

Dealing With the Soviet Union

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Before one can talk about the will and power of the U.S. to deal with the Soviet Union one must respond to two questions. *First*, why do we have to deal with the Soviet Union? What is the nature, seriousness, and imminence of any threat from the USSR? *Second*, what is the best way to deal with them? To what purpose? What means do we need to achieve that purpose?

I believe it is useful to look briefly at the history of these issues. Beginning with the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet regime has been a matter of curiosity and concern to many Americans. Russia was exhausted and weak and not then a physical threat, but Lenin's contempt and hatred for both European and American culture were explicit, detailed, and vigorous, and the implications for the future of that hatred were a matter for legitimate concern. At the Versailles peace conference consideration was given to measures that might mitigate that hatred. William Bullitt was a member of a delegation that went to Moscow at that time to explore possibilities, but the delegation returned empty handed.

By 1932 the United States still had not recognized the USSR. Bill Bullitt strongly believed that the essential first step in mitigating tensions would be U.S. recognition. Bill was a friend of mine. I had something to do with his meeting FDR during the 1932 presidential campaign. One of FDR's first actions was to work out an arrangement under which the Comintern agreed to cease its subversive propaganda in the U.S.; we in turn would recognize the Soviet Union. Bullitt was appointed our first post-World War I ambassador to Moscow. He tried hard to improve things but eventually came to the conclusion that the problem had deep ideological roots and that it was a virtually hopeless task to affect underlying Soviet doctrine.

FDR continued until his death to seek out ways to

mitigate Soviet hostility to the United States and lay a basis for post-World War II collaboration. Every president since FDR has tried, time and again, to find a path to a better relationship—some form of acceptable and less dangerous *modus vivendi*. Certainly Mr. Carter has tried to be both firm and accommodating. But the problem remains; American concern about the future of the U.S./USSR relationship is as great today, if not greater, as at any time in the past. Why should that be so?

I suggest there are two components to the answer. The first is the persistence of Soviet ideology's hostility to and contempt for Western culture. One can argue that some of the emotionalism has gone out of the ideology and that "hatred" has turned into a less emotional opposition and hostility. But of the opposition there can be no doubt. The other component of the answer is the manifest growth in the power of the Soviet Union and the system it commands—what it calls "The Camp of Peace and Freedom."

There is an interaction between these components. It is often suggested that one should distinguish clearly between what are called "intentions" and what are called "capabilities." What is less often noted is that intentions and capabilities interact. As power grows, what were once impracticable hopes—mere pipe dreams—can become serious intentions. When power declines, the reverse process can take place.

In the years immediately following the close of World War II the Soviet Union demobilized its forces more carefully and far less hastily than did the United States. Nevertheless its military power was limited. It enjoyed conventional superiority in the area surrounding its borders. It insisted upon a sphere of dominant influence as far as that superiority could reach—primarily through Eastern Europe. But it did not have the capability to project military power much beyond that perimeter. In those years all of us dealing with Soviet issues—including Chip Bohlen, George Kennan, Tommy Thompson, and Foy Kohler—were wary of Soviet sensitivity to any appearance of Western military pressure close to the Soviet perimeter. We saw no reason why a containment policy beyond that perimeter was not both feasible and prudent. Beyond the Soviet perimeter Western control of the seas and Western capability for

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rapid forward projection of conventional forces was protected, at first, by a nuclear monopoly and later by an acknowledged margin of nuclear superiority.

Vietnam demonstrated not only the reality of these superior capabilities but also their limitations. Neither the political health of South Vietnam nor the political cohesion of the United States was such as to be able to persist to a favorable conclusion in such a vicious, amorphous, and distant jungle war.

Today we face a new and evolving military situation vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and the so-called "Camp of Peace and Freedom." We are passing from a situation of acknowledged strategic nuclear superiority through a situation of rough strategic nuclear parity to one of strategic nuclear inferiority. One series of the many questions under debate today in Washington and the country at large is whether this—the assertion in my last sentence—is true; if true, does it make any difference, and if it makes a difference, what should we do about it?

To my mind the first part of the question is the least controversial. Distinct from those few who play tricks with words, those who deal with the facts of the situation agree that almost all the common indices of strategic nuclear capability are likely to turn negative to the United States within the next few years. The few that disagree hold that the words "superiority" and "inferiority" are meaningless because "superiority," and therefore "inferiority," make no difference. In other words, they confuse the first question—Is it true?—with the second—If true, does it make any difference?

Therefore it is on the second question that I believe we should focus our attention. Many in the United States have asserted that both sides have greater nuclear capability than they could possibly use, that anything over a few hundred nuclear weapons is overkill, that a nuclear war would result in the utter destruction of both sides, that the existence of nuclear weapons has made completely obsolete the principles of war, and that nuclear war has become unthinkable.

The Russians, on the other hand, take quite a different view. They believe that nuclear war deserves a great deal of thought, and they have given and are giving a great deal of thought to it. They believe the idea that the existence of nuclear missiles has somehow made obsolete the principles of war and the relationship of war to political purpose is not only wrong but a purely bourgeois conception. They believe that if a nuclear war were to occur, the destruction would be enormous but that there would be a military victor and a military loser and that it would make an enormous difference whether they themselves lost or won. They do not propose to lose if nuclear war occurs. They believe the best deterrent to the initiation of a nuclear war by their potential enemies is for the USSR to be prepared to win the resulting war should deterrence fail. They believe it important to assure that their leadership and their command, control, communications, and intelligence facilities be able to endure through a nuclear war, and that as much as possible of their industry and population survive. They

believe these things of sufficient importance to devote a high percentage of Soviet resources to these ends.

We have tried for more than a decade to persuade them that there is a better approach. That is, that both sides should agree to cooperate and not try to get the better of the other, and that both should try to assure each others' security by adopting a doctrine and policy of what is called "mutually assured destruction" and then translate that policy into comprehensive and equal agreed SALT limitations. Despite years of persistent effort, we have been unable to persuade the Russians to adopt such a doctrine or policy. They have persisted in a doctrine, a policy, and a program designed unilaterally to assure that we will be deterred from using nuclear weapons and that, should nuclear war nevertheless occur, they will win militarily and their regime survive. Their position with respect to SALT II has remained consistent with that policy.

For the last fifteen years we have hoped that the USSR would prove less obdurate. Many have felt there is no time pressure, that we could cut back on strategic nuclear programs that were proving awkwardly expensive and that the Soviet Union would respond to our restraint. Those hopes have been disappointed. Today many believe that the problems of inflation, the falling dollar, energy, and unemployment must take precedence over any effort to reverse past trends.

I now come back to the subject on which I was asked to reflect—the will and power of the U.S. to deal with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is now a major power; in fact, a new imperium with expanding influence. It intends that no important issue in the world be decided without its aims and ambitions being taken fully into account. Therefore we must deal with the Soviet Union. The question is not *whether*, but *how*, we should deal with the USSR and to what purpose. If our purpose is purely one of accommodation to the Soviet Union's new imperial position, it takes little will and few resources to fulfill that purpose.

If we propose to combine accommodation with pressure to restrain and influence the nature and mode in which the Soviet Union's growing power and influence are used, we need the tools and resources to do so. At a minimum we need allies and economic tools, and we must counter misleading and deceptive Soviet propaganda. If we propose that there be a limit to the degree to which "The Camp of Peace and Freedom" will feel confident that it can use—or exploit the possibility that it might use—military force to enforce its will, then we and our allies must address ourselves to the military capabilities necessary to enforce such limits.

Assume with me for the moment that it is the third purpose on which it would be wise for the United States to decide. Will the people of the United States back such a policy? I am sure they will. They believe that is what they are doing today. Neither the executive branch nor the Congress has told them that is not our policy, or that greater sacrifices are needed to support it. If more is needed, the executive branch should take the lead in telling them so.

Q & A

QUESTION: *I'd like to preface my question—I guess it must be characterized as hostile—with a statement of congressional record made a few days ago. Congressmen Bob Carr of Michigan and Tom Downey of Long Island said Mr. Nitze's statements made on the "Today" show about U.S.-Soviet strategic forces balance are among the "most distorted, misleading, and intellectually dishonest we have ever seen." My question really is: Should we be going in precisely the opposite direction from your suggestion that we need more missile systems? I'm sure you are familiar with the article in the October issue of Scientific American.*

PAUL NITZE: Not in detail, but I am somewhat.

Well, it approaches the situation in military terms, strategic terms. The bottom line is that we can increase our national security by reducing the military budget by 40 per cent. I think that a fairly persuasive case. But I'd like to ask if you think there is any serious contemplation on the part of the Soviet Union to make a strike. I ask because my perception of what they are thinking about in terms of nuclear strategy differs from yours. One Poseidon submarine carries sixteen missiles, each of them MIRVed ten times. That's 160 warheads that are independently targetable, and they are on the magnitude of two or three times the Hiroshima bomb. That means that you can put ten on Moscow, five on Leningrad, and so forth. I make a rough calculation that you can kill at least 20 million people with one Poseidon. Now do you think that a first strike could knock out our entire deterrent, including all the submarine force, and do you think that the Soviet Union would seriously contemplate a first strike if so much as one Poseidon submarine were prepared to retaliate?

You have made a lot of different points. Let me start with my friends Congressmen Carr and Downey. I did appear on the "Today" show. I appeared in connection with the issuance of a pamphlet by the Committee on the Present Danger entitled "Is the U.S. Becoming Number 2?" I was given seven minutes, in which I was asked a series of questions, all but one of which related to that report. I was asked one question that related to the particular article in *Scientific American* to which you referred. I had not read it, but I had been shown one sentence in that article before the program went on. That one sentence says the U.S. has nine thousand nuclear weapons in inventory, that this is forty-five times the two hundred warheads necessary for deterrence, and that still the executive branch does not propose to reduce the nine thousand. I was asked to comment on that sentence. I said that this suggests that two hundred SLBM warheads are enough for deterrence, which is exactly what you have been suggesting. I pointed out that the two hundred Poseidon warheads, each of which has a 40 kiloton yield, are equal to eight megatons. Eight megatons, of course, is less than a third of the megatonnage of a single one of the large Soviet missiles with single warheads. Each of these is twenty-five megatons.

I also said that the nuclear effect that it is most difficult to defend against is fallout. That fallout is propor-

tionate to yield if the weapons are exploded at the same height of burst and have the same percentage of fission as opposed to fusion yield. The area covered by blast is a very small area compared to the very big area that is covered by fallout from a high-yield weapon that bursts close to the ground. If one takes any single measure such as the number of warheads, I think one misses a great many of the important factors that bear upon this situation. The argument is commonly made that two hundred Poseidon warheads are enough for deterrence. But suppose you have two hundred submarine-based warheads. What the *Scientific American* article implies is that you have two submarines each with one hundred warheads. Now if one is in port being overhauled, you have only one at sea. Supposing that that submarine disappears and you believe the Soviets have sunk it with conventional weapons. What is it that you propose the U.S. should do? Should we try promptly to put to sea this other submarine we have left? If we do, it is very vulnerable and the Russians can probably take it out before we can do so. Is that adequate deterrence? With that kind of disposition there is no sensible and prudent thing you can advise the president to do. This point in the *Scientific American* article is really pure nonsense.

Let me make a further point. Downey and Carr issued their denunciatory statement about me and the Committee on the Present Danger report and put it in the *Congressional Record* within an hour after my broadcast. Normal practice is to give the person one is criticizing an opportunity to respond. They did not do so. They also admit they hadn't then even read the report of the Committee on the Present Danger that they were criticizing.

Just for the record, they did invite you to reply and they said they would put it in the Congressional Record.

They did, and I have replied, and it will be in the *Congressional Record*; I believe the response is overwhelming. I've sent it also to the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, on which they served.

Let me make just one other point. You suggested that I had implied the Russians would make an initial strike on the U.S. I did not suggest any such thing. I said the Russians are perfectly conscious of the fact that, if there were a nuclear war, the destruction would be enormous. But they are prepared to think through the contingency of nuclear war. And if you think that the relative potential of dealing with such a contingency has no bearing upon the way in which we can deal with the Soviet Union in important and difficult crises, I believe you may be in for a surprise.

You spoke about the preoccupation of antinuclear people with single measures of nuclear capabilities. I'm wondering if the people on your side of the argument are not guilty of the same practice, since you focus so heavily on megatonnage.

I believe you will find that in the publications we put out—take for instance this report the Committee on the Present Danger has just put out—there are at least twenty different measures that are dealt with. It certain-

ly does not focus on megatonnage and it does not focus on throw weight. This is another one of the totally unjustified and misleading arguments that the Downes and the Carrs of this world have been propagating. I know that the public thinks this is true, but look at my articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and so forth. Look at what those charts cover. We have done the computation with any and every index that anybody's ever suggested. I think the suggestion that I am guilty of a one-sided view of this is totally contrary to the fact.

Is it correct that, in a strictly military sense, a large number of small warheads is far more destructive than a small number of large warheads?

It depends on what type of destruction you're talking about. If you are talking about relatively soft, point targets, this is true. Now if you are talking about fall-out—and fallout, I believe, is the greatest and most dangerous thing about nuclear war—it is wholly relative to the yield. It isn't relative to the number of weapons at all. So it depends entirely upon what you are looking at and for what purpose.

It is not true that more small weapons are useful for every mission. In fact it can be quite the reverse of truth. If you are trying to knock out someone else's silos, it is important to have weapons that are large enough and accurate enough so that the combination of yield and accuracy gives you high confidence and that a single weapon will take out that silo. That means you have to have fairly high yield even if you have the best accuracy that one can currently have, taking into consideration the physics of the problem and the disturbance caused by going through the atmosphere upon reentry. Small weapons per se aren't good as countermilitary weapons.

Mr. Nitze, nobody can challenge your creditability, obviously. I've heard you on several occasions and you're always eloquent. And I've left each time deeply troubled about the security of our country. Then I hear people who disagree with you, like Admiral Eugene LaRocque, who is respected and who has a high degree of expertise in the same field, and retired General Shoup, also an expert. Now how do I, how do we citizens, make judgments as to whether you are right or whether they are right?

I think the only way one can get at it is to divide the problem into its parts. I think that where General Shoup and Admiral LaRocque differ with me is in the prescription of the course we should take. They are talking about action, what we should do. Some of the questions that were just raised have to do with facts. With respect to factual questions there is evidence that bears upon their truth or falsity. I don't think Admiral LaRocque disagrees with my estimate of the facts. I know that Secretary of Defense Harold Brown doesn't. Harold Brown was asked at a press conference, "Do you disagree with Paul's computations?" and he began to say, "Yes, I disagree," but then he said, "No, I don't disagree, I interpret them differently."

I do believe that it is possible with care to ascertain whether somebody's facts are accurate or not. There I will assert that I and my associates have been as precise

and as explicit with respect to the facts as is possible. I am unaware of anybody who had made an assault upon the facts that we have asserted. Now when you get beyond ascertainable facts, then you get difficult questions. In my remarks here I assumed the facts were beyond controversy, that the essential issue is, what do you believe our policy toward the Soviet Union should be? Do you think that the basis of our policy should be essentially that of accommodation? I suggested that there are degrees and that Americans thought they were supporting a policy that was not pure accommodation. In other words, they thought they were supporting something that was not appeasement, that there was some limit to appeasement. Now in the second of my categories I suggested a policy in which the prime tools limiting appeasement were those of economics and words.

My third category suggested a limit to appeasement where military power was being used directly against us or our allies. I think 90 per cent of the country believes that that's our policy. Certainly the president says so and the country is being given no reason to believe that that is not our policy—that there are contingencies in which we would wish to resist and have our friends resist if they were pushed by crass military power in a situation of vital interest. General Shoup was commandant of the Marine Corps when I was secretary of the Navy. He was one of those—as was I—who were against our original intervention in Vietnam. General Shoup and I were together on that issue. I have a great admiration for General Shoup. But I don't think he has addressed himself with knowledge and care to the nuclear questions.

Joseph Kraft recently wrote a piece in the New Yorker on his recent trip to Russia. Among many other topics he wrote about Russia's view of SALT II and said the Russians view China as a major threat and believe their nuclear capability has to be geared to the dual major nuclear threat they face in the world. How seriously do you take that view? Is China a major nuclear threat to Russia? Are there ways in which we can negotiate limitation with the Russians so that they will still feel protected against the Chinese?

I think it is true that the Russians have deep concern about the Chinese. They have never said they agreed with our concept of parity, or rough equivalence, in nuclear capability. They have never agreed to that in any form. Their phrase is "equal security, taking into account geographic and other considerations." The Soviets take the view that they are surrounded by enemies potential or actual and that the U.S. is surrounded by friends—that Canada is a friend and Mexico is a friend, that we have oceans on our borders and that for the USSR to have security equal to our own it is necessary for them to have capabilities quite disproportionately larger than ours, because the threat to them is much greater than the threat to us. I believe that the Chinese are not a large concern today, but the Russians look forward fifteen, twenty, thirty years from now and they believe Chinese capabilities can then be a major threat. Therefore, the terms of agreement for them must

be such that they can have capabilities to deal with the NATO threat and the Chinese threat and other threats concurrently, if they are to have equal security.

The second part of your question is: Is there anything that we can do that would ease the problem for the Soviet Union and still take care of our own problem? At one time during our negotiation with the Soviets I suggested to one of my opposite numbers that I was quite conscious of their problem with China and that I had tried to put myself in their position, asking myself how I would feel about this and what I would do. My friend said, "Don't do that. It will only drive you mad."

But the other part of my point was, it isn't certain that the U.S. may not have a problem with China. The Soviet territory is contiguous to that of the Chinese, I said to him, and can reach all parts of China with what you call nonstrategic weapons, tactical weapons. SS20s on Russian soil will cover all of China. The U.S. can't deal with China militarily, were this to become a problem for us, without using our strategic nuclear weapons. If you look at it from that standpoint, therefore, your problem is less than ours. Well, that was not acceptable to him. They continue to be deeply concerned about China.

Mr. Nitze, some people argue that the Russians build up in numbers because they see an American qualitative advantage because of our technological superiority. It's generally acknowledged by everyone with a right to an opinion that there is a very serious technological lag in the Soviet Union. All the major weapons developed in recent years, the Americans have developed first—cruise missiles, long-range missiles, MIRVs, and neutron bombs. There's a revolution going on that could, according to some experts, make tanks obsolete. What do you think of that argument? How do you weigh this technology gap in your balance between American and Soviet military power?

Well, in part I agree with what you say. We have been technologically ahead; we have usually been the first. I would suggest that the Soviet Union has caught up very fast and has passed us in many areas. I can remember when we were debating whether to go forward with the development of the thermonuclear weapon. In our view one of the prime considerations was that if we went forward and developed it, this would make it more probable that the Soviet Union would develop it. But as it turned out, the Soviet Union was ahead of us; they developed a thermonuclear weapon and tested a weapon before we did. We tested a thermonuclear device, but not a weapon, before the Soviet Union did.

It is not necessarily true that we are ahead technologically today. I know that the Soviets have caught up fast, and I believe that in certain areas they are equal and in others ahead. Now if you take the question of MIRVing, certainly we MIRVed first. But if you take the question of cruise missile technology, the Soviets devoted themselves to cruise missile technology not necessarily first, but after we abandoned the initial cruise missile they went into it with great attention. And they are the ones that first developed really accurate, effective cruise missiles. I think they have eighteen different varieties of

operational cruise missiles that are very good indeed. We have none that are operational today.

Mr. Nitze, would you give us an idea of the kind of SALT agreement that would be at least minimally advantageous to the U.S. and could still in your view be negotiated with the Soviet Union.

That's what we have been trying to do for six years. The other day I was asked by someone: What were the original U.S. objectives with respect to the SALT II in the fall of '72? I said I remembered a paper on that subject very well because I had drafted it myself. Everybody in the executive branch other than Dr. Kissinger agreed with it. He wanted more flexibility; he didn't want himself tied down. But I can remember what the objectives were. They were divided into two parts, one of which was the positive objectives we had in mind. The positive objectives were, first of all, essential equivalence in strategic nuclear capabilities. We did not believe that the Soviet Union would enter into an agreement in which they were in an inferior position and we didn't think that we should enter into an agreement in which we were in an inferior position; this was an elemental point in the relationship between the two countries.

And the second positive objective, and I thought the most important, was to place limitations upon the offensive capabilities of both sides such that it would be possible to maintain "crisis stability." This bears upon the question of whether it would profit either side to initiate the use of nuclear weapons in a situation in which there was a real threat of the outbreak of war. There was a time when there could have been such a profit, when both sides had all their bombers, for instance, on a small number of fields that were very vulnerable. But after we dispersed them into hardened silos we achieved a situation of real strategic stability, in which it would have been a mug's game for either side to attack the other with nuclear weapons. But it is that stability which is being undermined by the Soviet development of highly accurate MIRVs in adequate size and volume.

And the third positive objective was that, having done those two things, to create a situation in which both sides would have a lesser need to devote resources to the strategic nuclear business, and the strategic capabilities of both sides would bear less heavily upon the politics of the world as a whole.

Those were our positive objectives. Now then we had to look at the constraints that we had to meet while we were achieving those objectives. One of the constraints was that the terms of an agreement should be reasonably verifiable—not completely but adequately verifiable—particularly those terms that bore most essentially upon achieving the second objective. We also thought that we should take into account the interest of our allies, to whom an agreement should be reasonably acceptable. Thirdly, the terms of an agreement should be such that it would be politically feasible for us to live up to and thus do things that were necessary to maintain stability and equality. The fourth and most important limitation was that the agreement had to be negotiable with the Soviet Union and merit the consent of the Senate.

As you look back on what has happened over the six

years, and what began to happen almost right away, was that the fourth constraint began to swamp all the positive objectives and even the other three constraints. Today what you're left with is an agreement that may well be negotiable. I think they are very close to being able to complete an agreement, but one in which all the other objectives and constraints have had to be so compromised that there's very little left. It's been a real effort to try to get the best that could be negotiable. It isn't much good, but it isn't for want of trying.

Is it possible to contemplate economic exchanges and economic collaboration apart from the competition between the U.S. and the USSR?

Frankly, I think there is. The USSR is developing economic relationships beyond those that existed a year or two ago, and everybody that I know welcomes that development.

Would you tell us where your thinking takes you in contemplating the failure of deterrence? Most of us think that if there were a major nuclear exchange, not only would there be an enormous loss of life and the destruction of the well-being of those people that were left, but a destruction of those conditions that would allow us to develop and foster the values we are attempting to protect. Now that's one possibility of the policy of massive assured destruction. The other possibility, following a weapons system advocated by James Schlesinger, is a limited nuclear exchange. Is there in your thinking a possibility of a limited nuclear exchange that would be politically and militarily and morally acceptable?

One gets into very fine distinctions in discussing these questions. I think that it is necessary to say what we mean by limited use of nuclear weapons. I think people often think of this as involving just minor targets. I really don't believe that there's any prospect of that being a possibility.

I tend to agree with the Soviet view that the idea of just hitting cities is a dreadful idea. That's the most immoral thing that one could do and the worst from a policy standpoint. What one really should try to do is to destroy the military forces of the other side and do as little damage to their civilians as one possibly can. The Soviets don't seem to be worried that there'll be lots of civilian casualties, but they do say that the idea of just killing people for the sake of killing is a totally misbegotten idea. It is an abandonment of every principle of war. What you would want is to destroy the other side's military forces. If we could be sure that the Soviet Union could not effectively destroy our military forces and that we had as good a chance of destroying their military forces as they have of destroying ours, then I think we would have deterrence and the right kind of deterrence. The difficulty is that that is not the policy now being followed. What good is it to talk about the sure destruction of cities? That isn't going to work. You will find the cities are evacuated, the factories are evacuated. You will have lost the war, and what good will that do you then to have destroyed a lot of Russians? It's a silly idea.

If I understand you correctly, you see limited nuclear warfare as a possibility, as the Russians do?

If you understand what I mean by limited, and if you mean that you try to avoid civilian casualties to the best of your ability.

Mr. Nitze, assuming the validity of your thesis and the present Soviet military posture and their ideas about winning nuclear war, what sort of future do you envision for the U.S. beyond SALT II? Do we have to spend 15 per cent of our GNP on military expenditures and live in a society with elaborate civil defense provisions to evacuate cities and all that implies for the internal development of our society?

Let me go back to an earlier question that I didn't completely answer. We do have certain technological advantages, but not across the field. We could, however, develop a capability such that the Russians could not hope to defeat us militarily. Secondly, you talk of 15 per cent of the GNP. Our current expenditure on defense, I believe, is a little less than 5 per cent of our GNP. Let me be precise. Our direct expenditures on the strategic nuclear part of this are about \$11 billion of \$136, not a very large part of the defense program. Now I do believe that it would be advisable for us to move in the direction of what the Soviet Union has done in providing protection for its population. I believe for us to be just so grossly unprepared is to invite a challenge. I think we would have much more respect from the Russians and could get along with them much better if we looked at the problems seriously and responded.

It seems to me that we have had no luck in the past in changing their intentions through military response. I think the real long-range problem is how to change those intentions without accommodation to the extent of appeasement and without an increasing military concentration. Does the kind of military response you're advocating lessen our chances of finding those creative and imaginative new forms of activity on a world scale that would help change Soviet intentions?

Let me go back to your first assertion, that we have had no success in changing Soviet intentions through our military capabilities. I believe that to be an error.

We haven't changed the major direction. Otherwise we would not be where we are today.

I believe that during the various Berlin crises and the Cuban missile crisis we changed their policy because we used, or were in a position to use, certain military capabilities. Now you say none of this affected the persistence of their basic doctrinal point of view. I agree with you that it is persistent: I don't really believe the Russians are going to change that view because of anything we do. Questions of basic doctrine are going to change for internal reasons. This is not something that we can manipulate through "imaginative kinds of things." Certainly we're not going to manipulate them through words, through economics, or just diplomacy.

I wouldn't use the word manipulate. I don't think it's easy.

It isn't easy. And in the meantime you've got to deal with the situation as it is most prudently and wisely.

There is a basic question in defining strategic superiority. You suggested earlier that you don't feel that the Soviets now or in the foreseeable future are likely to find very powerful motives to launch a strategic first strike, but that in a crisis situation there could be a perception on both sides that they had a superiority. Could you cite examples from the past where the U.S. did certain things with more confidence because we had what we considered strategic superiority? And can you project certain scenarios where your definition of strategic superiority would affect our behavior in particular crisis situations?

I did not earlier respond to the question of strategic superiority and how one defines it because I don't believe one can encapsulate it in any kind of narrow measure.

The Soviet view, which I tend to agree with, is that strategic superiority implies a capability to fight and win a nuclear war. If the other side sees he's going to lose, he's not going to initiate a nuclear war. Clearly both sides can't have superiority concurrently. What is in the realm of the possible is for both sides to have the capability to deny the other side a war-winning capability. Of course involved in that is a subset of considerations. Certainly one element of such a subset would be to protect important parts of your strategic posture, to do something about the growing vulnerability of Minuteman sites, and so forth.

I think one should look upon the strategic nuclear balance as being one element of the military balance, and, as I understand the Soviet viewpoint, they think that even that should be subsumed under a broader concept still, which is the correlation of forces, and in the correlation of forces one should take into account political, ideological, psychological, economic, and other considerations. Now, there are situations in which the state of the military balance has affected what has been done. I think that almost all the people who have dealt with major decisions in foreign policy have had in mind the state of the military balance, what would happen at the end of the toboggan if a particular initiative were challenged or not challenged. I'm quite clear that those of us dealing with the Cuban missile crisis at the time—some more so than others and some with different judgment than others—did take into account the conventional military capabilities around Cuba but also the strategic nuclear balance. The consensus was that if the president made the remarks he did, the probability was that the Soviets would withdraw their missiles from Cuba. I believe that would not have happened if the military balance had been radically different.

Do you think the nuclear strategic balance or the conventional balance is more important in that case?

When you're talking about a whiskey and soda, which is more important? I guess the whiskey is more important. It's very hard to separate these things out. Certainly in the Berlin crisis, which after all occurred only a few months before, the nuclear balance was all of it because the tactical conventional balance around Berlin was unambiguously and wholly disadvantageous to NATO. So that the only thing that enabled us to face up to that was in fact the strategic nuclear balance.

Someone asked how we could sort out the facts. It seems to me that you replied that there was not much dispute about the facts. You've made a number of factual assertions that don't seem to me to hang together; for example, in talking about the effectiveness of small vs. large weapons. You said that fallout, which is the most effective of nuclear weapons....

Most difficult to defend against.

You didn't tell us that the U.S. could, if it wished, enhance the fallout of its small weapons by adding cobalt. Then you went on to say....

I had no intention of doing that. I was dealing with the capability of the weapons we have in inventory and plan to have in inventory. So I think this is purely a red herring that you present.

If you're going for a high fallout, you're bound to have a substantial impact on civilian casualties, are you not? You went on to say that you would not advocate a policy of striking against cities. It seems to me that if you go in for high radiation or high fallout weapons, you are bound to cause extraordinary numbers of civilian casualties.

Your comment does not bear upon the facts. What I said was that one can look at the fallout capabilities of weapons and then arrive at a certain number affected and so forth. I think nobody is contesting any of the numbers that I used. You're talking about questions of policy: Should we or should we not optimize our weapons for fallout? I've said nothing that would suggest I think we should, but I do think that the danger to the U.S. from high-yield weapons is very great indeed, and I think it does make a difference in looking at the nuclear balance to take that into account. I repeat: Nothing that you have said bears upon the facts. What you're really talking about is things that have to do with policy and really quite strange ideas about policy.