the West Europeans regularly pressing the Americans to make arms-control concessions, less skill has been required of Soviet diplomacy. The West Europeans also share responsibility with the Americans for the Western failure to protest the Soviet SRINF buildup in recent years. As a result, Western publics have not been informed about this aspect of the threat.

Whatever the origins of recent U.S. arms-control policies, a number of West European governments currently see themselves as a factor of firmness and reason in the Western Alliance. They draw comparisons with the pre-Afghanistan Carter administration, when West Europeans felt obliged to steady U.S. naïveté. Particularly in France, Britain, and the Federal Republic of Germany, Reykjavík has prompted new calls for increased West European defense cooperation and better coordination of security policies.

*Emerging Challenges*

The intra-Alliance disagreements about U.S. behavior at Reykjavík emphasize the need to relearn certain principles of arms control. Three principles are especially relevant: (1) the goal in negotiations should be security, not necessarily force reductions or the elimination of broad categories of weapons, including nuclear weapons; (2) for security, numbers of forces may be less significant than their characteristics, such as survivability and potency in relation to opposing forces and strategic defenses; and (3) the relationship between conventional and nuclear forces must be recognized.

The first principle is especially pertinent to the security of Western Europe. Some critical West European observers of Western arms-control policy believe that it has been focused on utopian and politically counterproductive goals, at least since January 1977 when the United States declared its ultimate goal to be "the elimination of all nuclear weapons from this earth."[48] SDI and the LRINF zero option are consistent with this goal. Both have been championed publicly as if the principal threat to Western security was the existence of nuclear weapons rather than Soviet political aspirations.

From the perspective of critical West European strategists, the U.S. goal of denuclearization, which has been endorsed by many in Western

48. Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 20.

Europe, has helped the Soviet Union to promote the perceptual delegitimization of nuclear weapons in Western societies. The previous Western defense consensus on a reliable nuclear deterrent has been undermined; and, it is argued, the West's own arms-control policies have abetted this development. As Peter Stratmann has noted, the LRINF zero option goal illustrates "a fundamental contradiction of perspectives between the thrust and direction of East-West security talks on nuclear arms control and the task of politically stabilizing and thus in the long term assuring the structure of the accepted NATO strategy."[49]

In other words, Western security planning should recognize that credible nuclear response options have to be maintained, as long as they have a useful role to play in balancing Soviet capabilities and making the West less vulnerable to Soviet blackmail or aggression. Nuclear weapons are instruments that help to keep the risks of political and military aggression incalculable for the Soviet Union. Rather than focusing on these instruments of Western security, which will remain indispensable for the foreseeable future, Western diplomacy should focus on the political roots of East-West antagonism. The availability of an alternative to nuclear deterrence through strategic defense measures or other means has yet to be demonstrated. As a result, the West needs "a progressive and measured approach to disarmament: to know what is possible but also to recognize what remains out of reach for a long time to come."[50]

The second principle suggests that such goals as 50 percent reductions in strategic nuclear forces are not necessarily constructive. Security and stability are more important than numerical reductions. Although stability is probably more a product of political relations than of force characteristics and balances, some types of reductions could be dangerous and destabilizing. The 50 percent reductions under negotiation by the United States and the Soviet Union could produce a more dangerous situation if the specific reductions were not carefully formulated because attacks against a large portion of the remaining U.S. forces could become a more practical and attractive proposition than in the current situation. Since Reykjavík the Soviets have made explicit their intention to retain ICBM throw-weight and prompt counterforce superiority. U.S. inferiority in this respect is unlikely to be altered by equal or proportionate cuts in force levels. As Alexander Haig said in 1979, "When you have imbalances that exist and you recreate them at lower levels, it makes them

49. K.-Peter Stratmann, *Aspekte der Sicherheitspolitischen und Militärstrategischen Entwicklung in den 90erJahren*, SWP-AP 2474 (Ebenhausen, West Germany: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, June 1986), 4-5.

50. Jean-Bernard Raimond, speech to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Vienna, 4 November 1986, 9.

more dangerous than at higher levels, where you have greater flexibility and there is some synergism."[51]

Since what matters operationally is capability relative to an opponent, strategically balanced negotiations would focus on damage-limiting capabilities as well as offensive strike forces. The Soviet Union's extensive damage-limiting investments include passive means of force survivability (mobility, deception, hardening, redundancy) and active defenses (especially air defenses) that have never been subject to negotiated constraints. The inclusion of strategic defenses in arms-control negotiations would be beneficial because it would oblige Western policymakers to devote greater attention to East-West asymmetries and to the implications for stability and security of specific accords.

The third principle — the need to recognize the relationship between conventional and nuclear forces — has been implicit since the origins of the Western Alliance, and Western governments have reaffirmed it since Reykjavík. But the Western Alliance appears to lack an agreed frame of reference for relating its nuclear arms-control goals to conventional arms control and conventional force development planning. Soviet conventional force superiority in Europe has been one of the fundamental challenges to Western security from the outset.

This conventional force superiority places the Soviet Union in a strong negotiating position with respect to both nuclear and conventional arms control in Europe. The Soviet Union derives "maneuverability" for nuclear arms control through its steadily enhanced conventional force advantages.[52] At the same time, of course, the Soviet Union generally declines to acknowledge that it enjoys geographical and numerical advantages in conventional military deployments in Europe. Logically, the Western Alliance should make reductions in its nuclear forces dependent on reductions in Soviet capabilities for conducting conventional offensives in Europe. Strategic and theater nuclear forces are linked to conventional forces in NATO's military strategy of "flexible response," and Western arms-control policy should recognize this linkage.[53]

With these three principles, it is clear that the West needs to undertake a comprehensive analysis of its security requirements and the possible contributions of arms control. The analysis should be more explicit and complete than has been evident in the past. The result should be

51. Alexander Haig, *The Salt II Treaty*, hearings, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 96th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), part 3, 298.

52. Stratmann, 29.

53. Senator Nunn recently proposed that the planned LRINF treaty include a "supreme national interest clause" that would permit the United States not to withdraw 20 to 25 percent of its LRINF missiles until satisfied with the chemical and conventional force balance in Europe. Don Irwin, "Soviets Urged to Cut Non-Nuclear Arms," *Los Angeles Times*, 9 March 1987, 15.

a package including strategic defenses and conventional forces that would be far more comprehensive than the current Soviet proposals. Such a package is desirable, if only to guide the Western Alliance in framing and evaluating specific and more limited agreements. Such an analysis could help to make it clear why a zero option for LRINF in Europe is strategically unwise, even if it seems appealing on near-term public diplomacy grounds.