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Reagan and Gorbachev: The Negotiations at Reykjavik

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INTRODUCTION

"I know that the simplest and most direct answer to the problem of nuclear weapons has always been their complete elimination."[1]

Paul Nitze

Since their very creation, nuclear weapons constituted one of the main threats for the survival of humankind. In times like ours of rising tensions worldwide, from terrorism to intrastate conflicts, the risks related to nuclear weapons and their reductions in the arsenals of nuclear powers are out of the agenda. If during the Cold War the main risk was a nuclear war between the two superpowers, nowadays the risk can be considered even multiplied. The number of nuclear powers has risen as the possibility to acquire nuclear weapons by non-state actors, the multipolarity of the world has diversified the nuclear threat making difficult to codify a protocol to avoid accidental launch, misjudgments or unauthorized launch such that between Soviet Union and United States. However, after the first half of the '90s the negotiation on arms reduction stopped and the problem of nuclear weapons was put aside.

There was a time in which the discussions on arms control, firstly, and arms reduction, then, were at the center of the international agenda. Throughout the Cold War, the specter of a nuclear confrontation between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, loomed ominously, heightening the immediacy of the nuclear threat. Consequently, the issue of nuclear weapons assumed heightened significance and urgency in the global consciousness. Nuclear weapons were essential in the balance of the Cold War based on the mutual assured destruction (MAD). Nuclear weapons provided the deterrent from a full-scale war which fortunately was never fought. Acknowledged

[1] Thomas Graham Jr., *Nuclear Weapons Elimination: A Process*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

the importance in the equilibrium post World War II of the nuclear weapons, U.S. and U.S.S.R. codified the nuclear era through successive treaties. Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) together with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) signed in 1972 provided the rule of the game of the nuclear era for more than a decade. The first provided limits to the expansion of the nuclear arsenals while the second prohibiting the deploy of defense assured the mutual assured destruction in case of a nuclear attack. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) signed in 1968 completed the architecture designing the nuclear powers and the non-nuclear powers trying to crystallize the situation with the guarantee for every state of the use of nuclear power for peacefully use. Simultaneously, the nuclear powers committed themselves to pursue a policy of gradual nuclear disarmament. NPT regime partially failed with the acquisition of the atomic bomb of India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea and because the negotiations for nuclear disarmament were never pursued seriously.

Before these treaties, the nuclear era was completely unregulated resulting in a situation that once made John F. Kennedy declare: "The world was not meant to be a prison in which man awaits his execution."[2] The successive regulation did not change the situation, the encoding of the MAD was not more comforting and not so safe. As Reagan stated: "People who put their trust in MAD must trust it to work 100 percent forever—no slip-ups, no madmen, no unmanageable crises, no mistakes—forever."[3] Based on that consideration, Reagan tried to escape the mechanism of MAD with his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Reagan wanted the U.S. to be capable to defend a nuclear attack. The possibility to break the equilibrium of the MAD with the SDI concurred in bringing back the Soviet Union to the arms control negotiation table in the second half of the '80s and starting a process that could have led to nuclear disarmament.

The road leading to real disarmament began In November 1985 at Geneva when President Ronald Reagan and Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev met for the first time in Geneva. The two leaders declared in the Joint Statement resulted from the summit that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."[4] These words were stated at a

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[2] George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, Sam Nunn, *A World Free of Nuclear Weapons*, Wall Street Journal, January 4, 2007

[3] Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, New York, Random House, 2005

[4] *Joint Soviet-United States Statement on the Summit Meeting in Geneva*, November 21, 1985

time in which many people in the military and the political establishment of both U.S.S.R. and U.S. considered a nuclear war conceivable and even acceptable. In fact, both countries developed various scenarios to face a nuclear war and organized numerous military exercises in preparation for a nuclear war. The force of the political will and the imagination of Reagan and Gorbachev were decisive to develop a new vision and to overcome military doctrines, armed development plans and positions on the arms control negotiations. Summit in October 1986 in Reykjavik was the venue for the U.S. and Soviet Union, through the negotiations between Reagan and Gorbachev to arrive to a shared understanding: the need to eliminate nuclear weapons. From there the negotiations on arms reduction accelerated and two important treaties were signed in 1988 and 1991. The Intermediate-Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) of 1988 eliminated all the shorter- and medium-range missiles and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) of 1991 signed by George H. Bush and Gorbachev reduced by half the strategic offensive weapons of U.S. and Soviet Union. Initial negotiations of both treaties occurred at the Reykjavik summit in 1986.

In 2007 Gorbachev wrote: "If the negotiations had continued in the same vein and at the same pace, the world would have been rid of the greater part of the arsenals of deadly weapons."[5] He considered a failure of a political leadership incapable to exploit the opportunities arose from the end of the Cold War the road taken by the arms reductions negotiations. It has been allowed the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the ABM Treaty abrogated, the requirements for effective verification and irreversibility of nuclear-arms reductions have been weakened; the treaty on comprehensive cessation of nuclear-weapons tests has not been ratified by all nuclear powers. The goal of the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons has been essentially forgotten.[6] In 2007, Gorbachev could not cite the 2019 abrogation of the INF Treaty. Different was the destiny of the START I which was renewed successively until the present-day formula of the New START signed in 2010.

After more than 30 years from the end of the Cold War, United States and Russia maintain, on short alert, long-range nuclear weapons capable to destroy each other's

[5] Mikhail Gorbachev, *The Nuclear Threat*, Wall Street Journal, January 31, 2007
[6] Ibidem

societies in few minutes. “In September 2004, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed El Baradei, estimated that more than forty countries had the capability to build nuclear weapons.”[7] The fact that only India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea had infringed the NPT Treaty made the risk of a nuclear war more circumscribed than it could be. With forty nuclear countries almost all intrastate conflict could carry the risk of going nuclear and then the extended proliferation could make impossible to avoid international terrorist organizations to acquire nuclear weapons. Main reason that avoided widespread nuclear proliferation was the policy of extended nuclear deterrence adopted by United States and Soviet Union in addition to the NPT Treaty. With the end of the Cold War and the evolution of the world’s relations to a multipolar direction, the conditions of the relatively success of the NPT Treaty are falling apart. Only the full application of the NPT Treaty could reinforce the non-proliferation regime and that means the reprise of serious negotiation for disarmament. After all, it is the basis of the bargain between the nuclear and non-nuclear states in the NPT Treaty. Non-nuclear states accepted to not obtain the nuclear weapons in exchange for accession to peaceful use of nuclear power and the promise from nuclear states to negotiate disarmament. The absence of disarmament negotiations in the post-Cold War era made desirable the acquisition of nuclear weapons for non-nuclear states looking for security and it can bring back the world to the nuclear age when nuclear war was considered conceivable and even acceptable.

It Is for these reasons that “we must look upon Reykjavik as a vital stepping-stone toward a rational and effective world effort to escape catastrophe and extermination.”[8] And that is why I chose to dedicate my dissertation to the Reykjavik summit, the beginning of nuclear disarmament and the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

Through the pages I depicted the Reagan’s foreign policy through his two mandates as President of the United States and the revolution that bring the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev as Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in

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[7] Thomas Graham Jr., *Nuclear Weapons Elimination: A Process*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

[8] Max M. Kampelman, *Zero Nuclear Weapons*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

Soviet foreign policy. At the time of the first Reagan's election nobody could foresee the end of the Soviet Union or the beginning of the disarmament negotiations. In fact, Reagan's posture was characterized by a solid military buildup and by the Reagan doctrine, the attempt to roll back the Soviet influence worldwide. U.S. military buildup led the Soviet to re open the arms control negotiations and the Reagan doctrine put pressure on a Soviet empire that was on the verge to fall due to domestic problems. The sensibility of President Reagan to nuclear disarmament became more pronounced during his second mandate. The willingness on American superiority over Soviet Union gave to Reagan the confidence to win the Cold War, but the possibility of a nuclear annihilation frightened the President. Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev came at the right time. He was conscious that Soviet Union could not bear anymore the costs of the arms race and he was conscious that Soviet Union needed time and a different world to implement the necessary reforms to overcome its domestic problems. The resolution of the Cold War prevented the Soviet Union to pursue its path of reforms. Mikhail Gorbachev introduced in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union a new vision of the world based on the common problems to resolve. He abandoned the Marxist-Leninist vision of class-based conflict and of world revolution. The two leaders shared the vision of the nuclear weapons as a problem to solve that only they could solve. Their relationship based on respect between enemies led them nearer than anyone to solve the problem of nuclear weapons eliminating them.

The proposals made through the negotiations revealed two different conceptions of the world in which they lived and the future of the nuclear age. Gorbachev behaved as the Soviet Union was meant to stay. He continued to see the world as divided between two main superpowers therefore the problem to solve was only between two actors. Furthermore, it is different the timespan imagined to adopt the resolutions, it is very dilated in Gorbachev's vision. If in Gorbachev's attitude is present a certain dose of trust of the other part and an attempt to create a different climate between enemies, it is absent the imagination of a new world, a world freed from the logic of the MAD. His vision is more focused on the Soviet-American relations and it failed to see the revolutionary potential of the implementation of the SDI. Reagan's vision went beyond the MAD. Reagan wanted with or without the coordination with Soviet Union to escape the barbarity of the nuclear deterrence. As once President Lyndon B. Johnson said: "…uneasy is the

peace that wears a nuclear crown. And we cannot be satisfied with a situation in which the world is capable of extinction in a moment of error, or madness, or anger."[9] It is exactly against error and madness that SDI could be more effective. Admitted that an antiballistic missile system could not be effective against a full-scale attack by a superpower, it could be effective against smaller attack and to guarantee a different kind of security. Clearly Reagan needed the negotiations with Soviet Union in order to diminish the possibility of a nuclear war between nuclear powers of the weight of the U.S. and Soviet Union, but in the future he already considered other kind of menaces. The possibility of madmen, error but principally the acquisition of nuclear powers by terrorist group needed to be addressed beyond the official relations between sovereign states.

In this sense, Reagan's view went beyond the world of MAD and of the two superpowers. He succeeded in imagining the future threats, that could come to non-state actors too. The world of the ideology conflict between capitalism and communism was not infinite as it seemed. The President of the U.S., leader of the free world could not compromise on his deep conviction for the larger good of the world.

Despite these differences, Reagan and Gorbachev succeeded in developing something that the others leader of the United State and Soviet Union failed to: a relationship of almost friendship based on the recognition and respect of the different ideological creeds, the different roles in world history and a shared commitment on the elimination or at least diminishment of the nuclear threat. At the two summits of Geneva 1985 and Reykjavik 1986, the two leaders spent a lot of time together and had the occasion to get to know each other. The personal good relationship between Gorbachev and Reagan resulted crucial in achieving results after the Reykjavik summit.

"It is a marvel of history that the end of Soviet power came peacefully, bringing about the end of the Cold War. In part, this was due to relationships that were forged at Reykjavik and that survived the seeming failure of that summit meeting and thrived in the months and years that followed."[10] In Reykjavik United States and Soviet Union did

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[9] Max M. Kampelman, *Zero Nuclear Weapons*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

[10] Don Oberdorfer, *When Reagan and Gorbachev Reached for the Stars*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

not reach an agreement on the elimination of the nuclear weapons but they did pose proposals on the table that could not be withdrawn. The climate between Soviet Union and United States sensibly changed. They could consider each other as partner in this matter. The rigidity of the ideological confrontation fell apart and maybe an irreplaceable pillar of the Soviet Union fell apart with that. In this way the Reykjavik summit could be considered as the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

The literature on U.S. foreign relations comprises a diverse range of sources, with primary documents forming the foundation. These official records offer insights into policy decisions and motivations. Additionally, direct testimonies, including memoirs and interviews, provide a human dimension to diplomatic history.

In examining U.S. foreign relations, primary sources from the Department of State serve as foundational documents, offering insights into American policy decisions. Complementing these, scholars' articles provide nuanced perspectives, enriching the understanding of the historical context and diplomatic strategies.

Direct testimonies, including memoirs, interviews, and firsthand accounts from key figures involved in shaping foreign policy decisions, contribute invaluable insights into the decision-making processes and the human dimensions of diplomacy. These personal narratives offer a unique perspective that complements and enriches the official record, providing a more holistic view of the motivations and considerations that influenced U.S. foreign relations.

On the Soviet Union's side, the absence of direct access to primary sources necessitated a reliance on scholars' articles, which have been instrumental in providing a detailed examination of Soviet foreign relations during the firsts Gorbachev years as Secretary General. Gorbachev's book, "Perestroika," emerges as a key testimony, offering a firsthand account from the Soviet perspective and contributing a valuable layer of insight into the internal dynamics of the Soviet Union.

Moreover, Gorbachev's "Perestroika" offers a unique firsthand account from a key figure in Soviet history. This source not only provides insights into the internal dynamics of the Soviet Union during a critical period but also sheds light on Gorbachev's perspective on U.S.-Soviet relations. Gorbachev's reflections, rooted in personal

experiences and political decisions, contribute a distinctive layer to the analysis, enhancing the overall richness and depth of the study.

To reconstruct the negotiations, a dual approach was adopted. Official reports from the United States form a critical component, providing an authoritative account of the U.S. stance and positions during the Reykjavik talks. Direct testimonies add a human dimension to the analysis, shedding light on the behind-the-scenes dynamics, motivations, and challenges faced by key figures involved in the negotiations.

The inclusion of multiple perspectives serves to enrich the narrative, offering a more complete understanding of the intricate interplay between these two global powers during a decisive period in history.

This study, therefore, reflects a meticulous and balanced approach, leveraging primary sources, scholars' articles, and direct testimonies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the U.S-Soviet Union relations that led to the Reykjavik negotiations and their significance.

Even if in the end Soviet Union and United States failed to reach the agreement of eliminating nuclear weapons, Reykjavik summit remained a crucial episode of world history as explained before. Its significance can be a useful reminder of how to negotiate with enemies and how to handle complex problems. Furthermore, one of the heritages of the World War II and the Cold War is still the permanence of the nuclear menace. The reconstruction of the context and of the negotiations that took place in the Icelandic summit through the pages of this dissertation can be the expression of the hope for a renewed interest in the nuclear problem.

REAGAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

The Reagan presidency, spanning from 1981 to 1989, left an indelible mark on American foreign policy, reshaping the dynamics of the Cold War. Among the defining moments of this era was the Reykjavik Summit of 1986, a critical juncture that showcased the evolution and interplay of Reagan's strategic initiatives. This chapter explores the intricate web of the Reagan Doctrine, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and the pursuit of arms control agreements, ultimately leading to the dramatic negotiations in Reykjavik. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study aims to unravel the complex threads that wove together to create a pivotal chapter in Cold War history.

At the heart of Reagan's foreign policy was the Reagan Doctrine, a paradigm that sought to roll back the influence of communism worldwide. This chapter will delve into the ideological underpinnings of the Reagan Doctrine and its impact on U.S. interventions. By understanding Reagan's assertive stance against Soviet-backed regimes and his commitment to supporting anti-communist movements, we can contextualize the geopolitical landscape that set the stage for the subsequent strategic initiatives.

Reagan's ambitious vision for a missile defense system, known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), emerged as a key component of his foreign policy arsenal. This chapter will scrutinize the origins of SDI, exploring the technological aspirations and strategic motivations behind the initiative. The study will assess the impact of SDI on U.S.-Soviet relations and its role in shaping the discourse on nuclear deterrence. SDI not only underscored Reagan's commitment to American security but also became a focal point in the arms control negotiations that unfolded at Reykjavik.

Reagan's pursuit of arms control agreements was a nuanced aspect of his foreign policy, balancing a commitment to deterrence with a desire to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict. The study will explore the motivations behind Reagan's diplomatic efforts and the challenges faced in achieving substantial reductions in nuclear arsenals.

In conclusion, this chapter embarks on a journey through the multifaceted landscape of Reagan's foreign policy, tracing the path from the assertive Reagan Doctrine, through the technological aspirations of SDI, to the delicate negotiations on arms control

that culminated in the Reykjavik Summit. Through a synthesis of historical analysis and scholarly insights, this study aims to unveil the interconnected narratives that shaped a critical chapter in Cold War diplomacy.

THE REAGAN DOCTRINE

Reagan became U.S. President on January 20, 1981. After years of détente under Nixon, Ford and Carter, newly elected President Reagan clarifies its intentions toward the relations with the Soviet Union during his first press conference as President held in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building on January 29, 1981, at 4 p.m. and broadcast live on nationwide radio and television networks: "Well, so far détente's been a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims. (…) I know of no leader of the Soviet Union since the revolution, and including the present leadership, that has not more than once repeated in the various Communist congresses they hold their determination that their goal must be the promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state, whichever word you want to use. Now, as long as they do that and as long as they, at the same time, have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is what will further their cause, meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat, in order to attain that, and that is moral, not immoral, and we operate on a different set of standards, I think when you do business with them, even at a détente, you keep that in mind."[11] He denounces the double morality of the Soviets, the incompatibility of the ends between the U.S. and Soviet Union and definitely the lack of trust between the two superpowers.

It is the begin of a new era of U.S.-Soviet Union relations, an era of harsh confrontation worldwide. After years of détente, Soviet Union seemed on the verge to overcome the American power after an extraordinary arms race during the 1970s and a renovate willingness to intervene militarily globally. The Soviet interventions in Angola, Mozambique and Afghanistan are examples of that. "Throughout the 1970s the growth of

[11] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 25

Soviet arms, strategic and conventional, proceeded at a rate that could eventually call into serious question the effectiveness of Western deterrent and defense arrangement."[12] Meanwhile, the U.S. just came out from the quagmire of Vietnam and the willingness in U.S. capacity to defend its foreign interests were at a minimum. The constraint posed by the defeat in Vietnam on the use of force in external relations was one of the features that Reagan had to face coming to power. No longer American public opinion would have accepted high human costs during long foreign military interventions. It is testified by his limited military interventions record in Libya, Grenada, Lebanon and by the nonmilitary intervention in Nicaragua.

Nevertheless, Reagan had the duty to restore the American prestige without the powerful mean of the military. "To stop and even to reverse the decline in America's global role and position, to restore the nation's credibility for power and its use, to stop the steady expansion of Soviet influence that had occurred in the 1970s, and perhaps in time even to put Moscow on the defensive, these were the foreign policy ends to which Mr. Reagan dedicated his administration."[13] In order to contain and eventually even roll back the expansion of U.S.S.R. influence worldwide, Reagan's administration launched the Reagan Doctrine. "The Reagan Doctrine, qua doctrine, proclaims a new international order in which the legitimacy of governments will no longer rest simply on their effectiveness, but on conformity with the democratic process."[14] The doctrine gave to the U.S. the moral responsibility to intervene against in particular Marxist-Leninist governments because illegitimate. Therefore, the doctrine is not only about containment as the previous Truman doctrine but is also offensive in his nature. Reagan wanted to stop the expansion and eventually roll back the Soviet Union influence aiding popular insurgencies wherever worldwide, especially in the Third World. Reagan Doctrine is based on an interest in the national security because freedom and democracy are the best guarantors of peace in Reagan's words.

Following the idea that the Soviet Union was "the focus of evil in the modern world" with the "aggressive impulses of an evil empire"[15], it was consequent for the

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[12] Robert W. Tucker, *Reagan's Foreign Policy*, Foreign Affairs, 1988/1989, Vol. 68, No. 1, America and the World 1988/89 (1988/1989), pp. 1-27, Council on Foreign Relations, 1989
[13] Ibidem
[14] Ibidem
[15] Ronald Reagan*, Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals*, 1983

administration to elaborate a counter strategy based on the narrative. The anti-communism was one of the defining features of the Reagan administration in its beginning. "The striking feature of the Reagan team was its ideological purity. White House political honchos […] even reached down to ensure purity in positions normally free from politics."[16] "Many career foreign policy specialists were fired, transferred, or forced into retirement for their failure to meet the president's ideological standards."[17]

The world as resulted from the international developments of the 1970s was a world in which containment has failed. The expansion of the influence of the Soviet Union was a threat for the American interests. The U.S. had to respond because Soviet expansion following the words of Reagan's CIA Director William Casey was a "a noose tightening, a rope woven of Communist victories around the globe."[18] The rise of anti-communist rebellions at the time gave some arguments to the administration to describe the rise of a wave of democratic revolutions around the world. Insurgencies that the Reagan's doctrine promised to support in order to reverse the expansion of the communism. In Reagan's words "In the Third World, in Afghanistan, in Central America, in Africa, in Southeast Asia, opposition to totalitarianism is on the rise. It may not grab the headlines, but there is a democratic revolution underway […] The goal of the free world must no longer be stated in the negative, that is, resistance to Soviet expansionism […] We must go on the offensive with a forward strategy for freedom."[19] "The strategy was shaped by the National Security Planning Group (NSPG), which included Reagan's first Secretary of State Alexander Haig, National Security Adviser Richard Allen, UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, and, most importantly, CIA Director Casey."[20] In January

[16] I. M. Destler, Leslie Gelb and Anthony Lake, *Our Own Worst Enemy: The Unmaking of American Foreign Policy*, New York, Simon et Schuster, 1984
[17] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996
[18] Joseph E. Persico, *Casey: From OSS to CIA*, New York, Viking Penguin, 1990
[19] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996
[20] Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, New York, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994

1981 yet, the administration agreed on the need for a covert strategic offensive against the U.S.S.R.[21]

The first countries to which apply the Reagan doctrine were individuated by CIA Director Casey during an NSPG meeting in March 1981.[22] They were Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Cuba, Grenada, Iran, Laos, Libya and Nicaragua. CIA Director Casey argued that "we need to be backing these movements with money and political muscle. If we can get the Soviets to expend enough resources, it will create fissures in the system. We need half a dozen Afghanistans."[23] The level of ideological confrontation was high as the tension between the two superpowers, the American plan was to promote uprisings worldwide against the enemy. The conflict is declined following the idea of the incompatibility of the two systems, communist and capitalist. The Soviet Union was described as an evil empire and as Reagan stated in a June 1980 interview, "let's not delude ourselves, the Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't engaged in this game of dominoes, there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world."[24] There was the certainty that the Soviet Union was following a sort of grand design to pursuit the domination of the world.

All was set for a dangerous showdown between the two superpowers. By early 1983, the NSPG furthered the initiative in two National Security Decision Directives (NSDD-32 and 75).[25] According to NSDD-75, the United States should "contain and over time reverse Soviet expansionism by competing effectively on a sustained basis with the Soviet Union in all international arenas, particularly in the overall military balance and in geographical regions of priority concern to the United States."[26] Furthermore "U.S. policy will seek to ... weaken and, where possible, undermine the existing links between [Soviet

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[21] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996

[22] Ibidem

[23] Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, New York, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994

[24] Karen Elliott House, *Reagan's World: Republican Policies Stress Arms Buildup, a Firm Line to Soviets*, Wall Street Journal, June 3, 1980

[25] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996

[26] *National Security Decision Directive Number 75*; 1983

Third World allies] and the Soviet Union. U.S. policy will include active efforts to encourage democratic movements and forces to bring about political change inside these countries."[27] All was set for the beginning of the operations that actually started with aid programs in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia and Nicaragua. Reagan Doctrine was nothing more that the continuation of the "long and noble tradition of supporting the struggle of other peoples for freedom, democracy, and independence."[28] Furthermore, in his 1986 State of the Union address, Reagan stated: “to those imprisoned in regimes held captive, to those beaten for daring to fight for freedom and democracy, for the right to worship, to speak, to live, and to prosper in the family of free nations […] You are not alone, Freedom Fighters. America will support with moral and material assistance your right not just to fight and die for freedom, but to fight and win freedom, to win freedom in Afghanistan, in Angola, in Cambodia, and in Nicaragua.” Testifying a way to intend the conflict between evil and good, communism and freedom that lasted at least until that year.

If the elaboration of the theory behind the Reagan doctrine was by the executive, the Reagan’s administration, the application of the doctrine needed the support of the Congress. There were three factions towards the Reagan Doctrine that represents three attitudes toward the implantation of the doctrine: advocates, pragmatists and opponents.[29] The advocates were in favor of a clash with the Soviet Union. They “considered the strategy to be a universal, stand-alone approach to the problem of Soviet expansionism and sought to implement the Reagan Doctrine wherever anti-communist rebels existed, or, for some, could be created.”[30] Representatives of this faction were in the executive, in the House of Representatives and in the Senate among the republican majority. “Pragmatists in the State Department, White House, and Congress endorsed the idea of assistance to anti-communist rebels in certain circumstances as a tool to further larger

[27] *National Security Decision Directive Number 75*; 1983
[28] George Shultz, *Shaping American Foreign Policy: New Realities and New Ways of Thinking*, Foreign Affairs 64, no.3 (Summer 1985): 713, 1985
[29] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996
[30] Ibidem

policy objectives."[31] They considered the aid to the insurgencies as useful tools in order to resolve regional crisis side by side with diplomacy. "a member of this group, stated that "aiding anti-communist rebels was not by itself a strategy […] Covert action [...] is not foreign policy."[32] Lastly, the opponents did not share the vision of the world of the republican majority and they did oppose to the Reagan doctrine always except for the case of the Afghanistan invaded.

The reason why in the end Reagan Doctrine was fully applied only in the case of Afghanistan was the division among the factions over different policy issues. Firstly, there were division on the objectives. The supporters believed that aiding revolutions at the periphery of the Soviet empire, the U.S. could reverse or roll back the Soviet gains of the 1970s. Problems at the periphery could have cause problems at the center of the Soviet empire forcing to moderation, reform or maybe failure. Others viewed the Reagan Doctrine as a way to challenge the Soviet Union in the developing world. Reagan Doctrine should have the function to raise the cost of the empire for the U.S.S.R. and convince the Soviets to stop new acquisitions. "By announcing and then pursuing a policy of support for anti-communist insurgencies, America could re-engage, cope with Vietnam's effect on the U.S. role in the world, and, as Fred Ikle (Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy) noted, "demonstrate the United States' capacity as a super power to apply the use of force" when required in the developing world."[33] Another attitude toward the objectives of the Reagan Doctrine was well represented by the idea of George Schultz. He described a sort of "dual track" Reagan Doctrine through which looking for peace negotiated agreements in the areas of crisis worldwide. This idea was described as appeasement by the more advocates. As Michael Armacost, Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs explained: "with respect to conflicts [...] in Afghanistan, Angola, and Cambodia, we are determined to support those resistance forces that are fighting for the independence and freedom. However, we also believe these conflicts can and should be

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[31] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996

[32] Chester Crocker, *High Noon in South Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1992

[33] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996

resolved politically. We have outlined a framework for promoting such solutions. The key is a negotiating process between the warring parties to bring an end to violence, national reconciliation, and the withdrawal of foreign troops; we see scope for US-Soviet talks to support such negotiations."[34]

The opponents questioned the Reagan Doctrine on several grounds. Firstly, they raised the moral question in aiding guerrilla insurgencies. Then, others support the vision that the insurgents aided were not so democratic and maybe the regimes against which they rebelled were not so totalitarian, so Marxist-Leninist or so Soviet dominated as the administration assumed. Furthermore, the importance of the states involved in the application of the Reagan Doctrine was at least dubious for the American interests and the strategy would have led only to "intensify conflict, exacerbate superpower competition, make settlement of regional conflicts impossible, and actually entrench Soviet influence as Marxist regimes facing guerrilla war turned to the Soviet bloc for aid."[35] Then, this vision seemed even more based with the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev and his opening to the West. "As time passed, more policy makers questioned the Reagan Doctrine's assumption that the Soviet Union was bent on world conquest and expansionism, which seemed less accurate in the presence of Gorbachev's internal reform efforts and foreign policy initiatives."[36]

Disagreement was present even over the choice of the potential recipients of the Reagan Doctrine. The advocates called for the application of the Doctrine to all kind of resistance against "pro-Soviet leftists" worldwide. Others viewed in the effective Soviet invasion and occupation the discriminant for the aid. Jeane Kirkpatrick and Alan Gerson described a way to identify recipients of Reagan Doctrine. They "identified three conditions for Reagan Doctrine assistance: an indigenous, independent insurgency ("Democratic Resistance"); a government relying on arms and personnel/advisers from the Soviet bloc to maintain it ("Soviet Client"); and a population denied participation in

[34] Michael Armacost, *US Policy Toward the Third World*, Department of State Bulletin, January 1987
[35] Raymond W. Copson, *Contra Aid and the Reagan Doctrine: An Overview*, Congressional Research Service Review, March 1987
[36] Mark N. Katz, *Beyond the Reagan Doctrine: Reassessing US Policy Toward Regional Conflicts*, The Washington Quarterly 14, no. 1, (Winter 1991): 169-79, 1991

their government ("Illegitimate Government").”[37] The scheme led to individuate a list of country as potential recipients: Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and Mozambique. Ethiopia was quickly abandoned. In Mozambique no aid was provided. “In Nicaragua and Angola, aid was uneven, inconsistent, or provided only after 1986. In Cambodia, the assistance was non-lethal and limited (less than $10 million annually). Only in Afghanistan was the doctrine implemented fully, consistently, and substantially, with roughly $1 billion provided during the Reagan administration.”[38]

The Doctrine born as a worldwide strategy to roll back the Soviet Union was in the end applied only in one country fully. Concerning the concrete application of the Reagan Doctrine, aid to Afghanistan began in 1982 and ended after 1988 with the withdraw of the Soviet troops. In Cambodia was applied a small, non-lethal covert program in 1982 that was expanded in 1985. When the Vietnamese troops began the retreat, the Congress ended the application of the Reagan Doctrine. In the case of the Angolan rebels there was a ban on aid by the Congress. Only in 1985 an alliance in the congress succeed in lifting the ban and in 1986 began the assistance under the auspices of the Reagan Doctrine. When at the end of 1988 a settlement was reached in Angola, the alliance between hard-liners and moderates split. The stalemate resulted in a continued aid. The case of Nicaragua resulted in a clash between the executive and the legislative branches. An assistance to the rebels began in 1981, then the Congress firstly restricted the aid in 1982 and in 1984 banned such aid. “Congress then tried to tie renewed assistance to a diplomatic settlement in 1985 and 1986. When the administration refused to negotiate and secretly organized aid to the rebels in violation of the congressional prohibition, a majority of Congress reacted by ending the application of the Reagan Doctrine.”[39] In Mozambique Reagan Doctrine was never really applied. There was a struggle within the Congress from 1985 to 1987 but the President and the majority in the Congress in the end refused to apply the Reagan Doctrine in Mozambique.

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[37] Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Alan Gerson, *The Reagan Doctrine, Human Rights, and International Law* collected in Louis Henkin et al., eds., *Right v. Might: International Law and the Use of Force,* New York, Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1989

[38] James M. Scott, *Reagan's Doctrine? The Formulation of an American Foreign Policy Strategy*, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall, 1996, Vol. 26, No. 4, Intricacies of U.S. Foreign Policy (Fall, 1996), pp. 1047-1061, Wiley, 1996

[39] Ibidem

The importance of the Reagan Doctrine did not lie in the effective results that achieved on the ground. Its importance was for the U.S. to change its posture against the Soviets. With the Reagan Doctrine the U.S. was no more on the defensive against the Soviet Union. Reagan Doctrine represented the hope to win a struggle between good and bad. Furthermore, a change of the narrative of the U.S.-Soviet Union confrontation, the occasion to state the importance to fight a battle from the right part of the history with the willingness to ultimately win.

STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE AND THE PROBLEM OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

After the Soviet military buildup of the 1970s the problem of arms control became more and more urgent. As denounced by Secretary Haig in July 1981: "The pace of the Soviet buildup is increasing. Since the beginning of last year, the Soviets have more than doubled their SS–20 force. Already 750 warheads have been deployed on SS–20 launchers. The Soviet Union has continued to deploy the long-range Backfire bomber and a whole array of new medium- and short-range nuclear missiles and nuclear-capable aircraft. This comprehensive Soviet arms buildup is in no sense a reaction to NATO's defense program. Indeed, NATO did very little as this alarming buildup progressed."[40]

The equilibrium in Europe was shifting to the Soviet part putting in danger the American allies of the NATO. Then, "in December 1979 the alliance finally responded in two ways. First, it agreed to deploy 464 new U.S. ground-launched cruise missiles in Europe and to replace 108 medium-range Pershing ballistic missiles already located there with modernized versions of greater range. Second, the alliance agreed that the United States should pursue negotiated limits on U.S. and Soviet systems in this category."[41]

These negotiations will not be the first of this kind. During the 1970s two agreements was reached under the name of SALT: strategic arms limitations talks. SALT I was signed on May 26, 1972 by U.S. President Nixon and U.S.S.R. General Secretary

[40] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 56
[41] *Ibidem*

Brezhnev. The treaty involved to freeze the number of strategic ballistic missile launchers at existing levels and provided for the addition of new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers only after the same number of older intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and SLBM launchers had been dismantled. Contextually, it was signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty imposing the limitation of the anti-ballistic missile systems used in defending areas against ballistic missile-delivered nuclear weapons. Under the terms of the treaty, each party was limited to two ABM complexes, each of which was to be limited to 100 anti-ballistic missiles. It was the détente at his high times, "in United States in 1973 almost 70 percent of the population believed that the United States and U.S.S.R. could work together for peace. There were even higher levels of support for SALT and for increased contacts in other fields, including trade and technological cooperation. In western Europe opinion polls showed that many people thought the Cold War was over for good."[42]

In 1979 when SALT II was signed and then not ratified, times had changed. SALT II promised to ban new missile programs and was signed after years of negotiations on June 18, 1979. Six months after, Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and the U.S. discovered the presence of a Soviet brigade stationing in Cuba. This led to the failure of the ratification of the treaty. The climate of renewed Cold War and suspicion between the superpowers made the opening of new negotiations on nuclear weapons very tough at the beginning of the 1980s. During a discourse to the Foreign Press Association on July 14, 1981 Secretary of State Haig stated six principles that the U.S. would have followed for the negotiations: "our arms control efforts will be an instrument of, not a replacement for, a coherent allied security policy; we will seek arms control agreements that truly enhance security; we will seek arms control bearing in mind the whole context of Soviet conduct worldwide; we will seek balanced arms control agreements; we will seek arms controls that include effective means of verification and mechanisms for securing compliance; our strategy must consider the totality of the various arms control processes and various weapons systems, not only those that are being specifically negotiated."[43]

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[42] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017

[43] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 56

Despite the tone of a hard cold warrior and the narrative of evil against good Reagan initially maintained, he decided to directly write a letter to Brezhnev in order to launch a new round of negotiations with the Soviet Union with a surprising friendly approach. It is Reagan that on November 18, 1981 decided to tell it to the world and to read the letter to the members of the National Press Club broadcasted live on radio and television. Reminding the responsibility he and Brezhnev had in common toward the humanity, Reagan wrote:

> The peoples of the world, despite differences in racial and ethnic origin, have very much in common. They want the dignity of having some control over their individual lives, their destiny. They want to work at the craft or trade of their own choosing and to be fairly rewarded. They want to raise their families in peace without harming anyone or suffering harm themselves. Government exists for their convenience, not the other way around … Is it possible that we have permitted ideology, political and economic philosophies, and governmental policies to keep us from considering the very real, everyday problems of our peoples? Will the average Soviet family be better off or even aware that the Soviet Union has imposed a government of its own choice on the people of Afghanistan? Is life better for the people of Cuba because the Cuban military dictate who shall govern the people of Angola? … should we not be concerned with eliminating the obstacles which prevent our people, those you and I represent, from achieving their most cherished goals?[44]

The urgent question and obstacles referred to are the possibility of a nuclear war between U.S. and Soviet Union and it is clear the sensibility of Reagan to the horrible consequences of a nuclear war to the people of the world who do not have a real interest in the world game of the Cold War. During the same discourse Reagan launched the name of the new negotiations that will be called START: strategic arms reduction talks. He committed the U.S. to resume the negotiations at Geneva on arms reduction and to open negotiations on strategic weapons the following year. Then, he proposed to reach a new equality at lower levels of conventional forces in Europe and finally he pointed out that to maintain peace they must reduce the risks of surprise attack and the chance of war arising out of uncertainty or miscalculation. Reagan concluded his speech declaring:" There is no reason why people in any part of the world should have to live in permanent fear of war or its spectre. I believe the time has come for all nations to act in a responsible spirit that doesn't threaten other states. I believe the time is right to move forward on arms control and the resolution of critical regional disputes at the conference table. Nothing

[44] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 69

will have a higher priority for me and for the American people over the coming months and years."[45]

Arms control became a declared top priority for the American foreign policy and for the relations between U.S. and Soviet Union. In a memorandum from the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs on July 9, 1982 there is the American perspective on the relations between east and west in times of negotiations for arms control:" The President approaches our relations with the Soviet Union as a realist. He has no illusions about the fundamental and implacable nature of conflict between the U.S and the USSR. He is firmly convinced that given the inadequacies and inefficiencies endemic to the Soviet system, the non-communist mode of development would eventually prevail. At the same time, the President is convinced that we can and should negotiate with the Soviets in order to limit the risk of nuclear war, reduce the danger of crisis escalation and attempt to build on those limited areas of agreement which exist between our two countries. It is precisely in this spirit that the U.S has embarked on INF and START negotiations."[46] There is the trust in a future victory of the west but the necessity to negotiate on present problems such as the nuclear weapons. The willingness of the superiority against the Soviet Union is total as the conception of the world divided in good and evil, a conflict of "implacable nature". Clearly, these kind of negotiations does not mean at all any kind of détente.

As in November 1982 Andropov came to power in Soviet Union, the negotiations on arms control were far from a resolution. In an address on the State of the Union before a Joint Session of Congress on January 25, 1983 Reagan declared his hopes in the new Soviet leadership for a positive change in Soviet-U.S. relations. On arms reduction talks: "For our part, we're vigorously pursuing arms reduction negotiations with the Soviet Union. Supported by our allies, we've put forward draft agreements proposing significant weapon reductions to equal and verifiable lower levels. We insist on an equal balance of forces. And given the overwhelming evidence of Soviet violations of international treaties concerning chemical and biological weapons, we also insist that any agreement we sign

[45] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 69
[46] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 108

can and will be verifiable."[47] It came to surface the lack of trust between the two superpowers as one of the main problems on the table of the negotiations. It is difficult to reach an agreement with whom is believed to be the evil of the world. Although it existed a sort of esteem toward the Andropov leadership. It is described by the National Security Council Staff as "the most intelligent and subtle leadership since Lenin" and it continues "in the very short time since he has taken power, Andropov has already demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the mentality of the Western world and a lively realization of the limitations of Soviet resources as well as the necessity for economic liberalization while maintaining a political iron grip."[48] The rise of Andropov did not mean an improvement in the U.S.-Soviet relations. As noted by Secretary of State Shultz in a memorandum to Reagan on January 19, 1983 "increased Soviet activism since Andropov's rise to power confronts us with a situation requiring strength, imagination and energy", the perspective was that the future will bear challenges and opportunities in the relations with the Soviet Union.

On arms control he advised the President:" We must not abandon the high standards we have set for potential agreements—real reductions, equality in the important measures of military capability, verifiability, and enhanced stability. We must at the same time win the battle for public opinion by making clear that it is the USSR, not the U.S., that is impeding progress toward agreements."[49] It is in that atmosphere of stalemate that at the end of an address to the Nation on March 23, 1983 Reagan introduced a game changer in the negotiations on arms reduction and an important element of the talks at the Reykjavik summit that will be called Strategic Defense Initiative. "Tonight, consistent with our obligations of the ABM treaty and recognizing the need for closer consultation with our allies, I'm taking an important first step. I am directing a comprehensive and intensive effort to define a long-term research and development program to begin to achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles. This could pave the way for arms control measures to eliminate the weapons themselves.

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[47] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 139

[48] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 140

[49] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 135

We seek neither military superiority nor political advantage. Our only purpose—one all people share—is to search for ways to reduce the danger of nuclear war."[50]

Reagan is moved in that direction by the question "would it not be better to save lives than to avenge them?". He is trying to find ways to escape the trap of the Mutual Assured Destruction posed by the mutual threat of the Soviet and American nuclear bombs. With the SDI he believed to launch "an effort which holds the promise of changing the course of human history." and that "could pave the way for arms-control measures to eliminate the weapons themselves."[51] The arms control negotiations were going nowhere with the Soviets that refused to significantly decreased its number of nuclear weapons and the growing mistrust and suspicion led to a deterioration of Soviet-American relations. New arms generated by the Soviet Union during the military buildup of the 1970s seemed to pose in serious danger the capacity of the U.S. of retaliation after an eventual Soviet first-attack. SDI practically imagined the use of space-based lasers to destroy incoming missiles.

The base of the revolutionary idea at the heart of the SDI began to be posed by Senator Wallop that back in 1979 declared: "Technology now promises a considerable measure of safety from the threat of ballistic missile."[52] Then, General Graham proposed to deploy space-based rocket-launched projectiles to intercept boosters. The idea would "free America from the threat of Soviet ballistic missiles largely by using technology that was proven successful as far back as 1959."[53] And finally, Dr. Teller, advisor of the President on scientific matters, urged the development of nuclear-driven directed energy weapons that "by converting hydrogen bombs into hitherto unprecedented forms and then directing these in highly effective fashions against enemy targets would end the MAD [mutual assured destruction] era and commence a period of assured survival on terms favorable to the Western Alliance."[54] The Presidential initiative was not out of the blue. A commission was formed to analyze the prospective of the program and in 1984 the

[50] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 145
[51] Ibidem
[52] Gerold Yonas*, The Strategic Defense Initiative*, Daedalus, Spring, 1985, Vol. 114, No. 2, Weapons in Space, Vol. I: Concepts and Technologies (Spring, 1985), pp. 73-90, The MIT Press, 1985
[53] Ibidem
[54] Ibidem

Defensive Technologies Study Team presented to the President a statement in which described the feasibility of the project: “By taking an optimistic view of newly emerging technologies, we concluded that a robust BMD system can be made to work eventually. The ultimate effectiveness, complexity, and degree of technical risk in this system will depend not only on technology itself, but also on the extent to which the Soviet Union either agrees to mutual defense arrangements and offense limitations, or embarks on new strategic directions in response to our initiative. The outcome of this initiation of an evolutionary shift in our strategic direction will hinge on as yet unresolved policy as well as technical issues.”[55] At the time the feasibility of the SDI program seemed to be little more than a possibility but on the wake of the marvelous feats that American technology could perform such as the Manhattan project or the Apollo program, President Reagan was very confident that U.S. was able to deliver another scientific miracle.

Soviet reaction to the announcement of the so called “Star Wars” was hard and implacable, they viewed the SDI as a direct threat. They did not take the version of Reagan that SDI was defensive in nature. General Secretary Andropov in a speech on March 27, 1983 said that the defensive measures Reagan spoke of would seem defensive only to "someone not conversant with these matters." The United States would continue to develop its strategic offensive forces with the aim of acquiring a first-strike capability. “Under these conditions the intention to secure itself the possibility of destroying with the help of ABM defenses the corresponding strategic systems of the other side, that is of rendering it incapable of dealing a retaliatory strike, is a bid to disarm the Soviet Union in the face of the United States nuclear threat.” Soviet response was hardly unexpected. President Reagan continued with his unequivocal candor about the Soviet Union and its international activities. Reagan continued insisting on denouncing the Soviet’s threat to the world, its bad record on human rights while considering the necessity to arrive to a compromise in the field of the arms control. “The President’s policy has been entirely coherent: he has stressed that Western statesmen have a moral obligation to speak candidly about the Soviet Union and its intentions—for our own sake, for the sake of those who suffer under Soviet rule, for the sake of realistic negotiations with the Soviets. If the President is perceived as suddenly backtracking, it will damage the perception of

[55] Gerold Yonas*, The Strategic Defense Initiative*, Daedalus, Spring, 1985, Vol. 114, No. 2, Weapons in Space, Vol. I: Concepts and Technologies (Spring, 1985), pp. 73-90, The MIT Press, 1985

policy coherence the public finds so reassuring."[56] And more from the words of the Special Assistant to the President and White House Chief Speechwriter Dolan on January 11, 1984: "Candor about the Soviet Union and its international activities, far from hindering the peace process, actually enhances it. History has shown that when the Soviets realize that their counterparts in negotiations have no illusions about the true nature of their system and its ultimate intentions that they settle down to the hard business of serious negotiations. While the democracies have their own serious injustices to deal with, this should not prevent us from making the crucial moral distinctions between a system which attempts to deal with its problems forthrightly and a system that justifies wrongdoing done in the name of the state. Our willingness to speak out about injustice is at the heart of our foreign policy, indeed forms its moral center. To fail to enunciate the differences between totalitarian and democratic systems of government would be to forsake this moral high ground. Equally as important, it would persuade the Soviets we are once again in the grip of self-delusion. This would only tempt them to exploit negotiations rather than work towards results beneficial to both sides."[57]

It can be traced a strategy behind the harsh climate of confrontation within the discourses of the President relating the Soviet Union. "Reagan from the very beginning of his presidency believed that the United States had to strengthen its defense and its international prestige in order to negotiate with the Soviet Union from an advantageous position …. Reagan's tough talk really frightened the aging leadership in Moscow, who, for the first time, started believing that the world might be heading toward a total war between the Superpowers"[58] The leadership in Moscow became adamant instead to soften and any agreement became more and more unreachable. Furthermore, risk of war increased as the tensions. In September 1983 the Soviets shot down a civilian Korean airplane mistaken for a U.S. spy plane killing 269 people including a U.S. congressman. Then in November 1983 the NATO military exercise named Able Archer '83 brought the world to the brink of war. The exercise "simulated conflict escalation up to the point when nuclear strikes were launched. The Soviets had been notified about the exercise beforehand, and knew quite a bit about it from their own intelligence sources. The CIA

[56] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 181
[57] *Ibidem*
[58] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017

reported later that Moscow had placed Soviet air units in East Germany and Poland on heightened readiness. There is no reason to believe that the Soviet leaders thought an attack was imminent, but Moscow's reaction showed just how volatile and dangerous the overall situation was. The world, and Europe especially, was closer to a situation where nuclear war could break out accidentally than it had been for a long time."[59] With an incumbent and rising nuclear danger, Ronald Reagan prepared himself to his second mandate as President of the United States. Nuclear disarmament will be one of the main objectives of his presidency.

REAGAN'S SECOND MANDATE

Despite the words of the Special Assistant to the President and White House Chief Speechwriter Dolan on January 11, 1984 on the candor of the discourses on the Soviet Union, President Reagan convinced himself that something was going wrong with his approach to the problems posed by the Cold War. "I feel the Soviet are so defense minded, so paranoid about being attacked that without being in any way soft on them we ought to tell them no one here has any intention of doing anything like that. What the hell have they got that anyone would want?" wrote Reagan in his diary on November 18, 1983. When President Reagan said that Americans should "begin planning for a world where our adversaries are remembered only for their role in a sad and rather bizarre chapter in human history"[60] Soviet leaders took him very seriously, that is the sort of communication should be avoided in an era of possible nuclear war. Reagan "found the principles of mutually assured destruction to be morally contentious and personally repugnant. The thought of himself ever having to use the nuclear launch codes horrified Reagan."[61]

During Reagan's speech for the inauguration of his second mandate on January 21, 1985 he explained clearly his vision on the mutual assured destruction: "Now, for decades, we and the Soviets have lived under the threat of mutual assured destruction—if either resorted to the use of nuclear weapons, the other could retaliate and destroy the

[59] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017
[60] Ibidem
[61] Ibidem

one who had started it. Is there either logic or morality in believing that if one side threaten to kill tens of millions of our people our only recourse is to threaten killing tens of millions of theirs?"[62] And to escape that situation he considered that "there is only one way safely and legitimately to reduce the cost of national security, and that is to reduce the need for it. And this we're trying to do in negotiations with the Soviet Union. We're not just discussing limits on a further increase of nuclear weapons; we seek, instead, to reduce their number. We seek the total elimination one day of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth."[63] Then, he relaunched his expectations on the negotiations on arms control and even to arrive to totally eliminate that kind of weapons. He repeated the same proposal and relaunched the arms control negotiations during the State of the Union address on February 6, 1985: "Since 1981 we've been committed to seeking fair and verifiable arms agreements that would lower the risk of war and reduce the size of nuclear arsenals. Now our determination to maintain a strong defense has influenced the Soviet Union to return to the bargaining table. Our negotiators must be able to go to that table with the united support of the American people. All of us have no greater dream than to see the day when nuclear weapons are banned from this Earth forever."[64]

After the first mandate during which Reagan believed to have restored the American prestige, to have invested enough on the defense and on the revolutionary program of the SDI without counting the offensive under the Reagan Doctrine, he considered American position on the arms control negotiations improved against the Soviet. Now time has come to arrive to some results on the arms control negotiations. A change in the communication with the Soviet did not imply a change in Reagan anti-communist stance. Reagan Doctrine continued to be applied and the communist threat continued to be addressed worldwide, the democratic revolutions wave seemed to be at its height and capable to challenge the "Brezhnev Doctrine". "Democracy is an old idea, but today we witness a new phenomenon. For many years we saw our adversaries act without restraint to back insurgencies around the world to spread communist dictatorships. The Soviet Union and its proxies, like Cuba and Vietnam, have consistently

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[62] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 226

[63] Ibidem

[64] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 231

supplied money, arms, and training in efforts to destabilize or overthrow noncommunist governments. “Wars of national liberation” became the pretext for subverting any noncommunist country in the name of so-called “socialist internationalism. ”At the same time, any victory of communism was held to be irreversible. This was the infamous Brezhnev doctrine, first proclaimed at the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Its meaning is simple and chilling: once you’re in the so-called “socialist camp,” you’re not allowed to leave. Thus the Soviets say to the rest of the world: “What’s mine is mine. What’s yours is up for grabs.”[65] The Cold War hotspots in 1985 at the beginning of Reagan’s second mandate were Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua. “In the Western Hemisphere, over 90% of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean today live under governments that are either democratic or clearly on the road to democracy—in contrast to only one-third in 1979. In less than 6 years, popularly elected democrats have replaced dictators in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Peru, and Grenada. Brazil and Uruguay will inaugurate civilian presidents in March. After a long twilight of dictatorship, this hemispheric trend toward free elections and representative government is something to be applauded and supported”[66] The developments of the events seemed to give reason to the American foreign policy within the world arena of the Cold War considering also the different economic situation clearly in favor of the capitalist side.

The risk of nuclear war still remained present and capable of destroy everything. In Soviet Union, after a brief interval under the leadership of Chernenko between February 1984 and March 1985, on March 11, 1985 the Politburo elected Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary. After relatively brief secretaries of Andropov and Chernenko the Politburo elected a younger leader as Gorbachev who at the times of his election was 54 years old. Even during his previous public offices, he was known to be a potential reformer. In December 1984 Gorbachev visited Great Britain as chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Soviet legislature and at the end of the visit Thatcher said: "I like Mr. Gorbachev. We can do business together."[67] Gorbachev’s rise to power in Soviet Union provided the negotiations for arms control and in general the relations

[65] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 232
[66] Ibidem
[67] Martin McCauley, *Gorbachev*, London and New York, Longman, 1998

between east and west a trustworthy counterpart, someone with whom do business together using Thatcher words. Something that was missing during all the years of the Reagan's presidency. It is difficult to reach agreements describing the counterpart as an "evil empire" and it is even more difficult if the parts do not trust each other.

American reaction to the new General Secretary was not so warm. It seemed that at least initially the Department of State believed that Gorbachev would have continued the same previous policies of the Soviet Union. "Gorbachev is bound to be more active and more formidable than his predecessors. He will present a superficial image of flexibility, as part of an aggressive strategy of wooing our allies and the Chinese while possibly confronting us boldly in Afghanistan/Pakistan, the Middle East, and even Central America. He may at the same time be willing to engage us and meet with you before the end of the year."[68] This is written in a paper prepared in the Department of State on March 22, 1985, few days after the election of Gorbachev. General Secretary Gorbachev had to prove to be really a reformer and a trustworthy counterpart for serious negotiations. Even shortly before the Geneva summit of September 1985 on arms control, the U.S. administration seemed wary to the intentions of the new Soviet leadership. "The U.S. in the past five years has been rebounding from its self-paralysis in the 1970's. Our economy is strong, we have had five years of a major military buildup, and the country seems once again supportive of an active world role for the U.S. Now the Soviets, under a new and vigorous leadership, may want to rebound as well, after a period of economic stagnation and decrepit leadership. They will be formidable adversaries—but they may also be eager to focus on domestic priorities. They have a big Party Congress coming up in February and have some big domestic decisions ahead of them. … Nor should we have illusions about Gorbachev and the new generation he represents. He is a tough bird, and he's very slick in working the Western media. His actions so far give no reason to think he's a closet liberal."[69]

U.S. administration gave very much importance to the new impetus that the Geneva meeting could give to the negotiations. In a memorandum of Secretary of State

[68] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 237
[69] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 248

Schultz for President Reagan on the subject preparing for Geneva, the meeting is described in this way:" This is THE SUPER BOWL. We can and must win, whether it turns out to be a propaganda battle, an acrimonious exchange, or a constructive effort with a promise of more to come. We want the constructive effort and so do our friends, allies, and the American people."[70] After all, the Geneva meeting will be the first meeting between the heads of Soviet and American government in more than 6 years. The U.S. were ready to negotiate but after the strong military buildup they had during the first half of the 1980s they felt strong even for a hard confrontation, they considered to be in a very strong position. On October 24, 1985 in an address before the United Nations General Assembly, President Reagan expressed all his hopes for the successive Geneva meeting: "Mr. Gorbachev and I will have that opportunity. So, yes, let us go to Geneva with both sides committed to dialog. Let both sides go committed to a world with fewer nuclear weapons, and some day with none. Let both sides go committed to walk together on a safer path into the 21st century and to lay the foundation for enduring peace. It is time, indeed, to do more than just talk of a better world. It is time to act. And we will act when nations cease to try to impose their ways upon others. And we will act when they realize that we, for whom the achievement of freedom has come dear, will do what we must to preserve it from assault."[71]

The Geneva summit held between November 19 and November 21, 1985 was not completely successful and U.S. and Soviet Union did not reach any fundamental agreement, but it was a useful occasion to meet and get to know each other between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev. The resulted Joint Statement released on November 21, 1985 remarked that the discussions had "covered the basic questions of U.S.-Soviet relations and the current international situation. The meetings were frank and useful. Serious differences remain on a number of critical issues. While acknowledging the differences in their systems and approaches to international issues, some greater understanding of each side's view was achieved by the two leaders. They agreed about the need to improve U.S.-Soviet relations and the international situation as a whole. In this connection, the two sides have confirmed the importance of an ongoing

[70] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 249
[71] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 253

dialogue, reflecting their strong desire to seek common ground on existing problems. They agreed to meet again in the nearest future. The General Secretary accepted an invitation by the President of the United States to visit the United States of America, and the President of the United States accepted an invitation by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU to visit the Soviet Union. Arrangements for and timing of the visits will be agreed upon through diplomatic channels."[72]

Describing the outcomes of the summit Reagan seemed confident in the future of the relations between U.S. and Soviet Union and of the negotiations on arms control: "I came to Geneva to seek a fresh start in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and we have done this. General Secretary Gorbachev and I have held comprehensive discussions covering all elements of our relationship. I'm convinced that we are heading in the right direction. We've reached some useful interim results which are described in the joint statement that is being issued this morning. In agreeing to accelerate the work of our nuclear arms negotiators, Mr. Gorbachev and I have addressed our common responsibility to strengthen peace. I believe that we have established a process for more intensive contacts between the United States and the Soviet Union. These 2 days of talks should inject a certain momentum into our work on the issues between us, a momentum we can continue at the meeting that we have agreed on for next year."[73]

Before the two meetings in the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Gorbachev considered necessary a preparatory meeting to be held "somewhere halfway"[74] Therefore, Soviets proposed London or Reykjavik[75] and then they agreed with the Americans to held a meeting in Reykjavik on October 11 and 12, 1986. President Reagan announced the meeting during a White House news conference on September 30, 1986: "The meeting was proposed by General Secretary Gorbachev, and I've accepted. And it will take place in the context of preparations for the General Secretary's visit to the United States, which

[72] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 256
[73] Ibidem
[74] G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015
[75] Ibidem

was agreed to at Geneva in November of ’85.“[76] All was set for the unexpected historical meeting at Reykjavik.

[76] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1981-1988, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy, eds. Kristin L. Ahlberg, Washington, U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2022, Document 278

GORBACHEV FOREIGN POLICY REVOLUTION

Mikhail Gorbachev's ascendancy to the leadership of the Soviet Union in 1985 marked a watershed moment not only in Soviet politics but also in the realm of international relations. At the core of Gorbachev's transformative approach was a philosophy known as "new thinking" (novoe myshlenie), a visionary departure from traditional Soviet foreign policy. This chapter delves into the genesis and evolution of Gorbachev's new thinking, exploring how this ideological shift became the driving force behind his foreign policy agenda. Central to this narrative is the examination of how Gorbachev's new thinking paved the way for the groundbreaking Reykjavik Summit of 1986, where Cold War dynamics underwent a profound transformation.

Gorbachev's new thinking emerged as a response to the multifaceted challenges facing the Soviet Union. This chapter will delve into the domestic and international factors that compelled Gorbachev to reevaluate traditional Soviet approaches. From economic stagnation to escalating military expenditures and the failure of Soviet interventions abroad, Gorbachev recognized the imperative for a radical departure from the status quo.

New thinking represented a departure from the confrontational stance that characterized previous Soviet foreign policy. The chapter will elucidate the key tenets of Gorbachev's new thinking, including a rejection of ideological confrontation, a commitment to disarmament, and an emphasis on cooperative relations with the West. The study aims to reveal the ideological foundations that underpinned Gorbachev's vision for a more interconnected and peaceful world.

The pinnacle of Gorbachev's new thinking manifested at the Reykjavik Summit in 1986. The chapter will explore Gorbachev's role leading to the summit, analyzing how his commitment to arms reduction and cooperative security became the driving force behind the negotiations with President Ronald Reagan.

Exploring the complexities of this visionary departure from traditional Soviet foreign policy, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how Gorbachev's ideological shift paved the way for a more cooperative and interconnected international

order, with the Reykjavik Summit serving as a testament to the transformative power of new thinking.

AT THE ORIGIN OF THE REVOLUTION

By the early 1980s the years of détente are over, changing the international environment that allowed the Soviet Union to become a superpower after the massive military buildup of the 1970s.
The Soviet Union possessed the most formidable military capabilities in both Europe and Asia and it demonstrated its capacity to intervene on a global scale whenever it deemed necessary, but under the surface the problems were growing inside the country. "Its economy seemed set on a downward turn. Its politics seemed dysfunctional, to the point that real leadership and direction were hard to attain. And the public mood was dismal. People who had been proud of Soviet achievements and at least tolerant of the system's imperfections now started to doubt the future of Communism and their own role within it."[77]

After the death of Brezhnev Soviet Union experienced two interlocutory General Secretaries under Andropov and Chernenko between November 1982 and March 1985 in continuity with the dogmas of orthodox communism. The advent of a young leader as Gorbachev was exactly meant to bring some novelty in Soviet Union politics, in fact the Politburo elected its youngest member with an age of fifty-four. Gorbachev held the belief that a revitalization of Soviet society was essential, emphasizing the need for vigilant guidance from the Communist Party. He saw the necessity to uplift people's morale and fortify their optimism about the future.

These aims will be translated into the programs of reform for the Soviet Union of perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) announced at a Central Committee Plenum in January 1987 as fundamental in order to overcome years of deterioration. Definitions of perestroika as it was the grade of openness provided by the glasnost always

[77] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017

remained rather vague of the concrete content of the reforms. In a first definition by Gorbachev perestroika was "a resolute overcoming of the processes of stagnation, destruction of the retarding mechanism, and the creation of dependable and efficient machinery for expediting the social and economic progress of Soviet society. The main aim of our strategy is to combine the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with a plan-based economy and set the entire potential of socialism in motion."[78]

To conclude his interviews with the Time, Gorbachev left the answer of this question to the audience: "If we in the Soviet Union are setting ourselves such truly grandiose plans in the domestic sphere, then what are the external conditions that we need to be able to fulfill those domestic plans?"[79] Gorbachev was introducing to the western world his plans for the Soviet Union. Researching the reasons for the revolution that took place in Soviet foreign policy as it was Gorbachev's new thinking, it is worth noting the link he made between the domestic and the foreign spheres. Perestroika was the heart of the Gorbachev project for the Soviet Union and it was a great plan to restructure the Soviet society. Starting from the way of production of goods to the costumes of the people.

> Perestroika means overcoming the stagnation process, breaking down the braking mechanism, creating a dependable and effective mechanism for the acceleration of social and economic progress and giving it greater dynamism. Perestroika means mass initiative. It is the comprehensive development of democracy, socialist self-government, encouragement of initiative and creative endeavor, improved order and discipline, more glasnost, criticism and self-criticism in all spheres of our society. It is utmost respect for the individual and consideration for personal dignity. Perestroika is the all-round intensification of the Soviet economy, the revival and development of the principles of democratic centralism in running the national economy, the universal introduction of economic methods, the renunciation of management by injunction and by administrative methods, and the overall encouragement of innovation and socialist enterprise."[80]

It is understandable the grandiosity of the Gorbachev's aims as it is understandable the state of crisis in which the Soviet Union should have been to need such a renovation.

> Perestroika means a resolute shift to scientific methods, an ability to provide a solid scientific basis for every new initiative. It means the combination of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with a planned economy. Perestroika means priority development of the social sphere aimed at ever better satisfaction of the Soviet people's requirements for good living and working conditions, for good rest and recreation, education and health care. It means unceasing concern for cultural and spiritual wealth, for the culture of every individual and society as a whole. Perestroika means the elimination from society of the distortions of socialist ethics, the consistent implementation of the principles of social justice. It

[78] Odd Arne Westad*, The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017
[79] *An interview with Mikhail Gorbachev*, Time, 9 September 1985
[80] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987

means the unity of words and deeds, rights and duties. It is the elevation of honest, highly-qualified labor, the overcoming of leveling tendencies in pay and consumerism.[81]

In order to achieve all the objectives set, Gorbachev cannot afford an international situation of intense confrontation as it was with "the Reagan military buildup, the recovery in many Western capitalist countries from the economic stagflation of the 1970s, the technological challenge of SDI, the crisis in Poland, and the failure of the Afghan intervention."[82] Soviet Union needed a different landscape to implement the perestroika reforms. Perestroika in internal affairs and new thinking in foreign policy are inextricably linked. New thinking (novoye myshleniye) constitutes the foreign policy dimension of Gorbachev's comprehensive reforms, which encompass the well-known concepts of perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness). These three reform elements are interconnected and mutually reinforcing: the evolution of foreign policy thinking contributes to the restructuring of the Soviet economy, while domestic economic and political reforms influence the direction and execution of Soviet foreign policy. Consequently, understanding new thinking in foreign policy requires considering it within the broader framework of Mikhail Gorbachev's vision for the future of the Soviet Union, rather than viewing it solely as a revision of specific aspects of Soviet international conduct.[83] The theory behind the perestroika is originated largely by Gorbachev's vision and considerations about the conditions of the Soviet Union and what was needed for its future in order to overcome the difficulties of the country.

Gorbachev's revolution in foreign policy borrowed ideas from the experts of the Academy of Sciences Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), one of the most important foreign policy think tank in the Soviet Union. "In the early 1980s, the institute quite aggressively promoted a distinctive ideology of international relations, including a complex empirical and essentially nonclass vision of world politics. In particular, it advocated the study of global problems such as environmental degradation and resource depletion that cut across national and, as institute

[81] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987
[82] Jeff Checkel, *Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution*, World Politics, Jan., 1993, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jan., 1993), pp. 271-300, Cambridge University Press, 1993
[83] Peter Zwick, *New Thinking and New Foreign Policy under Gorbachev*, PS: Political Science and Politics, Jun., 1989, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 215-224, American Political Science Association, 1989

scholars often pointed out, ideological boundaries."[84] These arguments could not find space under Brezhnev, Andropov or Chernenko. They were content to repeat the verities of the Marxist-Leninist dogma. Official statements from leadership and other documents consistently highlighted the class-based dynamics of the global system, often minimizing or overlooking discussions about global issues. Instead, there was a strong emphasis on the significance of the international class struggle. The reality was that IMEMO had very few channels to directly influence the Soviet foreign policy, the main was personal ties between the institute leaders and the top political leadership. In 1982 the channel through which the institute could influence Soviet foreign policy ceased to exist with the death of both IMEMO head Nikolay Inozemtsev and CPSU general secretary Leonid Brezhnev. Additionally in 1982, IMEMO became the target for a pressure campaign backed by the CPSU. The actions taken during this campaign, such as arresting a deputy director and establishing a CPSU/KGB investigative commission, had a profound impact on the institute's conduct. The other channel to influence Soviet foreign policy was through the IMEMO publications, especially the monthly journal Memo. "Because of this political interference, Memo, for the first and only time in a sixteen-year period from the 1960s into the 1980s, virtually lost its voice during 1982. For example, the institute's strident advocacy of the need to study global problems, which had been so evident in the early 1980s, nearly disappeared from the pages of Memo during 1982 and early 1983."[85]

Everything was destined to change with the appointment as a new head of the institute of Aleksandr Yakovlev in September 1983. Gorbachev wanted Yakovlev as head of the IMEMO after he met him during the summer of 1983 while touring Canada, where Yakovlev was ambassador. Again, the IMEMO had the personal tie channel to influence Soviet foreign policy open through the friendship between its head and the CPSU general secretary Gorbachev in 1985. Yakovlev instilled a more transparent environment at IMEMO, promoting rigorous and scholarly research while diminishing the emphasis on Marxist-Leninist dogma. Additionally, during his tenure, he introduced several new sections in the institute's journal, Memo, designed explicitly as platforms for unconventional and contentious perspectives. The IMEMO's ideas found fortune in 1984

[84] Jeff Checkel, *Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution*, World Politics, Jan., 1993, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jan., 1993), pp. 271-300, Cambridge University Press, 1993
[85] Ibidem

because of two main factors: Soviet foreign policy had hit a low not witnessed for decades, perhaps since the postwar era. Gorbachev had unmistakably emerged as the successor to Chernenko and had expressed his openness to novel concepts in foreign and security policy. Then, when Gorbachev came to power it was a naturally consequence that the IMEMO's ideas began to find space in the official foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

From October 1985 onward, Gorbachev began articulating the international system in language closely resembling that employed by numerous scholars from the institute, at times repeating portions of their analyses verbatim. By October 1986, concepts such as interdependence, global problems, and nonclass values had become firmly entrenched in the vocabulary of the new General Secretary. With the conception of the world radically changed, the image of the adversary was destined to change too. The new more cooperative approach of the new thinking with the capitalist world could not coexist with the nature inherently aggressive of the western imperialism. In the fall of 1987 Gorbachev admitted that "contemporary capitalism could free itself of militarism and its neocolonial tendency to exploit the developing world."[86] The new image of the adversary, especially of the U.S., was instrumental for the policy of reduction of the Soviet defense budget. It would be impossible to sustain if the main adversary remained an irreducible class enemy.

In December 1985 Yakovlev received a promotion to a significantly more influential role within the Central Committee apparatus. This advancement might appear counterintuitive considering Yakovlev's apparent success at IMEMO. Nonetheless, Gorbachev evidently desired his trusted ally in a more robust bureaucratic position, aiming for Yakovlev's assistance in facing resistance to his policies within the Central Committee, which, at that juncture, retained a pivotal role in the political process. As head of IMEMO it was appointed Yevgeniy Primakov. "In mid-1986 Primakov began to suggest publicly, at first cautiously but then with increasing boldness, that capitalism could endure and sustain significant economic growth, indeed, could even outgrow its militarism and aggressive foreign policy."[87] Additionally: "capitalism had an internal vitality that would allow it to maintain more than adequate levels of economic growth for

[86] Jeff Checkel, *Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution*, World Politics, Jan., 1993, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jan., 1993), pp. 271-300, Cambridge University Press, 1993
[87] Ibidem

the foreseeable future, and its external behavior posed no threat to the USSR; that is, it was not inherently militaristic."[88] The revolutionary meaning of Gorbachev's new thinking lies in the capacity of abandon the Marxism-Leninism in foreign policy and in trying to overcome its dogmas. This move allows Gorbachev to gain space for its internal reforms and it allows Soviet Union to try to reshape its image in the international relations with the western world.

Gorbachev wanted to create the external conditions to permit to the perestroika to gain momentum, changing the external image of the Soviet Union. As it is testified by his words, Gorbachev was searching dialogue and the confidence of his counterparts on a common background of universal values with his new thinking policy in order to cooperate to solve common issues and to downplay the antagonism. "The backbone of the new way of thinking is the recognition of the priority of human values, or, to be more precise, of humankind's survival."[89] And also: "The Soviet leadership is striving to handle foreign affairs in a new way. Dialogue is the first thing I must mention in this context"[90] It is striking the change of tone thinking about the previous general secretaries. The international fight to the capitalism is completely abandoned. "Every nation is entitled to choose its own way of development, to dispose of its fate, its territory, and its human and natural resources. International relations cannot be normalized if this is not understood in all countries. For ideological and social differences, and differences in political systems are the result of the choice made by the people. A national choice should not be used in international relations in such a way as to cause trends and events that can trigger conflicts and military confrontation."[91] And more elaborating on security: "Universal security in our time rests on the recognition of the right of every nation to choose its own path of social development, on the renunciation of interference in the domestic affairs of other states, on respect for others in combination with an objective self-critical view of one's own society. A nation may choose either capitalism or socialism. This is its sovereign right. Nations cannot and should not pattern their life either after the United States or the

[88] Jeff Checkel, *Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution*, World Politics, Jan., 1993, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jan., 1993), pp. 271-300, Cambridge University Press, 1993
[89] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987
[90] Ibidem
[91] Ibidem

Soviet Union. Hence, political positions should be devoid of ideological intolerance."[92] The revolution in foreign policy of the new thinking is completed with the overcoming of the pillars of the Marxism Leninism, communism is no longer the destiny of the humankind.

ELEMENTS OF NEW THINKING

As for perestroika and glasnost, new thinking was complicated to be implemented through consistent policies. "New thinking is an evolving doctrine, and Gorbachev initiates new foreign policy as he goes along. Doctrines and policies are added, adjusted, and discarded in response to international realities. As one Soviet critic of perestroika observed, Gorbachev's approach is that of a pilot who has taken off without knowing where he will land."[93]

At least at the beginning, Gorbachev had hard times trying to convince his comrades that new thinking was at the same time new and consistent with the principles of the Marxism Leninism. Then, Gorbachev had to face the skepticism of the international audience that had to be convinced by Soviet deeds consequent with the new theory. As perestroika and glasnost unleashed unintentional consequences, the concept of "new thinking" has prompted inquiries into the Soviet stance on international relations and the USSR's position in the global order. By questioning fundamental Marxist-Leninist interpretations of international conduct, including concepts like imperialism, class warfare, and proletarian internationalism, Gorbachev has fundamentally disrupted the underpinnings of Soviet foreign policy. These developments led conservative forces in the Soviet leadership to consider new thinking as an ideological capitulation. Gorbachev will succeed in definitely overcoming the opposition with the "demotions" of Anatoly Gromyko, Victor Chebrikov, and Yegor Ligachev only in September 1988.

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[92] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987

[93] Peter Zwick, *New Thinking and New Foreign Policy under Gorbachev*, PS: Political Science and Politics, Jun., 1989, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 215-224, American Political Science Association, 1989

Profound influence on the new thinking theory is provided by the problems posed by the nuclear threat. "In the nuclear age, humanity must evolve a new mode of political thought, a new concept of the world that would provide reliable guarantees for humanity's survival. People want to live in a safer and a more just world. Humanity deserves a better fate than being a hostage to nuclear terror and despair. It is necessary to change the existing world situation and to build a nuclear-weapon-free world, free of violence and hatred, fear and suspicion."[94] New thinking is informed by universal values such as the common fate of humanity over class interest. Although Gorbachev refutes the notion that acknowledging humanity's shared interest in survival in the nuclear age means relinquishing the class analysis of issues related to war and peace, including the struggle between capitalism and communism, it is a radical departure from Leninism. Gorbachev was trying to ground his new thinking on a foundation of Marxist humanism. “In what is perhaps his most intriguing ideological contribution, Gorbachev has suggested that the historical dialectic is leading to cooperation and interdependence rather than conflict and division.”[95] Gorbachev tried to remain within the ideological borders at least superficially and formally.

Gorbachev's new thinking addresses the nuclear issue by declaring that in the nuclear age “it is the political function of war that has always been a justification for war, a "rational" explanation. Nuclear war is senseless; it is irrational. There would be neither winners nor losers in a global nuclear conflict: world civilization would inevitably perish. It is a suicide, rather than a war in the conventional sense of the word.”[96] The established belief that only with an efficient army and an efficient armament a country can guarantee its security is declared obsolete. “From the security point of view the arms race has become an absurdity because its very logic leads to the destabilization of international relations and eventually to a nuclear conflict. Diverting huge resources from other priorities, the arms race is lowering the level of security, impairing it. It is in itself an enemy of peace. The only way to security is through political decisions and disarmament. In our age genuine and equal security can be guaranteed by constantly lowering the level of the strategic balance from which nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction should

[94] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987
[95] Peter Zwick, *New Thinking and New Foreign Policy under Gorbachev*, PS: Political Science and Politics, Jun., 1989, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 215-224, American Political Science Association, 1989
[96] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987

be completely eliminated."[97] It is with this new spirit that in the summer of 1985 the Soviet Union introduced a unilateral moratorium on all nuclear explosions and expressed its readiness immediately to resume the negotiations for a comprehensive test ban treaty. It opened a new stage on the talks on disarmament and on security. "Soviet security under new thinking is seen as "mutual security" to be achieved by political agreement not military power. Mutual security will require a scaling down of military power on both sides to a level that Gorbachev calls "reasonable sufficiency," and, in Soviet Marshal Akhromeyev's words, a recognition that "presently, it is no longer possible to guarantee security by perfecting the shield and sword."[98]

In the meantime, Gorbachev never officially repudiated the "socialist internationalism" or the Brezhnev doctrine, the guidelines of the Soviet bloc policy, although it seemed something changed. "The party secretary responsible for bloc relations, Vadim Medvedev, wrote in May 1988 that the system of relations among socialist states had developed during a time when "the Soviet Union was the only country with the experience to build socialism." According to Medvedev, not only did this retard socialist development in the past, it is currently outmoded."[99] About the linked topic of promoting or exporting violent revolutions Gorbachev was clearer. Such activity was not only undesirable but unacceptable because revolutions must arise out of objective, national conditions. "According to Gorbachev, "Today, too, we are firmly convinced that 'pushing' revolution from outside, especially by military means, is futile and impermissible." The implication of this statement is that Gorbachev's new thinking recognizes that peaceful coexistence cannot be a selective process that permits confrontation on a regional level while avoiding it on a global level."[100]

Previous predictions about the near end of capitalism were profoundly remodulated with the advent of the new thinking. Soviet ideologists began to admit that they underestimated the capacity of resilience of capitalism and that they overestimated the capacity of influence of socialism. A perspective in which western countries could experience a communist revolution was impossible. Even in the third world, Soviet

[97] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987
[98] Peter Zwick, *New Thinking and New Foreign Policy under Gorbachev*, PS: Political Science and Politics, Jun., 1989, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 215-224, American Political Science Association, 1989
[99] Ibidem
[100] Ibidem

experts judged that the chances for revolution were remote. Third world communist parties failed to conquest the support of the working class and failed to become mass organizations with few exceptions. For what concerns intercommunist relations, “Gorbachev capsulized his approach at the February 1986 Twenty-seventh Party Congress when he said: "diversity of our movement is not synonymous with disunity ... Unity has nothing in common with uniformity, with hierarchy, with interference by some parties in the affairs of others, with the desire of any one party to have a monopoly on truth." The challenge for Gorbachev is to promote socialist unity and preserve Soviet security while respecting the diversity within socialism, especially within the Socialist Commonwealth (the Soviet bloc).”[101] Gorbachev tried to overcome the rigidity of the Brezhnev’s theory of “limited sovereignty” but he did not have another theory to replace it. In fact, Gorbachev reminded that "the ruling parties of the socialist countries are aware of the great extent of their responsibility, nationally and internationally.”[102] The possibility of a Soviet intervention in other communist countries to defend the rights of the revolution remained however in place. Expressed in language emphasizing voluntarism and cooperation, Gorbachev's concept of socialist internationalism surprisingly aligns with Brezhnev's on two key aspects: the pivotal role of the Party and the shared responsibility of individual socialist states toward the broader movement.

In his revision of Soviet policy toward the West Gorbachev moved especially on the arms control policy. New Soviet position on this field radically changed Soviet military doctrine. Gorbachev's approach to Soviet military doctrine can be encapsulated as follows: acknowledging that security isn't ensured solely through nuclear weapons, recognizing the impossibility of winning a nuclear war, understanding that military force alone cannot achieve political objectives, aiming for military parity at the lowest strength level rather than superiority, unilaterally renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons, embracing the defensive and retaliatory principle of mutual assured destruction instead of interim war-fighting until nuclear deterrence is eliminated, and acknowledging the need for a "war-fighting" capacity until nuclear weapons are entirely eradicated, while refraining from pursuing "war-winning" in the conventional sense.

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[101] Peter Zwick, *New Thinking and New Foreign Policy under Gorbachev*, PS: Political Science and Politics, Jun., 1989, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 215-224, American Political Science Association, 1989

[102] Mikhail Gorbachev*, Perestroika*, New York, Harper & Row, 1987

The other side of Soviet policy toward the West took into account the economic relations. When Gorbachev came to power "the USSR was isolated from the global economic system to a degree that even its eastern European allies were not. In 1985 only 4 percent of the Soviet gross national product was connected to foreign trade outside the East Bloc. Foreign investments were negligible. Even the much-vaunted gas exports to western Europe were slow to make an impact. By 1985 the Soviets supplied less than 3 percent of western Europe's natural gas."[103] The economic isolation of the USSR was in part due to Soviets' own design and in part due to enforcement by others. Soviet leaders feared that with economic integration capitalist thinking and practices could spread into the country leading to political unrest and eventually counterrevolution against the Communist. Regardless foreign trade was desirable but only at the Soviet conditions of state-led initiatives and strict reciprocity. "The Western allies, and especially the United States, also tried to prevent Soviet Union from benefitting too much from economic interaction with the West. Since the late 1940s, the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (CoCom) had placed restrictions on products countries allied with the United States would be allowed to export to the Soviet Union. These lists were quite extensive, ranging from advanced agricultural equipment to aircraft components to computer and software."[104] Then, with the end of détente direct trade with the U.S. further collapsed. In 1974 with the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act U.S. Congress restricted normal trade relations with countries that did not allow free emigration, namely USSR. The economic isolation of the USSR began to be seen as a problem by Gorbachev as it was the general backwardness of the Soviet economy that, designed to overtake capitalism, it was falling further and further behind especially from the United States. This was the basic reason for the perestroika in domestic policy. Gorbachev's central idea revolves around the notion of mutual benefit through arms control and economic interdependence, emphasizing the counterproductivity of nuclear threats and confrontation. Under Gorbachev's leadership, Soviet officials advocate for a shift away from the "balance of terror" and "balance of power" paradigms toward one characterized by a "balance of interests." Gorbachev openly acknowledges that the dire economic situation in the Soviet Union is a primary motivator for this aspect of new thinking.

[103] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017
[104] Ibidem

Despite varying perspectives among Western experts, Gorbachev remains convinced that both the Soviet Union and the West stand to gain from halting the arms race and fostering increased economic interdependence.

Lastly, new thinking in foreign policy had consequences in the numerous regional conflicts in which USSR was involved. Regional conflicts had to be solved in order to overcome the difficulties which plagued East-West relations in the détente era. Different factors contributed to this Soviet turnabout on regional conflicts. Firstly, the significant financial investment in supporting Third World clients has yielded minimal returns for the USSR. Secondly, these regional conflicts have not been pivotal to Soviet security concerns. However, a crucial factor is Gorbachev's realization that the pursuit of regional influence directly contradicts the goal of fostering improved relations with the West, a key element for Soviet economic development. New Third World foreign policy was consequent to the vision Gorbachev had about regional conflicts. Soviet Union had to disengage especially from the clients that was not contributing to the Soviet economic development. Many of them were high cost, low return investments, then the Reagan Doctrine made difficult to maintain or to gain new state clients and finally Gorbachev did not believe in the revolutionary capacity of the Third World. All of this resulted in a "two-track" policy of maintaining the more successfully clients and of development bilateral ties with the more prosperous Third World states, regardless of their political orientation. In fact, "Gorbachev immediately de-escalated the Soviet commitment to the Third World at the March 1985 Plenum of the Central Committee that named him general secretary: "The Soviet Union has always supported the struggle of the peoples for liberation from the colonial yoke and today, too, our sympathies are on the side of the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America that are following the path of strengthening their independence and social renewal." This expression of sympathy was a far cry from the active support expressed for the previous three decades."[105]

New thinking came as a revolution in soviet foreign policy because shook its basic principles. New thinking is a clear move away from orthodox Marxism-Leninism. Soviet Union foreign policy jumped from the antagonistic world view of the class-based struggle

[105] Peter Zwick, *New Thinking and New Foreign Policy under Gorbachev*, PS: Political Science and Politics, Jun., 1989, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 215-224, American Political Science Association, 1989

to an interdependent world based on universal values. Problems as the environment, the survival of the mankind in the nuclear age, the economic interdependence, the call for a common house in Europe were topic that hardly could find space within the previous general secretaries' foreign policy. Under Gorbachev Soviet Union tried to present itself in a different way to the world. The immense internal problems which Gorbachev wanted to address with its main policy, the perestroika, made necessary the revolution in foreign policy. Essentially Soviet Union could not afford to continue with its previous foreign policy and to restructure itself internally at the same time. New thinking in this way is instrumental to the perestroika. The disarmament policy and the revision of the Soviet military doctrine had the consequence to alleviate the pressure of the armament and of the army cost on the Soviet expenditures as the disengagement from the global revolution. Resources which could be redirected to internal expenditures. The need to open Soviet Union to the international economy was in the same direction of development of the Soviet economy and to booster its production. Gorbachev wanted to reverse the image of the Soviet Union in Europe and in general to the West. Soviet Union should not be viewed as a menace anymore but as a housemate in the common house of Europe. A reliable partner to tackle the global problems together with the other nations. Certainly, Soviet Union wanted to keep its difference from the capitalist world. Gorbachev never declared to give up on socialism. What Gorbachev imagined was a coexistence with capitalism, a competition in economy but a profound relaxation of the tension with the West even more than that of the age of détente.

The negotiations at Reykjavik with the revolutionary proposals Gorbachev made to the U.S. and then to the West in the field of nuclear disarmament was the symbol of the beginning of a new era. Gorbachev proved with his deeds and commitments that his openness to the dialogue and to a new stage of East-West relations were true and deserving attention.

PRECEDING EVENTS AND DIPLOMATIC PRELUDE TO REYKJAVIK

With the advent in March 1985 of the new General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, western governments did not expect actually major change in Soviet politics but soon they had to reconsider.

Gorbachev's speech at the 27th Communist Party Congress in February 1986 was just the greatest manifestation of the new direction of Soviet foreign policy. Admitting the economic and technological difficulties of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev affirmed the necessity of major internal reforms as of new foreign policy approach. Major changes were prospected in the arms control policy where Gorbachev changed Soviet stances regarding intermediate-range nuclear forces (INFs), substantial reductions in strategic offensive nuclear forces, verification, and testing. The international situation and the internal difficulties of the Soviet Union needed the change of direction in foreign policy because Gorbachev faced not only profound domestic economic and social challenges but also encountered a foreign policy that had grown progressively inflexible and focused on defense.

Soviet Union was involved in too many regional conflicts and it had to sustain too many poor state-clients, but in particular the Afghan crisis was a "bleeding wound" as "already at his first meeting after taking over as head of the party, Gorbachev had referred to."[106] During the summer of 1985, Gorbachev allowed a more aggressive strategy in Afghanistan with more air support and more weapons for the Afghan Communist army in order to get rid of the Afghan problem. A year later, the situation on the ground did not improve, "the Soviet offensive had simply led to more suffering for Afghan civilians, more refugees for the mujahedin to recruit from, and higher numbers of Red Army casualties"[107] In June 1986, Gorbachev decided to withdraw from Afghanistan. The situation was already compromised, "the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had blackened Moscow's reputation among many nonaligned countries and in Western Europe. At the same time, the build- up of Soviet INFs, above all, the SS-20, had provoked NATO's double-track decision of 1979 to deploy new medium-range missiles in Western Europe

[106] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017
[107] Ibidem

aimed directly at the Soviet homeland. Moscow's walkout from the INF negotiations in November 1983 further damaged its image in Western Europe and allowed President Ronald Reagan to portray the Soviets as the main obstacle to arms control."[108]

Consequently, the United States – Soviet Union relations was at a low point. President Reagan was at the offensive worldwide with the Reagan Doctrine and the Soviet Union confronted a substantial increase in U.S. military capabilities and a renewed sense of American political assertiveness that jeopardized any fleeting advantages the Soviets had acquired in the late 1970s. The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) further accelerated this trend, heightening Moscow's concerns about potential short-term political and military gains by the United States and the potential for a destabilizing arms race between offensive and defensive capabilities. Discussions on SDI will be one of the major points in the disarmament negotiations. Gorbachev feared a new arm race that the Soviet Union could not afford and he will try any mean to impede the continuation of the research in that field. In particular, Soviet Union was worried that even if this missile defense scheme did not work, it was expected to energize the American economy and expand the technological disparity between the East and West. Additionally, it was anticipated to compel a shift of crucial resources into new areas of the military economy, where a significant portion of Soviet scientific and technical expertise was already concentrated. Consequently, the SDI could undermine Gorbachev's overarching objective of long-term economic revitalization.

At the 27th Communist Party Congress, Gorbachev summarized the basic elements of his foreign-policy approach. "The speech contained a number of new ideas concerning Soviet security policy. Noteworthy in this regard are first, Gorbachev's emphasis on the nonmilitary aspects of security, particularly "global problems" such as the environment, which he noted require "cooperation on a worldwide scale"; second, his emphasis on the "growing tendency toward interdependence," which also necessitates greater international cooperation; third, his observation that ensuring national security was increasingly becoming a political task; and fourth, his emphasis on the importance of

[108] F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev: The Road to Reykjavik*, Foreign Policy, Winter, 1986-1987, No. 65 (Winter, 1986-1987), pp. 3-28, Slate Group, LLC, 1987

mutual security, the notion that the security of one state cannot be achieved at the expense of another."[109]

A feature of the new approach of Soviet foreign policy was an attempt to enhance its relations with Western Europe. Soviet analysts began to note a divergence between the Western European states and the United States especially concerning security issues. "In the words of Aleksandr Yakovlev, the newly promoted Central Committee secretary and a close associate of Gorbachev: "The distancing of Western Europe, Japan, and other capitalist countries from U.S. strategic military plans in the near future is neither an excessively rash fantasy nor a nebulous prospect. It is dictated by objective factors having to do with the rational guarantee of all of their political and economic interests, including security"[110] To exploit this possibility, Gorbachev decided to abandon the previous former Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko's hard-line stance toward Western Europe and has pursued a more conciliatory policy. Starting from the economic area, Gorbachev admitted in May 1985 the possibility of recognition of the European Community as a political entity in order to establish economic ties between the European Community (EC) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). These ties would have increased increase Soviet and East European access to trade and technology. Establishing relations between the European Community and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance on a bloc-to-bloc basis would, for the first time, provide the Soviet Union with a political avenue to engage with Western Europe as a unified entity, where the United States lacked representation. A similar effort was conducted by the Soviet Union in the military field. Soviet leadership wanted Europe to take a more independent stand in security issues. Example of this attempt was the Gorbachev's declined offer in 1985 to France and Great Britain to negotiate reductions in nuclear forces. In both the Stockholm Conference on Disarmament in Europe and the INF negotiations in Geneva, the recent indications of Soviet readiness to make significant concessions seemed to be aimed, at least in part, at fostering détente in Europe. The Soviets also believed that the allies of the United States will intensify their efforts to urge the Reagan administration to adopt a more cooperative stance on other arms control matters, including nuclear testing and the SDI. The attempt

[109] F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev: The Road to Reykjavik*, Foreign Policy, Winter, 1986-1987, No. 65 (Winter, 1986-1987), pp. 3-28, Slate Group, LLC, 1987
[110] Ibidem

to improve relations with Western Europe was undoubtedly complementary, not an alternative, to the improvement of relations with the United States. Improvement of relations with the United States will pass mainly through the policy of arms control and its negotiations.

Meanwhile, to solidify his policy shifts, Gorbachev implemented a substantial reorganization of Soviet foreign-policy personnel and institutions. His objective was to exert more direct influence over the shaping and implementation of Soviet policy. The most notable alteration occurred in July 1985 with the replacement of Andrei Gromyko. A relatively unknown politician from Soviet Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze was appointed as successor. He did not have relevant experience in foreign affair and his great merit was to owe his elevation to Gorbachev. The epurations within the Soviet foreign policy team did not end with Gromyko who was "promoted" to the ceremonial role of President of the Soviet Union. The retirement of Andrei Aleksandrov-Agentov who was a speech writer for and adviser to Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko allowed Gorbachev to replace him with Anatoly Chernyayev, a specialist on capitalist countries who will accompany Gorbachev at Reykjavik. Gorbachev effort of renovation included the Central Committee Secretariat dealing with foreign affairs and the Foreign Ministry. The head of the Central Committee's International Department for nearly 30 years, Boris Ponomarev was retired at the age of 81. Ponomarev from his post managed relations with non-governing Communist parties and he was a strong supporter of the "national liberation" struggles in the Third World. His retirement was necessary to follow up on the change in the policy for the Third World that beginning from the 27th Communist Party Congress considered the Third World as peripheral to Soviet national interests. For similar reasons, it was important the departure of Kostantin Rusakov, aged 77. He was the head of the Central Committee Department for Relations with Ruling Communist and Workers' Parties of socialist countries. As new head of the Central Committee's International Department was appointed Anatoly Dobrynin who was Soviet ambassador to the United States for 24 years and as his deputy Georgi Korniyenko, former first deputy foreign minister and one of the Foreign Ministry's top Americanist. This move was to testify the shift of the focus of the Central Committee's International Department from the Third World to U.S.-Soviet relations and arms control.

Another feature of Gorbachev's renovation was the effort to strengthen the Central Committee's expertise on arms control. In the International Department, Dobrynin has established a new section dedicated to coordinating arms control policy. This unit was led by Major General Viktor Staradubov, who has previously fulfilled roles as the Soviet representative to the Standing Consultative Commission—a forum overseeing compliance with arms treaties between superpowers—and has been a part of the Soviet SALT and INF negotiating team. The already cited Yakovlev, former ambassador to Canada and head of the prestigious Institute of World Economy and International Relation, was appointed to the post of Central Committee secretary in charge of propaganda. "He accompanied Gorbachev on his highly successful visit to Britain in December 1984 and played a very visible role at the Reykjavik summit."[111] Within the Foreign Ministry, it was relevant the new Dobrynin's influence. He succeeded in promoting two of his protégés into important positions. Yuli Vorontsov, former Soviet ambassador to France, replaced Korniyenko as first deputy foreign minister. Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, the former head of the American Department, became a deputy foreign minister. Vorontsov and Bessmertnykh were previously Dobrynin deputies in Washington. Then, a new arms control department within the Foreign Ministry was established. The leader of the Soviet delegation to the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks in Geneva and one of Moscow's top arms control specialists, Victor Karpov was named has head of the new department.

After changes in the personnel of the foreign policy, Gorbachev decided changes in top military personnel too. Although he did not have special ties with the military unlike his predecessors, Gorbachev decided to replace the late General Aleksei Yepishev, head of the Main Political Administration of the Army and Navy and Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, aged 76, commander in chief of the navy with the 56 years old Colonel General Aleksei Lizichev and the 58 years old Admiral Vladimir Chernavin. They did not fight in World War II and they should have represented an element of novelty and modernity within the army. Starting from summer 1985 Gorbachev replaced with younger officers the posts of chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces; heads of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, in Poland and in Hungary; and commanders of the Moscow and Byelorussian military

[111] F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev: The Road to Reykjavik*, Foreign Policy, Winter, 1986-1987, No. 65 (Winter, 1986-1987), pp. 3-28, Slate Group, LLC, 1987

districts. In his quest for control, Gorbachev has deliberately avoided including military officials in the highest ranks of the Politburo. The military lost some of its power over the General Secretary and it was already suffering the decline in military spending that was probably to continue in the future under the new policies of Gorbachev. "Since 1976 the annual growth in Soviet defense spending has declined from between 4 and 5 per cent to about 2 per cent, with stagnation in overall weapons procurement. This slowdown appears to represent a conscious policy decision by the political leadership, not a consequence of technological problems or bottlenecks."[112]

The renovation of the personnel of the Soviet foreign policy team and the military was instrumental to the application of the new policies, especially in the field of arms control. It was in coincidence with the 40th anniversary of the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima on 6th August 1985 that Gorbachev launched his first action in the arms control policy. Gorbachev proposed a moratorium on nuclear testing challenging President Reagan to join him in signing a test ban treaty at the next summit meeting. Gorbachev considered the moratorium as a first step toward the end of the arms race. United States declined the offer. Gorbachev went beyond the proposal of a test ban treaty and on 15th January 1986 he launched a comprehensive proposal on arms reduction including the call for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. "Gorbachev also has advanced new proposals on conventional arms control. At the June 1986 meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact in Budapest, the Soviet bloc recommended: a wider negotiating zone ("from the Atlantic to the Urals") that would include the European part of the USSR, a move Moscow has resisted in the past; phased troop reductions of up to 500,000 soldiers and airmen by the early 1990s, beginning with a reduction of 100,000-150,000 troops within 2 years; and cuts in tactical nuclear aircraft and nuclear weapons with ranges of over 1,000 kilometers."[113]

What can be considered as the last step before Reykjavik was the important Geneva summit between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev held on 19th and 20th November 1985. It was the first meeting between a President of the United States and a Soviet General Secretary in six years. Although nobody expected relevant results,

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[112] F. Stephen Larrabee and Allen Lynch, *Gorbachev: The Road to Reykjavik*, Foreign Policy, Winter, 1986-1987, No. 65 (Winter, 1986-1987), pp. 3-28, Slate Group, LLC, 1987

[113] Ibidem

it was an important occasion for the two leaders to take measure of each other. The talks covered from arms control, especially about the American SDI project, to human rights. It was in this occasion that Reagan invited Gorbachev to meet again in the U.S. the following year and Gorbachev invited Reagan to the Soviet Union in 1987. Initially, Reagan did not impress very much Gorbachev. “The only time Reagan really got through to him was when they parted. Past summits had not achieved very much, Reagan said. The president “suggested that he and Gorbachev say “To hell with the past”, we’ll do it our way and get something done.” It was an expression of Reagan’s frustrations with what he found to be a plodding, detail-oriented Soviet negotiating style. But it was also an indication of the president’s belief that he could deal with Gorbachev at the personal level and bring about results.”[114]

It is with this sense of possibility that the two leaders determined to change the course of history regarding arms control left Geneva.

[114] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017

NEGOTIATIONS AT REYKJAVIK

In the autumn of 1986, the world watched with bated breath as U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev convened in Reykjavik, Iceland, for a summit that would redefine the contours of Cold War diplomacy. This chapter delves into the intricate dynamics, motivations, and pivotal moments of the Reykjavik Summit, a critical juncture that showcased both the possibilities and limitations of superpower relations during a tumultuous era.

The Reykjavik Summit emerged against a backdrop of persistent Cold War tensions and an escalating nuclear arms race. The chapter will explore the historical context that set the stage for the summit and it provides historical insights into the geopolitical landscape that fueled the urgency for high-stakes negotiations.

At the heart of the Reykjavik Summit were two formidable leaders, each navigating the complexities of their respective political landscapes. The chapter will scrutinize the personalities, ideologies, and strategic goals of Reagan and Gorbachev.

The primary focus of the Reykjavik Summit was the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The chapter will dissect the ambitious agendas and aspirations of both leaders, examining their proposals for significant reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals. Through an analysis of negotiation records and memoirs, the study seeks to reveal the complexities of their visions and the challenges inherent in attempting to reshape the nuclear status quo.

The Reykjavik Summit was marked by moments of convergence and divergence, with both leaders grappling with ideological differences and strategic imperatives. The chapter will meticulously analyze key moments during the negotiations, including the discussions on the elimination of all nuclear weapons and the impasse over the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

While the Reykjavik Summit did not result in a formal agreement, it was a crucible of diplomatic engagement that left an indelible mark on Cold War history. The chapter will highlight impactful moments during the summit, examining the proposals, counter-proposals, and the candid discussions that unfolded in the Icelandic capital.

This chapter provides a detailed exploration of the Reykjavik Summit, shedding light on the high-stakes discussions that unfolded between Reagan and Gorbachev in the shadow of Iceland's capital. The summit, while falling short of a conclusive agreement, epitomized the challenges and possibilities inherent in redefining the superpower relationship during a critical juncture in the latter stages of the Cold War.

PREPARATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE SUMMIT

At the end of the Geneva summit in 1985, U.S.S.R. and the United States recognized the special responsibility to safeguard peace. Gorbachev and Reagan declared jointly that nuclear war should never be unleashed and that there could be no winners in it. Furthermore, they declared that neither side would seek military superiority. The Joint Statement on the Summit in Geneva reflected the sensibility of both Gorbachev and Reagan about the dangers of a war during the nuclear age. Reagan remained profoundly impressed by the possible consequences of a nuclear war and the risk of war taken during the NATO exercitations Able Archer ’83 convinced him of the necessity to calm down the tensions with the Soviets and to find alternatives to the mechanism of the Mutual Assured Destruction. Therefore, Reagan began to make proposals on the arms control and he began the SDI project as a way to escape the logic of the Mutual Assured Destruction. Certainly, Gorbachev was equally scared by the consequences of a possible nuclear war but his preoccupations originated also in a domestic situation in the Soviet Union that could not afford to continue to keep the heavy burden of the arms race. Gorbachev declared “When I became head of state, it was already obvious that there was something wrong in this country… Doomed to serve ideology and bear the heavy burden of the arms race, it was strained to the utmost.”[115]

Anyway, talks in Geneva about strategic reductions of the nuclear arsenals was failing to make significantly progress. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze called the traditional arms-control process “a well-travelled road that led nowhere.”[116] In

[115] Jack Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended*, New York, Random House, 2005
[116] Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom*, London, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991

the meantime, both Soviet Union and United States struggled under the weight of massive defense spending. Reagan embarked on a three-trillion-dollar military buildup that caused record deficits, while over 30 percent of the Soviet Union gross national product was consumed by the military. Gorbachev explained "The world's nations were at an impasse. It seemed that confrontation between East and West would go on forever."[117]

At Geneva both parts concorded in declaring about nuclear and space talks:

> The President and the General Secretary discussed the negotiations on nuclear and space arms. They agreed to accelerate the work at these negotiations, with a view to accomplishing the tasks set down in the Joint U.S.–Soviet Agreement of January 8, 1985, namely to prevent an arms race in space and to terminate it on earth, to limit and reduce nuclear arms and enhance strategic stability. Noting the proposals recently tabled by the U.S. and the Soviet Union, they called for early progress, in particular in areas where there is common ground, including the principle of 50% reductions in the nuclear arms of the U.S. and the USSR appropriately applied, as well as the idea of an interim INF agreement. During the negotiation of these agreements, effective measures for verification of compliance with obligations assumed will be agreed upon.[118]

The problems of the space arms race and the proposals to reduce the strategic weapons were already on the table on November 1985. Soviet leaders left impressed by Reagan's sincerity and sensed an opportunity for meaningful dialogue. (Stanton, 2011) Shevardnadze wrote:" We saw that Reagan was a person you could deal with, although it was very hard to win him over, to persuade him of the other point of view. But we had the impression that this is a man who keeps his word and that he's someone you can deal with and negotiate with and reach accord."[119]

Between Geneva and Reykjavik Gorbachev declared that Soviet Union remained loyal to the commitments assumed at Geneva. Soviet Union in fact extended its moratorium on nuclear test while in the U.S. the nuclear tests continued. On January 15, 1986 Soviet Union proposed a program for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of the century. Furthermore, in June the Warsaw Treaty countries put forward a major comprehensive program for large scale reductions in conventional armaments and armed forces in Europe.[120] These commitments and actions prompted Gorbachev to declare that Soviet Union was doing everything possible to help bring about a new way of thinking in the nuclear age. From his point of view, he was not receiving reciprocal answers from the

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[117] Mikhail Gorbachev, *On My Country and the World*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2000
[118] *Joint Soviet-United States Statement on the Summit Meeting in Geneva*, November 21, 1985
[119] Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998
[120] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Reykjavik: Results and Lessons*, Madison, Sphinx Press, 1987

United States. Gorbachev began to consider that the hopes for major changes in the world situation was evaporating shortly after the Geneva meeting. For these reasons Gorbachev believed that something had to be done in order to overcome such course of developments, of stalemate in the Geneva talks and negotiations over arms control. He came to the conclusion that a new impetus was necessary, a powerful impetus to turning the process in the required direction. Such impetuses could be provided only by the leaders of the USSR and the United States of America.[121]

So, in a four-page letter to Reagan delivered by Shevardnadze during a visit to Washington, on 15 September 1986 Gorbachev spoke of "the spirit of candor which is coming to characterize our dialogue" and wondered whether "the US leadership is at all prepared and ready to seek agreements which would lead to the termination of the arms race and to genuine disarmament?" He pointed out that despite the ongoing Geneva talks, "we still have not moved an inch closer to an agreement on arms reduction." "I have come to the conclusion," the Soviet premier wrote, "that the negotiations need a major impetus; otherwise they will continue to mark time […] They will lead nowhere unless you and I intervene personally […] An idea has come to my mind to suggest you, Mr. President, that, in the very near future […] we have a quick one-on-one meeting, let us say in Iceland or in London, maybe just for one day, to engage in a strictly confidential, private, and frank discussion (possibly with only our foreign minister present). The discussion-which would not be a detailed one, for its purpose and significance would be to demonstrate political will-would result in instructions to our respective agencies to draft agreements on two or three very specific questions, which you and I could sign during my visit to the United Stated."[122]

As it already happened in 1960, at the eve of important summit between the head of state of U.S.S.R. and U.S. unforeseen events happen. In 1960 Khrushchev refused to meet Eisenhower in Paris after the Soviet air force shot down an American U-2 spy plane, which had been traversing the USSR on its way from Peshawar in Pakistan to Bodo in Norway.[123] At the eve of the Reykjavik summit, the Daniloff affair exploded. All began with the arrest of the Soviet spy Zakharov. "Before the FBI arrested Soviet United Nations

[121] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Reykjavik: Results and Lessons*, Madison, Sphinx Press, 1987
[122] *Gorbachev to Reagan*, September 15, 1986
[123] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War*, New York, Basic Books, 2017

employee Gennadi Zakharov for espionage on August 22, little thought seems to have been given to the implications for superpower diplomacy. Those implications became painfully clear eight day later on August 30 when U.S. journalist Nicholas Daniloff was arrested in Moscow in retaliation. Although the KGB claimed to have caught Daniloff receiving classified materials from a Soviet citizen, there was not much question that he was innocent. President Reagan began calling him a "hostage" whose ransom was the release of a genuine Soviet spy."[124] The incident caused a great stir in the U.S. and it risked to wreck the possibility of a summit between Reagan and Gorbachev. U.S. and U.S.S.R. managed well the crisis and "ten days later President Reagan announced that Daniloff had been freed and was leaving the Soviet Union. The next day, September 30, this announcement was followed by two more: Gennadi Zakharov would leave the United States after pleading "no contest" to espionage charges, and Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev would meet in Iceland on the 11th and 12th of October."[125] The course of the events shocked the public opinion in the U.S., "there was an immediate and violent reaction to the way the Administration had handled the Daniloff case. Although the Administration claimed these three events were not linked; that Daniloff had been unconditionally released, that Zakharov had been sent home in exchange for Soviet dissident Yuri Orlov and his wife, that negotiations over Gorbachev's invitation were conducted separately from those concerning Nicholas Daniloff, it is hard to believe all this was coincidence-that this was not a package deal."[126]

Another thing that astonished most observers was the announcement of a summit to take place in less than two weeks, given Reagan's longstanding and considerable opposition to unprepared summits was well known. The reason why U.S. administration accepted the summit was that probably they did not expect considerable breakthroughs possible during the negotiations. "The United States clearly believed the Reykjavik agenda to be a limited one, meant to result at best in: a date for a Washington summit; the outline of an agreement on INF missiles in Europe, which had been the subject of the most give-and-take in the exchange of letters; and some tangible progress on nuclear

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[124] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy,* Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

[125] Ibidem

[126] Ibidem

testing issues."[127] For that reason it was not considered necessary a great or long preparation. "No new positions on strategic offensive reductions or on strategic defense were considered, nor were specific interagency discussions held on these subjects in preparation for the summit."[128] Not even the planned attendance of Soviet Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev alerted the United States to Soviet intentions. "Akhromeyev's presence should have been a strong signal that the Soviets were anticipating flexibile negotiating on the most important strategic issues, requiring real-time military analysis and approval of the top military officer."[129] Therefore, no specific coordination with the allies was considered necessary before the Reykjavik summit. "In the usual course of arms control negotiations, there is both time and opportunity for considerable discussion with allies of specific proposals and counterproposals. A summit requires a different sort of consultation based on non-specific possibilities and agreement on basic objectives and bottom-line positions. The Reykjavik summit, launched as it was with less than two weeks' notice, fell outside both of these patterns of arms control consultation. The NATO allies had been consulted on the U.S. proposals prior to the beginning of the 6th round in Geneva in late September, according to usual practice. Consequently, neither specific nor general consultations were held in the 11 days prior to Reykjavik."[130]

On the Soviet side the plan was clear. They could not afford a new round of arms race and the dangers posed by the SDI project launched by Reagan needed to be addressed. On October 4, Gorbachev laid out his goals to the Soviet team preparing for Reykjavik. If a new arms race began, he told them, "the pressure on our economy will be inconceivable"[131] He emphasized that to achieve lasting progress, there had to be advantages for the Americans as well. "Nothing will come out of it," he said "if our proposals lead to a weakening of US security."[132] Gorbachev addressed the Politburo a couple of days before his departure for Reykjavik and told them "intermediate" solutions would not be enough. "If they impose a second round of arms race upon us," Gorbachev

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[127] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy,* Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987
[128] Ibidem
[129] Ibidem
[130] Ibidem
[131] Anatoly Chernyaev *Meeting Notes*, October 4, 1986, National Security Archive
[132] Ibidem

warned, “we will lose.”[133] The Soviets considered the proposals elaborated for Reykjavik as a package that, if accepted, could within a brief period really bring about “a breakthrough in all directions of the struggle for limiting nuclear weapons and really eliminate the threat of nuclear war, and would make it possible to start moving toward a nuclear-free world.”[134] There were a great difference in preparation and consideration for the Reykjavik summit between Soviet Union and United States.

At the eve of the Reykjavik summit, it was already known what the points of major confrontation would be: the Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) Treaty and the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative. The ABM Treaty between United States and Soviet Union dated back to 1972. “The Treaty was intended to form one part of a regime to govern nuclear weapons. In signing the Treaty, each party undertook not to deploy ABM systems in defense of its territory or to provide a base for such a defense. Each promised not to deploy antiballistic missile systems in defense of an individual region, with a limited exception: each party is permitted to deploy ABM systems and components in one circumscribed "deployment area" and at certain specified test range.”[135] In fact, the only functioning ABM system was deployed in Moscow and it was allowed by the Treaty. Article V of the Treaty provided the details of the duty: “no ABM system or component may be tested, developed, or deployed if it is space-based, sea-based, air-based, or mobile land-based.”[136] Antagonists to the development of the SDI were supporters of the restrictive interpretation of the Treaty, for them “because article V prohibits the testing, development, or deployment of all "ABM systems or components" that are based in space, water, or air, or are mobile land-based, only fixed land-based systems and components may be developed and tested.”[137] To the rescue of the SDI comes the “Agreed Statement D” in which “the parties provided that if ABM systems and components "based on other physical principles" - that is, technologies not used in the systems and components described and regulated in the Treaty - were created in the future, they could be deployed

[133] *Chernyaev Notes from the Politburo Session*, October 8, 1986, National Security Archive
[134] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Reykjavik: Results and Lessons*, Madison, Sphinx Press, 1987
[135] Abraham D. Sofaer, *The abm Treaty and the Strategic Defense Initiative*, Harvard Law Review, Jun., 1986, Vol. 99, No. 8 (Jun., 1986), pp. 1972-1985, Harvard Law Review Association, 1986
[136] Ibidem
[137] Ibidem

only after the parties had formally discussed them and agreed on specific limitation."[138] Since SDI was a technology that was not present at the time of the signing of the Treaty, it was regulated by the "Agreement Statement D" for the supporters of a broader interpretation of the Treaty. "Construed more broadly, the Treaty establishes a coherent, nonredundant scheme that: (i) prohibits the deployment of all systems and components based at launch sites and derived from then-utilized physical principles, except in the quantities and areas specifically permitted (article III); (2) prohibits the development, testing, and deployment of all systems and components derived from then-utilized physical principles other than those based at launch sites (article V); (3) permits the creation of systems and com- ponents based on other physical principles (Agreed Statement D); and (4) prohibits the deployment of devices based on other physical principles until agreement is reached on specific limitations (Agreed Statement D)."[139]

Nevertheless, the ABM Treaty alongside the SALT Treaty were created as an architecture of the nuclear age to guarantee the equilibrium between the parties through the principle of the Mutual Assured Destruction. The development of a technology that undermined the possibility of retaliation to a first-strike by one of the parties, it destroyed the whole regime of the nuclear age, the Mutual Assured Destruction. The ABM Treaty was designed "to decrease the pressures of technological change and its unsettling impact on the strategic balance, both sides agree to prohibit development, testing, or deployment of sea-based, air-based, or space-based ABM systems and their components, along with mobile land-based ABM systems. Should future technology bring forth new ABM systems "based on other physical principles" than those employed in current systems, it was agreed that limiting such systems would be discussed, in accordance with the treaty's provisions for consultation and amendment."[140] Although Reagan through a presidential directive stated that SDI program was continuing to be conducted as originally structured in a manner consistent with the restrictive interpretation of the ABM Treaty, SDI was imagined by Reagan exactly to overcome the logic of the Mutual Assured Destruction and therefore to overcome the ABM regime.

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[138] Abraham D. Sofaer, *The abm Treaty and the Strategic Defense Initiative*, Harvard Law Review, Jun., 1986, Vol. 99, No. 8 (Jun., 1986), pp. 1972-1985, Harvard Law Review Association, 1986
[139] Ibidem
[140] Ibidem

It is in this light that Soviet Union soon reacted to President Reagan's "Star Wars" speech of March 23,1983. “In a statement issued four days later, General Secretary Andropov said that the defensive measures Reagan spoke of would seem defensive only to "someone not conversant with these matters."[141] In Andropov’s view, United States were seeking first-strike capability: “under these conditions the intention to secure itself the possibility of destroying with the help of ABM defenses the corresponding strategic systems of the other side, that is of rendering it incapable of dealing a retaliatory strike, is a bid to disarm the Soviet Union in the face of the United States nuclear threat”[142] The connection between offensive and defensive weapons was established through the SALT I in which was stated that to reduce and limit offensive weapons would have been possible only if there were mutual restraint in defensive system. “The United States intends to sever this interconnection. Should this conception be translated into reality, it would in fact open the floodgates to a runaway race of all types of strategic arms, both offensive and defensive” Andropov declared.[143] The Soviet’s position on SDI was already clear in 1983 and it was hardly surprising.

Beyond the possibility of a new stage in arms race and the abrogation of the ABM Treaty, Soviets were worried that Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), such as SDI, would make war more likely because it would create the illusion of invulnerability, and thus increase the temptation to strike first. “The most detailed analysis of the SDI to have been published in the Soviet Union has come from a group of scientists, headed by scholar R.Z. Sagdeev, director of the Academy of Sciences' Institute of Space Research, and by Dr. A.A. Kokoshin of the Academy's Institute of the USA and Canada, working under the direction of scholar E.P. Velikhov, director of the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy and vice-president of the Academy. The title of the working group's report is “The Strategic and International Political Consequences of the Creation of a Space Based Anti-Missile System Using Directed Energy Weapons.”[144] The authors of the report were skeptical to the possibility to create an effective space-based BMD under current

[141] David Holloway, *The Strategic Defense Initiative and the Soviet Union*, Daedalus, Summer, 1985, Vol. 114, No. 3, Weapons in Space, Vol. II: Implications for Security (Summer, 1985), pp. 257-278, The MIT Press, 1985
[142] Ibidem
[143] Ibidem
[144] Ibidem

technological capabilities and they considered that even if it could be developed, it would be vulnerable to countermeasures. “If a space-based BMD system is vulnerable to destruction, then it cannot provide effective defense against a first strike, since the attacking side will be able to destroy the system. But such a system might give rise to the illusion that it could provide a relatively effective defense against a strategic force that had already been weakened by an attack. Its deployment would therefore be seen by the other side as a very threatening move. Under these circumstances, each side, both that which had a BMD system and that which did not, would have an incentive to strike first. The net effect of deploying a BMD system would not be to provide escape from mutual deterrence, but rather to make that relationship less stable.”[145]

Acknowledging that SDI would be deployed soon or later if the research would have begun, the challenge for the Soviet Union was how to render the defense ineffective. The Soviet military had three options to use separately or in combination: “it can upgrade its retaliatory forces, it can develop weapons that could destroy the space-based BMD system, or it can deploy its own BMD system.”[146] Soviet experts recommended as a main road to face the SDI threat to develop further the offensive weapons in order to overwhelm the eventual SDI deployment. “In spite of this advice, the Soviet leaders may worry that the United States will manage to develop a highly effective BMD system. They will therefore want to expand their R&D program so that they will be able to field their own system, if they should so decide. Because there is considerable overlap between ground-based laser anti-satellite (ASAT) and BMD technologies, an extended R&D program would contribute to ASAT as well as to BMD. It is one of the dilemmas of BMD development that it will further the development of effective ASAT, which in turn poses a serious threat to space-based BMD.”[147]

In order to stop a new stage of arms race that the Soviets could not afford and to stop or slow down the SDI itself, Soviet Union resumed to the arms control negotiations. Already Gromyko as Soviet foreign ministry declared, establishing the key interconnection between offensive and defensive systems: “The Soviet Union is ready not

[145] David Holloway, *The Strategic Defense Initiative and the Soviet Union*, Daedalus, Summer, 1985, Vol. 114, No. 3, Weapons in Space, Vol. II: Implications for Security (Summer, 1985), pp. 257-278, The MIT Press, 1985
[146] Ibidem
[147] Ibidem

only to consider the problem of strategic arms, but would even be ready to reduce them sharply, of course, while maintaining the principles of equality and equal security. And on the contrary, if there were no progress in questions of space, then it would be superfluous to speak about the possibility of reducing strategic arms."[148] The advent of Gorbachev as General Secretary did not change the Soviet stance on SDI. "In his speech to British members of Parliament in December 1984, Gorbachev said that the "non-militarization of space" and nuclear weapons "ought to be considered and resolved in [their] interconnection"[149]

From the United States side, Paul Nitze declared: "For the next ten years, we should seek a radical reduction in the number and power of existing and planned offensive and defensive nuclear arms, whether land-based or otherwise. We should even now be looking forward to a period of transition, beginning possibly ten years from now, to effective non-nuclear defensive forces, including defenses against offensive nuclear arms. This period of transition should lead to the eventual elimination of nuclear arms, both offensive and defensive. A nuclear-free world is an ultimate objective to which we, the Soviet Union and all other nations can agree."[150] The different conceptions of how to reach a nuclear free world and of the connection between offensive and defensive weapons are clear and they will be the major obstacles on the road to an agreement on arms control. The main problem for the effectiveness of the American SDI "as Richard DeLauer, former Under Secretary for Defense for Research and Engineering, has said, "with unconstrained proliferation (of offensive systems), no defensive system will work." If defensive systems are to contribute to a safer and more stable strategic relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, they will have to be embedded in a strict arms-control regime that limits offensive systems. In the current political and technological circumstances, however, the attempt to build defenses may well push the other side into expanding and upgrading its offensive forces. It is thus a paradox of the present superpower rivalry that the effort to build BMD can, and very possibly will,

[148] David Holloway, *The Strategic Defense Initiative and the Soviet Union*, Daedalus, Summer, 1985, Vol. 114, No. 3, Weapons in Space, Vol. II: Implications for Security (Summer, 1985), pp. 257-278, The MIT Press, 1985
[149] Ibidem
[150] Ibidem

undermine the very condition that is needed to ensure that BMD contributes to a safer world."[151]

The objective of an arms control agreement was thus shared between Soviet Union and United States. The possible trade-off to exploit was between the stop of the SDI project and the strong reduction of Soviet offensive forces. While Gorbachev arrived to Reykjavik ready to concede major concessions in order to stop or slow down SDI, Reagan commitment to SDI and his new conception of a defense-dominant strategic relationship with Soviet Union was adamant.

REYKJAVIK, 11th-12th OCTOBER 1986

The location chosen for the summit was Hofti House, already home of the French Consulate in Iceland and British ambassador's residence. The Icelandic government took over Hofti House after the British sold it because considered haunted and maintained it for conferences and entertaining visiting dignitaries. "Soviet and American advance teams had chosen it because of its remote location and commanding view of the harbor."[152] After all, Iceland and Reykjavik were exactly chosen because of the remote location and to avoid massive intromission by the hosting government beyond the fact that was halfway between United States and Soviet Union.

Reagan arrived on October 9th on Air force One and established his headquarter at the U.S. embassy, while Gorbachev and the Soviet team arrived the following day by air and settled into their accommodations on a 360-foot-long Soviet cruise ship named Georg Otts anchored off-shore.[153] On the morning of Saturday 11th October, Reagan and Gorbachev finally met each other at Hofti House. The first hour of the first meeting the two leaders met alone. "Reagan suggested they sit at the table, rather than in side chairs, in order to work more comfortably. Gorbachev agreed, then surprised the President by

[151] David Holloway, *The Strategic Defense Initiative and the Soviet Union*, Daedalus, Summer, 1985, Vol. 114, No. 3, Weapons in Space, Vol. II: Implications for Security (Summer, 1985), pp. 257-278, The MIT Press, 1985
[152] Fredrik Stanton, *Great Negotiations*, Yardley, Westholme, 2011
[153] Ibidem

pulling out a stack of prepared papers from which to work. This set the tone of the meeting, with the Soviets driving and the Americans reacting. While Reagan talked broadly about his goals for the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), his idea to link deferral of SDI deployment to the elimination of ballistic missiles, and his willingness to share SDI benefits, Gorbachev read specific proposals from a prepared statement."[154] Then, U.S. Secretary of State Shultz and Soviet foreign ministry Shevardnadze joined them in a small room on the building's first floor. Main Gorbachev proposal was to cut strategic nuclear forces in half. As Gorbachev later wrote: "Our proposal to cut strategic nuclear arsenals boiled down to the following: negotiations were stuck in endless discussions, the argument was going round in circles and getting nowhere. What was needed was a new approach. We therefore suggested cutting each of the three groups (ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and strategic bombers) by 50 per cent. It was the first time that the Soviet Union had agreed to such a big reduction in its ground-based ICBM force. This was our most powerful strategic weapon and was considered a major threat by the Americans. It was not meant as a one-sided offer, since the United States were supposed to cut by 50 per cent their major striking force-their nuclear submarines and their strategic bombers, in which they were superior to us. The logic was simple: to reduce the arsenals which guaranteed nuclear deterrence to a much lower level."[155] Furthermore, Gorbachev proposed to eliminate Soviet and American intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe, allowing France and Great Britain to keep their 194 warheads that technically laid outside of NATO's command structure. Additionally, Gorbachev suggested to freeze the number of short-range INF missiles in Europe, an offer less generous than it appeared, as the Soviets had 120 deployed in Europe and NATO had none. "In return Gorbachev asked for a commitment from the United States not to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty for at least ten years. Finally, Gorbachev suggested a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing."[156]

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[154] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

[155] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, New York, Doubleday, 1995

[156] Fredrik Stanton, *Great Negotiations*, Yardley, Westholme, 2011

From the first stages of the negotiations, the fates of the ABM Treaty were considered fundamental by the Soviets to begin a path of reduction of nuclear arsenals. Reagan reacted to the first proposal declaring that to eliminate INF in Europe was a shared goal but that should be reduction in INF in Asia too because the missiles "threatened American allies in the Pacific, and as mobile systems, the Soviets could easily return the weapons to Europe."[157] The ten years commitment to the ABM Treaty was rejected. Reagan's reasoning was that even if poison gas had been outlawed after World War I, the armies kept the gas masks. Likewise, if they eliminate all nuclear missiles, they however need a guarantee, a defense against future madman who could reintroduce them. "In the discussions following this initial exchange, Gorbachev rejected Reagan's offer to share technology while expressing dissatisfaction with his explanation of SDI."[158] The American offer to share the SDI technology was considered unsubstantiated. After all, Americans refused to trade with Soviet Union many items, how can Gorbachev take seriously the offer of sharing advanced technology such as the SDI. In fact, in the speech on Soviet Television on 14th October Gorbachev will declare: "Reagan is ready to share with us the results obtained within the research done on SDI. In answering this last remark, I said: Mr. President, I do not take this idea seriously, your idea about sharing with us the results of research on SDI. You do not even want to share with us oil equipment or equipment for the dairy industry, and still you expect us to believe your promise to share the research developments in the SDI project. That would be something like a "Second American Revolution," and revolutions do not occur that often. I told President Reagan that we should be realists and pragmatists. This is a more reliable approach for the issues at hand are very serious."[159]

After this initial exchange and discussion, the negotiations were interrupted for lunch. Paul Nitze, the State Department senior arms-control adviser, remarked, "This is the best Soviet proposal we have received in twenty-five years."[160] After a period of stalemate in arms control negotiations following the Geneva summit, Soviets introduced

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[157] Fredrik Stanton, *Great Negotiations*, Yardley, Westholme, 2011

[158] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

[159] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Reykjavik: Results and Lessons*, Madison, Sphinx Press, 1987

[160] George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power and the Victory of the American Ideal*, New York, MacMillan, 1993

in Reykjavik very interesting proposals. The Americans felt that it was a breakthrough moment. The relationship between the two leaders was evolving too. As Reagan later recalled: “Looking back, it’s clear that there was a chemistry between Gorbachev and me that produced something very close to a friendship. He was a tough, hard bargainer. He was a Russian patriot who loved his country. We could-and did-debate from opposite sides of the ideological spectrum. But there was a chemistry that kept our conversations on a man-to-man basis, without hate or hostility. I liked Gorbachev even though he was a dedicated Communist and I was a confirmed capitalist.”[161]

Both parties believed that an agreement was within reach. “When President Reagan met with his advisers for lunch at the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik, a decision was reached to propose that working groups meet through the night to flesh out the areas of agreement and disagreement between the two sides. One set of working groups, headed by Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Rozanne Ridgeway, would discuss bilateral, regional and human rights issues. The other set, headed by the former chief INF negotiator and now special Advisor on Arms Control, Paul Nitze, would work out the differences on arms control. This U.S. initiative may have been a critical turning point. By its very nature, this plan confirmed that the United States was prepared to join the Soviets in escalating the importance of this meeting. What had been carefully portrayed as working session in preparation for a summit suddenly was transformed into a forum for real deal-making.”[162] The main difference of views at this stage of the negotiation between Gorbachev and Reagan was how to deal with the INF in Asia. Reagan welcomed the proposal of the 50 percent reduction of nuclear arsenals. “Gorbachev agreed to Reagan's proposal for working groups, and both men then agreed that the goal for the groups was to reach agreement on instructions to Foreign Ministers, who would in turn work toward a "framework agreement" for signature at a Washington summit”[163]

The U.S. team was guided by Paul Nitze, “the seventy-nine-year-old eminence grise of the U.S. arms-control community who had negotiated the SALT I strategic arms limitation treaty and the ABM treaty with the Soviets, the U.S. team met for ten and a half

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[161] Ronal Reagan, *An American Life*, New York, Simon Et Schuster, 1990

[162] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

[163] Ibidem

hours with their Soviet counterparts, led by Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, chief of staff of the Soviet armed forces."[164] There were a stark contrast between the two delegations, in fact the Soviet delegation was military in predominance while the American inner working group, those who conducted the real negotiations, were all civilians. The JCS representative, Lt. General John Moellering, played a relatively minor role.[165] Paul Nitze described the negotiations with the Soviets during the night between 11th and 12th October: "We spent a large part of the first six hours of the meeting trying to pin down what "fifty percent reduction" would entail. Akhromeyev explained that the Soviets proposed halving the strategic arsenals of each side "category by category". I was quick to object to that formula. That would mean unequal end points in those categories where one side or the other had the current advantage. For example, the Soviet Union's large relative advantage in ICBM warheads would remain. I thought the sides must strive for equal end results; this would require unequal reductions where the current levels favored one side."[166] At six thirty Sunday morning, the two teams reached an agreement on the meaning of 50 percent reduction in strategic weapons. The Soviets fulfilled the American concern for an equal numerical outcome with a ceiling for each side of six thousand warheads and one thousand six hundred delivery vehicles. It meant greater cuts by the Soviets. Kenneth Adelman, head of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and Reagan's senior arms-control adviser, called it "more progress than we achieved in thousands of hours in hundreds of meetings over the previous five years"[167]

"Although the Soviets had not specifically stated a requirement for a comprehensive package linking all agreements, including INF and nuclear testing, to resolution of the SDI issue, it was apparent to at least some U.S. participants in retrospect that the linkage was implicit by the time the arms control working group disbanded at 6:30 a.m."[168] The problems of the elimination of the INF, nuclear testing and SDI

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[164] Fredrik Stanton, *Great Negotiations*, Yardley, Westholme, 2011

[165] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

[166] Paul Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Center of Decision*, New York, Grove Weidenfeld, 1989

[167] Kenneth Adelman, *The Great Universal Embrace: Arms Summitry-A Skeptic's Account*, New York, Simon et Schuster, 1989

[168] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

remained on the table when on Sunday morning Reagan and Gorbachev returned to Hofti House for the final session of the summit, scheduled to finish at twelve thirty in the afternoon. "With a 50 percent reduction in strategic weapons in hand, they returned to the question of the intermediate-range missiles. Reagan pressed to abolish them globally, but at a minimum insisted that removal of those weapons from Europe be accompanied by a reduction in Asian systems as well. "I cannot permit," Reagan maintained, "the creation of a situation where we would reduce these missiles to zero in Europe and not make proportional reductions of similar Soviet missiles in Asia. SS-20 missiles are mobile and can be moved easily. Their presence exerts an influence on our Asian allies, not to mention our allies in Europe."[169] Gorbachev decided to compromise on this issue proposing the elimination of INF in Europe and a ceiling of one hundred INF missiles for each party in Asia. Furthermore, "both sides agreed to work toward a ban on nuclear testing in concert with their reductions in nuclear stockpiles, and in what the Americans viewed as a major breakthrough, the Soviets consented to make human rights a regular subject of the two sides' agenda in future discussions"[170]

"The President accepted this formulation, despite the fact that there had been no consultation with the NATO allies-those most directly affected-on the possibility of immediate elimination of these long-range systems. At this point, the President authorized a series of phone calls to the leaders of those European countries committed to deployment of the INF missiles. These calls informed each nation of the U.S. intention to agree to elimination of these systems."[171] The deadline of the end of the session arrived and it was ignored by the participants. "With all but the final details to be worked out, an agreement on strategic arms must have seemed very near. Thus, Reagan was vulnerable to Gorbachev's suggestion that an unscheduled afternoon session be held to discuss strategic defense issues further."[172] Gorbachev in fact had to resolve the issue of the SDI and he needed more time. Gorbachev began warning: "The present chance, might be the only one. I was not in a position a year ago, to say nothing of two or three years ago, to

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[169] *U.S. and Soviet Meeting Notes*, October 12, 1986, National Security Archive
[170] Fredrik Stanton, *Great Negotiations*, Yardley, Westholme, 2011
[171] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987
[172] *Ibidem*

make the kind of proposals I am now making. I might not be able to make the same proposals in a year or so. Time passes. Things change."[173] And then Gorbachev reintroduced the issue of the ABM Treaty linked to the SDI, he said: "If the parties are undertaking deep reductions in nuclear weapons, there must be an atmosphere of confidence, and to achieve that the conditions of the ABM Treaty must be toughened." He cautioned that "if the fate of the ABM Treaty is not clear then the whole concept collapses and we are back where we were before Reykjavik."[174] It became clear to everybody in the American team that the Soviets wanted to stop SDI at all costs and that will be no agreement without all agreed. It was needed a major proposal from the American side since the Soviets had already made great concessions.

During the afternoon, Robert Linhard, an air force colonel and senior National Security Council arms-control expert, came out with a proposal to escape the impasse. "Linhard's proposal gave way to the Soviet demand and committed each side to confine itself to research, development, and testing permitted by the ABM Treaty for ten years, and significantly increased the stakes. During the first five years both sides would reduce their strategic offensive arsenals by 50 percent. In the second five-year period they would eliminate all remaining strategic missiles. […] After ten years, with all offensive ballistic missiles eliminated, each side would be free to deploy defenses.[175] Reagan approved the proposal, in his view he would have accepted the Gorbachev conditions on the ABM Treaty in return for all Soviets ballistic missiles. After the ten years period, the U.S. would have been free to deploy SDI in space. "Moreover, it was the first time that the United States had ever proposed to eliminate all ballistic missiles within a specified time frame."[176] The American delegation was almost certain that an agreement could be reached. Even Gorbachev observed, "Both the negotiating teams realized that this was a unique opportunity to break out of the vicious circle of the nuclear arms race."[177] The formula presented by the Americans with the Linhard proposal made reference to adherence of the ABM Treaty that in the American interpretation allowed SDI

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[173] *U.S. and Soviet Meeting Notes*, October 12, 1986, National Security Archive
[174] Jack Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended*, New York, Random House, 2005
[175] Fredrik Stanton, *Great Negotiations*, Yardley, Westholme, 2011
[176] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987
[177] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, New York, Doubleday 1995

development even within a restrictive interpretation of the text of the Treaty. For this reason, the Soviets could not be satisfied, they needed to stop the SDI development. Gorbachev insisted that research on ABM systems should be limited to laboratory during the ten-year nonwithdrawal period from the ABM Treaty. Gorbachev explained:

> Your formula fails to meet our position halfway. Our point of view is that we will eliminate strategic nuclear forces in these 10 years. In the meantime, while the USSR and the U.S. are carrying out deep reductions in nuclear weapons we ought to reinforce instead of undermining the ABM Treaty. That's why we are proposing to strengthen the ABM regime in that very crucial period. Why complicate things with other problems which we are uncertain about, the consequences of which are unclear? Why burden an agreement by these weights? You have to agree that it would be more difficult for us to go along with this if you tie us down with aggravating weights. That is why we are proposing that we come to an agreement regarding the 10-year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty; to carry out research only in laboratories during that period, and then after the period is over and strategic weapons have been eliminated, discuss what to do next.[178]

Reagan tried to persuade Gorbachev to his position and at least to postpone the discussion on the interpretation of the ABM Treaty to the Washington summit. He wanted to close the deal on the most important thing: to eliminate nuclear arsenals. Gorbachev insisted firmly, "Without that there's no package. All of the elements are interrelated. If we come to an agreement on deep reductions of nuclear weapons, we must have assurance that the ABM Treaty will not only be complied with but also strengthened in this crucial period. I repeat, this period is too crucial, it is dangerous to improvise."[179] "Some of the Reykjavik participants have claimed that the reappearance at this point of the restrictions to the laboratory was a last-minute move they did not expect. It remains unclear how, despite repeated Soviet calls for such restrictions in Geneva and at Reykjavik the previous day, these participants could have been surprised."[180] It was time for the final American proposal. Reagan was ready to accept all the Soviets proposals but he could not accept to give up on the SDI. He promised to the United States that he would not have compromised on SDI. "In this U.S. "counter-counter proposal," most of the Soviet language was retained. However, key portions were altered: the constraint on testing of strategic defense elements was removed, the reference to elimination of all strategic nuclear offensive forces in ten years was crossed out and all offensive ballistic missiles written in, and the right of either party to deploy strategic defense at the end of ten years absent a mutual

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[178] *Soviet Meeting Notes*, October 12, 1986, National Security Archive
[179] *U.S. and Soviet Meeting Notes*, October 12, 1986, National Security Archive
[180] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

agreement not to was substituted once again for the Soviet formulation. In offering this final U.S. proposal, Reagan relied on his belief in his own powers of persuasion to convince the Soviet leader that strategic defenses were a necessary "insurance policy" and that they must be non-threatening in a world with no ballistic missiles."[181]

Everybody understood that everything depended on agreement on how to handle SDI. Reagan insisted trying to persuade Gorbachev: "I fail to see the magic of the ABM regime, whose only assurance of safety is the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction. We are talking about elimination of missiles, about how we should no longer threatened with the danger that some gloomy day someone will push the button and everything will be destroyed. But even when we destroy these missiles we must have a defense against others. The genie is already out of the bottle."[182] Gorbachev replied sustaining that experimentations on SDI would have been allowed in laboratory conditions but both the leaders knew that the word "laboratory" meant the halt of a great part of the scheduled research on the SDI and that the Congress would hardly have given the funds for the development of a technology without the possibility of open-air tests. Reagan considered this latter request on limiting experiments on SDI to laboratory conditions as betrayal from Gorbachev part. "As evening approached, I thought to myself: Look what we have accomplished-we have negotiated the most massive weapons reductions in history. I thought we were in complete agreement and were going to achieve something remarkable. Then, after everything had been decided, or so I thought, Gorbachev threw us a curve. With a smile on his face, he said: "This all depends, of course, on you giving up SDI." I couldn't believe it and blew my top. "I've said again and again the SDI wasn't a bargaining chip. Now, with all we have accomplished here, you do this and throw in this roadblock and everything is out the window."[183]

Gorbachev remained steady on his position; he could not allow the SDI tests to go on. In fact, Gorbachev explained: "It's not a trivial thing-it is everything. You must understand me. To us the laboratory issue is not a matter of stubbornness or hard-headedness. We are agreeing to deep reductions and, ultimately, the destruction of nuclear

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[181] *Report of the Defense Policy Panel of the Committee on Armed Services, The Reykjavik Process: Preparation for and Conduct of the Iceland Summit and its Implications for Arms Control Policy*, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987

[182] *Soviet Meeting Notes*, October 12, 1986, National Security Archive

[183] Ronal Reagan, *An American Life*, New York, Simon et Schuster, 1990

weapons. And at the same time, the American side is pushing us to agree to give them the right to create space weapons. Let me be clear. I cannot do without the word "laboratory". I cannot carry back to Moscow an agreement that gives up this limitation of research and testing to the laboratory. If you agree to this, we could write it all down and I will sign it right now. If this is not possible, then we can say good-bye and forget everything we have discussed."[184] These were the last words of negotiations, Reagan and Gorbachev understood that the historical agreement that both desired on arms control was impossible to reach at the moment. The two leaders continue to talk and try to persuade the other all the way to the threshold of the exit door of Hofti House. "Mr. President," Gorbachev called out to him, "you have missed the unique chance of going down in history as a great president who paved the way for nuclear disarmament." "That applies to both of us" Reagan replied.[185]

REACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE SUMMIT

Despite the bitter end of the Reykjavik summit, both parties considered what just happened as a success after a brief period of reflection. Shultz wrote: "The sweep of what had been achieved at Reykjavik was nevertheless breathtaking, far-reaching concessions to the American positions had been put forward, orchestrated by Gorbachev, over the two days: it was an elaborate chesslike performance. At the end, Gorbachev pulled the rug out. […] Gorbachev's approach had been brilliant, but he neglected two points: President Reagan's deeply felt commitment to a new, defense-based concept of deterrence; and the fragility of the Soviet arms control concessions. Without SDI as an ongoing propellant, these concessions could wither away over the next ten years. I knew that the genie was out of the bottle: the concessions Gorbachev made at Reykjavik could never, in reality, be taken back. We had seen the Soviets' bottom line. […] At Reykjavik we had reached virtual agreement on INF and had set out the parameters of START. And we had gotten

[184] Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998
[185] Edmund Morris, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*, New York, Random House, 1999

human rights formally on the negotiating table. […] The reality was that Reykjavik was a stupendous success."[186]

Beyond the breathtaking advance in the arms reductions negotiations, the U.S. obtained that the discussions on human rights would have been steadily on the table in successive U.S.-Soviet negotiations. The American agenda for the Reykjavik summit was based on four points: arms reductions, human rights, regional conflicts and people-to-people contacts. In the address to the Nation on the Meetings with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in Iceland on 13th October 1986, Reagan clearly stated "an improvement of the human condition within the Soviet Union is indispensable for an improvement in bilateral relations with the United States."[187]

The point must have been clearly understood by the Soviets and the American offensive at Reykjavik in this field seemed to have produced immediate results. A month after the Reykjavik summit, at the Third Review Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) the Soviets "largely abandoned the traditional Eastern tactic of declaring Western human rights criticism to be interference in their internal affairs."[188] On 5th November 1986, Shevardnadze announced the intention of the Soviet Union to host a conference on human rights and the following day Soviet officials announced a reform on the emigration rules for Soviet citizens. Furthermore, between September 1986 and the end of the year, Soviet Union solved many high-profile cases of prisoner of conscience and high-profile emigration cases. To mention a few: Yuri Orlov was released from internal exile; poet Irina Ratushinskaya was released from a labor camp; Andrei Sakharov's internal exile ended and Nina Kovalenko's imprisonment in a psychiatric hospital ended. "Their release from labor camps, a psychiatric hospital, and internal exile, as well as, the approval of emigration requests for other individuals, generated international media attention that reflected positively on Gorbachev's

[186] George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: Diplomacy, Power and the Victory of the American Ideal*, New York, MacMillan, 1993

[187] *Address to the Nation on the Meetings with Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev in Iceland*, October 13, 1986

[188] B. Wayne Howell, *Reagan and Reykjavík: Arms Control, SDI, and the Argument from Human Rights*, Rhetoric and Public Affairs, Fall 2008, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 389-415, Michigan State University Press, 2008

leadership and the changes taking place inside the Soviet Union"[189] It is difficult to believe in a simple coincidence between the Reykjavik summit and these events.

The reforms of the perestroika implied a certain measure of glasnost but the firmness of the U.S. to link the human rights to the improvement of relations made it necessary a change of posture in Soviet Union. Gorbachev was in search of improvement in U.S.-Soviet relations since Geneva 1985, he needed the prestige derived by major achievements in foreign policy and he needed an agreement on the arms race. Both needs requested an improvement in human rights record of the Soviet Union. Indeed, Anatoly Chernyaev, one of the top foreign policy advisors to Gorbachev, observed, "Our policy did not change until Gorbachev understood that there would be no improvement and no serious arms control until we admitted and accepted human rights, free emigration, until glasnost became freedom of speech, until our society and the process of perestroika changed deeply."[190] The reforms proposed by Gorbachev will be insufficient to save the Soviet Union that will dissolute after few years from Reykjavik, at the end of 1991.

American NATO allies' response to the negotiations that took place in October 1986 at Reykjavik between Reagan and Gorbachev reflected the anxiety of the European governments when at stake there were arms control agreement limiting the weapons at the basis of the NATO deterrence in Europe. The situation in Europe was characterized by the presence of the NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Even if NATO was a defensive pact, it justified high Soviet military forces within the Warsaw Pact countries. This state of affair prevented the establishment of normal relations between the East and the West. NATO at the same time powered and prevented the Soviet threat.

In the NATO context, each ally had two fears or costs: the fear of abandonment and of entrapment or cost of dependence and cost of reduced freedom of action. Fear to be abandon during a crisis and fear of entrapment in a conflict between superpowers without the possibility of choice. In relation to the nuclear weapons, the fear of abandonment lied on the possibility that the American nuclear deterrent stops to deter a possible Soviet threat and the fear of entrapment lied on the possibility that the Americans

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[189] B. Wayne Howell, *Reagan and Reykjavík: Arms Control, SDI, and the Argument from Human Rights*, Rhetoric and Public Affairs, Fall 2008, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Fall 2008), pp. 389-415, Michigan State University Press, 2008

[190] Jack Matlock Jr., *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended*, New York, Random House, 2005

triggers a nuclear war destroying Europe in the process. These fears activated a cycle in Soviet-U.S. relations. “When the United States responds to European fears of abandonment by giving more explicit security guarantees or extra nuclear hardware for the European theatre, East-West relations worsen and the Europeans' fear of entrapment in a superpower conflict becomes more acute. On the other hand, when America responds to fears of entrapment by pursuing bilateral agreements with the Soviet Union more vigorously, the allies who are most dependent feel that their security guarantees are being undermined”[191] In fact, since World War II, Soviets and Americans succeed in closing only few treaties codifying some aspects of the existing balance and the status quo.

After Reykjavik, responses from West Germany, Great Britain and France were characterized by the fear of abandonment. They resented not to be consulted before and after the negotiations and they feared the destabilizing potential of deep cuts in nuclear weapons. “Most felt that the proposal to ban ballistic missiles had undermined the credibility of extended deterrence and the legitimacy of the British and French strategic arsenals.” Among the reactions, there is some irony in the fact that the British, French and West German defense elites, who were skeptical about the opportunity of the SDI, admitted that they have to thank SDI for having saved NATO from a disastrous package of arms reductions. First European leader to visit the United States after the Reykjavik negotiations was Chancellor Kohl who expressed public approval to Reagan’s proposals. In private, he sustained that a zero INF agreement would be dangerous without an agreement on shorter-range systems, he suggested to enhance NATO’s conventional forces in the case of deep cuts in offensive ballistic missiles.[192]

The reality is that both Kohl and Thatcher were about to face elections and they would have preferred a modest outcome from Reykjavik, an outcome good to the continuation of the arms control process without a clear decision on cuts of force levels. Furthermore, Kohl and Thatcher were subject to the predominance of fear of entrapment of their electorates thus they would have preferred the U.S. to accept some limits on SDI testing in exchange for an arms control agreement before the end of Reagan term. In

[191] Jane M. O. Sharp, *After Reykjavik: Arms Control and the Allies*, International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Spring, 1987, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Spring, 1987), pp. 239-257, Oxford University Press, 1987
[192] Ibidem

France, "Both the President, M. Francois Mitterrand, and the Prime Minister, M. Jacques Chirac, emphasized the inadequacy of transatlantic consultation in general and on the Reykjavik summit in particular. In a speech to the West European Union in December 1986, M. Chirac said that NATO was threatened by "the feeling, whether justified or not, that decisions vital to the security of Europe could be taken without Europe really having any say in the matter."[193] It was true that the Reagan administration was particularly insensitive to the allies on the matter of arms control. In 1982, the U.S. refused the Nitze-Kvitsinsky compromise at the Geneva INF talks without consulting the allies. Then in 1983, when Reagan decided to launch his Strategic Defence Initiative there was no previous discussion with the allies. Finally, during the Reykjavik negotiations, Reagan informed European leaders of the proposals at stake with a telephone call between a session and the other of negotiation.

Although the negotiations did not end with a desired agreement from Soviet part, Gorbachev did not considered Reykjavik a failure, at least in public. "In spite of all its drama," the Soviet leader announced, "Reykjavik is not a failure-it is a breakthrough, which allowed us for the first time to look over the horizon." Gorbachev believed "Reykjavik showed that an agreement was possible. […] Reykjavik strengthened our conviction that we had chosen the right course."[194] "I think," he declared, "that the U.S. President and I should reflect on the entire situation that ultimately evolved here at the meeting, and make another attempt to step over the things that divide us."[195] The Soviet Union "will be waiting, without withdrawing the proposals that we have made public."[196]

The possibility to eliminate all the ballistic missiles remained only a proposal resulted within the negotiation at Reykjavik and it will never become a reality. Nevertheless, at the basis of the successive Treaties on nuclear weapons lies the proposals and the ideas put forward at Reykjavik. Gorbachev maintained his offer on the table and Reagan announced the same in a nationally televised address from the Oval Office:" The

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[193] Jane M. O. Sharp, *After Reykjavik: Arms Control and the Allies*, International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Spring, 1987, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Spring, 1987), pp. 239-257, Oxford University Press, 1987

[194] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs,* New York, Doubleday, 1995

[195] Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998

[196] Ibidem

door is open, and the opportunity to begin eliminating the nuclear threat is within reach. … We're ready to pick up where we left off, and we're prepared to go forward whenever and wherever the Soviets are ready."[197] The basis for an INF Treaty and for a strategic arms reduction Treaty were already established. Shevardnadze and Shultz began working on it in order to find the right formula that Reagan and Gorbachev could sign.

The turning point will be in February 1987, when Gorbachev renounced to link an INF Treaty with an agreement on ABM to sabotage the SDI. Gorbachev agreed with Shultz that Soviet Union would agree to eliminate its short-range intermediate missiles too within the INF Treaty and furthermore Gorbachev agreed in eliminating INF from Asia as in Europe. On 29th July 1987, the United States accepted the Soviet Union proposal. After the signing, Gorbachev declared: "What we have achieved is the revival of hope."[198]

The Treaty on the reduction of the strategic arms was finally concluded four years later. On 31st July 1991, Gorbachev and George H. W. Bush signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Americans and Soviets decided to cut their nuclear arsenals by half.

[197] Michael Mandelbaum and Strobe Talbott, *Reagan and Gorbachev*, New York, Random House, 1987
[198] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Memoirs*, New York, Doubleday, 1995

CONCLUSION

The legacy of the Reykjavik summit is remarkable. Even before Reykjavik, at Geneva, Soviet Union and United States declared the irrationality of a nuclear war. Therefore, the futility to relies on nuclear weapons for national security. From this point, at Reykjavik began the shift from the arms control of the 60s and 70s to nuclear disarmament. At the time of the summit, antiballistic missile systems emerged as a key to reduce offensive nuclear weapons and trying to escape the MAD. Finally, the renounce from both superpowers to the doctrine of "protracted nuclear war".

President Reagan was terrified by the potential consequences of a nuclear war and considered the logic of the MAD as "uncivilized". The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as Secretary General provided a window of opportunity for U.S. and Soviet Union to collaborate in order to address the problem. As Reagan later recalled about the spirit of Gorbachev: "To hear this man now, without any urging from me, express his wish that we could totally eliminate nuclear weapons because of the threat they represent—and he quoted back to me a line I used as long ago as 1982 ... 'A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.' "[199] President Reagan was surprised and pleased to hear these words from him. They understood each other on the topic.

Arms control was about managing a potential conflict between enemies and be prepared for the economic and military costs. It accepted the possibility of military buildup in order to guarantee the right of a retaliatory strike to respond a first nuclear attack. Reagan was profoundly contrary to the process that was inherent to the logic of the MAD. As on October 14, 1986 he declared: "We had, to work to make the world safer, not just control the pace at which it became more dangerous."[200] Despite all the opposition by whom still believed in the strategic equilibrium and the arms control, the road undertaken by Reagan and Gorbachev at Reykjavik gained popularity before and after the

[199] James E. Goodby, *President Reagan's Nuclear Legacy*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007
[200] Ibidem

end of the Cold War and reached some results with the INF Treaty and the diverse START Treaties.

In Reagan's thought, SDI was crucial in order to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons. He was the first President to conceive that antiballistic missile systems would be the key to allow deep reductions in nuclear offensive arsenals. This thought led Paul Nitze to elaborate the theory of "defense dominance". The guarantee of deterrence through defensive systems instead of offensive missiles. To realize a world without nuclear weapons United States needed Soviet Union collaboration through a Treaty sanctioning initially deep reductions of the level of offensive nuclear weapons. The development of antiballistic systems to be deployed in both countries should have guarantee the security against other nuclear risks, such dictators out of control, terrorists or accidental launches.

One of the first duty Reagan undertook as President was to reach parity in nuclear weapons with the Soviet Union. During the 70's Soviet military buildup seemed to have led to a situation of disadvantage in nuclear arsenals between United States and Soviet Union. American buildup was appropriate linked to the doctrine of "protracted nuclear war" that needed thousands of nuclear warheads to be persecuted. The policy of arms reductions adopted through the second term of President Reagan made the theory of "protracted nuclear war" obsolete and difficult to adopt. The overcoming of the "protracted nuclear war" is a great achievement considering the enormous damages that could derive from a nuclear war of the genre.

The path taken with the decision to develop antiballistic missile systems have consequences in present world. The risks related to the launches of missiles even not nuclear have risen over the last years. From Lebanon to North Korea, missiles are a real threat that did not ended with the end of the Soviet Union. The Reagan's decision to not compromise on the SDI research was extremely fortunate. Gorbachev made whatever he could in order to destroy the possibility of a missiles defense. Reagan's refusals to the great concessions made by Gorbachev's proposals were maybe not understood by all the commentators that judged the Icelandic summit as a failure. "First impressions judged

that the United States had walked away from an array of Soviet concessions because of a dubious Star Wars fantasy."[201]

Reagan's view went beyond the Soviet Union menace and neither Gorbachev nor the media understood that at the time. Reagan knew that SDI or other antiballistic missile systems could not be totally effective against a nuclear attack but he considered SDI as "a safety valve against cheating—or attacks by lunatics who managed to get their hands on a nuclear missile."[202] Reagan wanted to reach an agreement with the Soviet Union on the elimination of the nuclear weapons by year 2000 as proposed by Gorbachev in early 1986, eliminating the Soviet menace. At the same time with the development of the SDI, Reagan wanted to guarantee his country against other possible dangers. For this reason, he could not compromise on the SDI, he did not want to leave United States vulnerable to long-range strategic missiles.

The decision took at Reykjavik to not compromise on SDI at the time allowed the technology to develop during the years. Nowadays, antiballistic missile systems exist and it allows to not remain totally vulnerable to an eventual missile attack.

The 1986 Reykjavik summit was a turning point in United States-Soviet Union relations that eventually led to the end of the Cold War with the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991. After Reykjavik, Gorbachev understood the necessity to reach an agreement with the United States to end the arms race if he wanted to deal with the internal problems and reforms. The meeting between Gorbachev and Reagan demonstrated the importance of personal communication between leaders. Their relationship revealed to be fruitful with the ratification of the INF Treaty. Finally, for the first time in Reykjavik Soviet Union accepted to bring to table of the negotiations all the four points of the American agenda: arms reductions, use of force in third countries, human rights and building a better work relationship. This led to progress in all four areas.

In fact, Reykjavik summit was more than a summit about arms reductions or just a two-day negotiation that ended with absence of agreement between United States and

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[201] Thomas H. Henriksen, *The Legacy of Reykjavik: Preserving a Security Option for Dealing with Madmen, Missiles, and Missile Defense*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

[202] Ronald Reagan, *An American Life*, New York, Simon et Schuster, 1990

Soviet Union. The path that conducted to Reykjavik and then to the end of the Cold War began in the early 1980s. It comprised an extraordinary effort to develop dialogue with the Soviet Union and with the allies from an American perspective. The allies insistence for dialogue translated in the "double track" approach to United States-Soviet Union relations was fundamental to write the four points American agenda toward Soviet Union. Human rights point comprised: examples, the treatment of dissidents (most famously Anatoly Scharansky, Andrei Sakharov, Yuri Orlov), religious freedom, travel, family reunification, denial of emigration for Jews and others, and the suppression of information.[203] During the 80s, the meetings between United States and Soviet Union began always with the human rights as it was the case in Reykjavik. For what concerns regional issues Gorbachev and Reagan addressed the most important at the time: Afghanistan, Nicaragua, the Middle East, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Angola and the overall topic of Soviet support for so-called national liberation fronts. The last point that involved building a better work relationship included discussions about trade, air safety, search and rescue, the environment, housing, consulates, and cultural exchanges. The summit at Reykjavik was more than arms reductions.

The four points were equally important and United States did not pursue linkage between them. "Lack of progress on one would not mean the sacrifice of all others."[204] This was a key move in improving United States-Soviet Union relations, despite the advocates of the pointlessness of negotiations with Soviet Union. Many episodes could have led to the interruption of the dialogue, for example the Daniloff case, but the renounce of linkage contributes to made the negotiations stay on track. Each problem was faced by the United States in its own context without involving the whole of the relations with the Soviet Union.

If for the Soviet Union the meeting at Reykjavik was about mainly SDI, for the United States it was not. United States were ready to carry on their full agenda. Especially on human rights, at the time of Gromyko, Soviet Union always declined to even talk about it. At Geneva, human rights were objected as interference in internal affairs but at least

[203] Rozanne L. Ridgway, *The Legacy of Reykjavik: Remarks*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007
[204] Ibidem

Gorbachev and his team listened and in the final Joint Statement accepted to refer to humanitarian issues. At Reykjavik, Soviet Union lastly accepted the items of human rights and humanitarian affairs to be on the agenda of the summit. "The human rights dialogue had expanded far beyond lists of names, to discussions of open societies as successful societies, of the freedom of thought and intellectual exchange necessary to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. A far more textured and philosophical exchange was taking place under those two important words "human rights."[205]

The opportunities that were within grasp at Reykjavik may have been lost, but some lessons remain. "The determination of both leaders to engage each other despite the differences between their countries and the manner in which each dealt with the challenge of negotiating with a state that was his country's main competitor if not outright enemy"[206], it is one of them.

Firsts years of Reagan's administration was characterized by a high level of confrontation with the Soviet Union. President Reagan and his advisers shared the vision of a Soviet Union as an "evil empire" with the world communist revolution as a main objective. Reagan's administration was determined to not let it happen and to ultimately win the Cold War. The Reagan doctrine, designed to respond the Brezhnev doctrine, for years assisted and provided funds and arms to government and political groups oppressed by the Soviets. What divided Reagan's advisers was the willingness to negotiate with the Soviet Union or not. Opponents to engagement with Soviet Union sustained the end of the détente era. Under Nixon, Ford and Carter, United States pursued a policy of détente in which Soviet Union was considered as equal, minimizing hostility and maximizing stability. Détente led to a decline in American influence and a growth of Soviet aggressiveness throughout the world. To avoid offence to the Soviet Union, United States compromised on their own values. During the détente Soviet Union expanded its influence and power, for this reason confrontation and not negotiation was the best policy to face Soviet Union and ultimately to defeat it. Opponents to negotiations believed that

[205] Rozanne L. Ridgway, The Legacy of Reykjavik: Remarks, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

[206] Abraham D. Sofaer, *A Legacy of Reykjavik: Negotiating with Enemies*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

being the Soviet Union built on an ideology considering the international law as a fraudulent, capitalist system to be exploited through cheating and manipulation, it was pointless to negotiate with them. Past negotiations gave great advantages to Soviet Union and little to the United States and in general the free world. United States and western diplomats willing to find agreements with the Soviet Union were viewed as a danger because they did not realize that the Soviet Union was not going to comply with the signed pacts.

Secretary of State George Shultz led the supporters of engagement with the Soviet Union. He was convinced that the United States could confront the Soviet Union in every aspect but at the same time United States had the duty to understand if the Soviet Union was willing to respond on American issues of interest. United States had to check if their policy of pressure on Soviet Union achieved results to be exploited on diplomatic ground. President Reagan followed Shultz advise. While pursuing the military buildup and confrontation with Soviet Union, Reagan prepared to negotiate to find peace or stable relations with Soviet Union. "That the Soviets cheated and lied was a given to Reagan and Shultz; but they were confident in their capacity to insist on agreements that served U.S. interests and could be verified."[207] The dual track policy resulted by the thought of Reagan and Shultz was different to a policy of détente and it was based on regime acceptance, limited linkage and rhetorical restraint.

Regime acceptance implied the willingness of the United States to improve the relations with the Soviet Union whatever differences may be and a commitment to not try to overthrow directly Soviet Union regime. Opponents to dual track would have preferred a policy of total containment because they advocated regime acceptance would have led to accommodation or détente. The path chosen by Reagan overcame both containment and détente. United States pursued to advance United States objectives by increasing diplomatic contacts at all levels, cultural and commercial contacts and diplomatic engagement on the full range of issues willing that measures of acceptance would have led to increased diplomatic effectiveness.

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[207] Abraham D. Sofaer, *A Legacy of Reykjavik: Negotiating with Enemies*, collected in George P. Shultz, Sidney D. Drell, *Implications of the Reykjavik Summit on Its Twentieth Anniversary*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press Publication, 2007

The policy of limited linkage is the one that provoked more controversies. The United States committed to not leave the negotiation with the Soviet Union in face of the various episodes that could be used as pretext to stop engagement such as human rights violations, foreign interventions, espionage activities, support for terrorism, and occasional acts of brutality. The complexity of the relations between United States and Soviet Union had to be pursued regarding an issue at once without linking the issue one to another or with an attitude of "nothing is agreed until all is agreed". Reagan's administration knew that Soviet Union would have behave badly in any case. Therefore, it could be useful to reach agreement on limited issues of interest for the United States that Soviet Union wanted to negotiate.

Reagan was among the most frank and direct leader of the United States involving United States-Soviet Union relations. Rhetorical restraint seems not to be one of his main features. Actually, President Reagan and Secretary of State Shultz realized that put rhetorical pressure every time Soviet leaders responded positively to United States impulses was not the best option managing United States-Soviet Union relations. Adopting this tactic, United States succeeded in solving diverse issues privately collaborating with the Soviet Union under the promise to not take rhetorical advantage on the world stage.

The atmosphere between Soviet Union and United States created by the policies chosen by Reagan and Shultz was an atmosphere of trust that eventually led to the possibility of negotiate arms reductions. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze were reassured by the regime acceptance of the United States that their regime would not be overthrown directly by the United States. Therefore, effective diplomacy could be pursued following limited linkage and rhetorical restraint on a broad range of issues, not limited to arms control or reductions. The personal relation between Gorbachev and Reagan allowed the two leaders to eventually discuss in a direct and frank matter at Reykjavik one of the most delicate issues at stake between United States and Soviet Union at the time. The combination of hard confrontation and diplomacy proved to be highly effective for the United States.

Reykjavik summit could have been the triumph of Reagan foreign policy but he decided to not compromise on security even if he had to give up on an important result.

Gorbachev and Reagan reached agreements on the great part of the agenda, programming to eliminate nuclear weapons in ten years but Gorbachev insisted in a package deal comprising the strengthening of the ABM regime circumscribing research on antiballistic missile systems to laboratory. Accepting the deal would have meant to give up on SDI. To give up on what Reagan considered the only secure way of nuclear disarmament.

Gorbachev in time convinced himself to untie the different agreements on nuclear reductions before the end of the Soviet Union and he succeeded in signing historical treaties in the field of nuclear disarmament. Although nuclear disarmament was instrumental to put an end to the arms race and the resulting economic pressure on his country, Gorbachev firmly believed in the necessity of the nuclear disarmament and as Reagan in the uncivilized nature of the logic of MAD. Despite Gorbachev's effort in perestroika within domestic policy and in new thinking within foreign policy, Soviet Union was doomed to end. His great merit in foreign policy is to have tried to change the image of the Soviet Union and the climate of tensions characterizing the Cold War. His abandonment of the orthodox Marxism-Leninism to the acknowledgment of an interconnected world with shared common problems, we will never know where would have led Soviet Union foreign policy.

The legacy of Reykjavik still resonates to our days. The capacity to negotiate with enemies, the nuclear disarmament problem, antiballistic missiles systems are topic still relevant because we live in a world with rising international tensions. The standing of leaders such Reagan and Gorbachev is unlikely to be matched, they were able to manage the relations between Soviet Union and United States unexplored before in difficult times. Summit at Reykjavik in 1986 was an important moment of the relations between two countries. The summit could be considered as a failure, a lost occasion but the resolutions taken there were the beginning of the end of the Cold War and they still shape our world. For the first time, the two main powers of the world admitted the possibility to end wasting money on arms race and to end the conceivability of the mutual assured destruction eliminating all nuclear weapons.

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