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# WITHDRAWAL SHEET

## Ronald Reagan Library

**Collection:** Baker, Howard H. Jr.: Files  
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**Date:** 08/03/2004

| DOCUMENT NO.<br>& TYPE | SUBJECT/TITLE                                                                                  | DATE    | RESTRICTION   |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------|
| 1. memo (90232)        | Frank Carlucci to Chief of Staff re nuclear weapons issues, 1p<br><i>R 11/9/06 FOI-075 #16</i> | 3/18/87 | <del>B1</del> |
| 2. report              | re nuclear weapons (attachment to item 1), 6p<br><i>PART " " #17</i>                           | 3/17/87 | B1            |

### RESTRICTIONS

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90232

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 18, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

FROM: FRANK C. CARLUCCI   
SUBJECT: Nuclear Weapons Issues

At the March 6 lunch with the U.S. Nuclear and Space Negotiators, two issues arose which I would like to follow-up on with you. The first concerned the safety and security of our weapons in Europe. As we mentioned during the lunch, much has been done to improve the situation since you left the Senate. Rather than attempt a written summary and risk failing to cover issues of particular interest to you, I would be delighted to have the NSC staff experts on this issue brief you. I should note that we are due for a review with the entire NSC of nuclear weapons security, both at the Department of Energy facilities in the United States and at Department of Defense facilities abroad. I expect this NSC session to be scheduled in the next two months.

The second issue involved the total abolition of nuclear weapons. As you know, the President has long believed such abolition is a desirable long term goal. For the near term, however, it is the unanimous judgment of the national security community that such abolition would not be in our interest. Attached is an updated version of a paper, originally prepared by my predecessor after Reykjavik, which sets forth in some detail the rationale why we should step back from any discussion of eliminating all nuclear weapons. Although the paper specifically refers to eliminating such weapons over a ten year period, the rationale is almost certainly valid for the foreseeable future.

I find the attached paper a compelling argument and believe that it should continue to be our position. The President endorsed it in October of last year; I have sent him a copy and recommended that he reaffirm that judgment. I thought you might find it useful as well.

Returning to the issue of nuclear weapons site security, please let me know if you would like an informal update in your office by the NSC staff. I will then make the necessary arrangements.

Attachment  
Tab A

Updated Version of October 1986 Paper on the  
Elimination of All Nuclear Weapons

~~TOP SECRET~~

Declassify on: OADR

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NLS FOY-075 #16

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BY 125, NARA, DATE 11/9/06

TAB A



Revised: March 17, 1987

Why We Can't Commit to Eliminating All Nuclear Weapons  
Within 10 Years

Purpose. This paper reviews why we should avoid giving the impression that the US proposes eliminating all nuclear weapons in 10 years, and clarifies why the proposals that were handed over to General Secretary Gorbachev in writing in Iceland were focused on the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles in 10 years.

In taking this action, we should stand firm by our long-term commitment to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, but always cast this in terms of a long-term goal which will require the correction of existing conventional force imbalances and other conditions that require us to have the nuclear weapons in the first place.

Eliminating Ballistic Missiles. The idea of calling for the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles is not a new one. And although we had not previously considered suggesting that this be accomplished by 1996 (in 10 short years), it is a concept that we have studied carefully.

The idea of calling for the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles grew out of a proposal initially made by Secretary Weinberger. He made it as we were working on the July 25, 1986, arms control letter to General Secretary Gorbachev. Secretary Weinberger suggested that it be coupled with the idea of sharing the benefits of advanced defenses.

The logic of this idea is simple and direct. Secretary Weinberger argued that it would make no sense to commit to share the benefits of advanced defenses with the Soviets if they insisted on continuing to possess large numbers of offensive ballistic missiles which would attempt to defeat our defenses. In short, why share the benefits of our research unless the Soviets showed a willingness to join us in making the transition to a more defense reliant world by reducing and ultimately eliminating offensive ballistic missiles.

The call for the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles was also consistent with what we were trying to do both in START and in INF, and also with the fundamental goal specifically set for the SDI program.

With respect to START, the call for the total elimination of all ballistic missiles is a logical extension of the position we have taken in the START negotiations that we must reduce and eliminate the unique threat posed by ballistic missiles. Our position has long been that while each side may need nuclear forces for some time to deter conflict and underwrite its security, neither side needs fast-flying, non-recallable offensive ballistic missiles for this purpose.



From the very first, in START, we have been trying to draw a clear distinction between fast-flying ballistic systems, which are uniquely suited for an attempted first-strike by an aggressor, and slow-flying systems which are better suited for retaliation (less so for aggression). As a result, we have been attempting to focus on reductions in ballistic missile warheads as the heart of the issue to be resolved -- and have treated slow-flying bombers largely to meet Soviet concerns.

In INF, we have taken a similar position. We have kept the focus on missiles, and avoided discussion of dual-capable, tactical aircraft. We proposed the zero-zero solution for the LRINF missile problem. We have called for the similar reduction and elimination of shorter-range ballistic missiles, missiles that pose as direct a threat to our Allies as Soviet ICBMs do to the United States.

With respect to SDI, our specific, stated goal was to make ballistic missiles obsolete, not to make all nuclear weapons obsolete. Here, again, our focus was on promptly eliminating the threat posed by these fast-flying missiles. We have called for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, but we have made it very clear that this step could only be taken if either the conventional balance of forces were corrected, or if the conditions of the world changed sufficiently so that the conventional force imbalance was not as direct a threat as it is today and our requirements for nuclear weapons were removed.

After study and discussion, we incorporated the idea of proposing the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles into the July 25, 1986, letter to the General Secretary. We then consulted our Allies about this idea, and gained their support for it.

In Iceland, at the critical point of finding a response to Soviet concerns which neither compromised our principles or our security, we drew upon this previous consensus and adapted this element (a call for the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles) into our response to the Soviet call for a 10 year period of non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. By doing so, we undercut any Soviet objection to our having the right to deploy defenses as insurance, since we would have committed to wait until all offensive ballistic missiles of the two superpowers should have been eliminated anyway. By calling for the elimination of missiles of all ranges, we also, in one step, solved the problem of getting rid of both the last 100 Soviet SS-20 warheads in Asia (a concern of our Asian allies) and the remaining shorter-range INF missiles that still would threaten our European allies (a particular concern of Kohl).

It was for these reasons that we proposed to the Soviets the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles in 10 years. It was also for these reasons that we rejected the Soviet



attempt to alter this to a proposal for the elimination of all strategic forces -- and instead went back to them with a second proposal that was altered in certain language but firm on the call for the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles.

Under the recommended proposals, at the end of 10 years, when no offensive ballistic missiles exist, the US and the Soviet Union would still have up to 50% of today's strategic nuclear offensive force levels, although they would now be concentrated in slow-flying systems (bombers and cruise missiles). This would provide a modest strategic retaliatory force to deter attack on the US and conventional aggression against our allies throughout the world until our conventional forces could be upgraded and our air defenses put in place. It would keep a US nuclear umbrella, although a quite smaller one, over NATO. We would also still have some nuclear weapons in battlefield systems like artillery and in our dual-capable fighter aircraft that could hold Soviet tank concentrations at risk. Thus, keeping some nuclear forces would offset the great Soviet advantage in conventional forces that exists threatening NATO. These were the very significant reasons behind our rejection of any Soviet attempts to shift the proposal from the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles to either the elimination of all strategic forces or the total elimination of nuclear weapons in 10 years.

Eliminating All Nuclear Weapons. In the President's speech announcing the SDI program in March, 1983, he called for a future nuclear free world. Prior to finalizing that speech, we had a series of discussions about the fact that until regional conventional force imbalances could be corrected, such a step was simply not possible -- and, therefore, the main thrust of the SDI program announced in the speech, and the specific objective given to that program was not to make nuclear weapons obsolete, but to make ballistic missiles obsolete.

In January, 1986, General Secretary Gorbachev proposed a plan for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. We very carefully studied the plan, and reached the conclusion that while we agreed with the ultimate goal, that such a step could only be taken if we were confident that we had other means to offset Soviet conventional force advantages. The US responded to the General Secretary's proposal along these lines. Nothing has changed since that time.





FOIA(b)(1)

The Impact on US/Allied Military Strategy. If we could put aside for the moment the nuclear forces of the UK, France and China -- and others who could become nuclear powers like India, Israel, Pakistan, South Africa, etc. -- we should also consider the situation we would face if the types of proposals discussed above were implemented.

Eliminating all offensive ballistic missiles would push us back to a condition similar to that which we faced in the 1950s. A limited number of nuclear weapons would exist, largely deliverable by aircraft.

In terms of military tactics, the existence of these remaining nuclear weapons would mean that an aggressor could not mass his forces in any one place in the hope of breaking through conventional defenses because he could not be sure that nuclear weapons would not be used to destroy these forces when they are massed. The fact that the threat of nuclear attack prevents an aggressor from massing his conventional forces without risk makes modern conventional weapons more effective, giving them the chance to handle the threat they face since the existence of nuclear weapons means that the aggressor can't simply mass forces and overwhelm positions with force of numbers.

In terms of strategy, the existence of these weapons (too slow to be used to surprise and defeat retaliatory forces, but still well suited for a retaliatory mission) would still raise the price of aggression to a level high enough that it could help deter aggression.

Eliminating all nuclear weapons (once again ignoring the forces of the UK, France, China and others for simplicity) would push us back to a situation that existed on the eve of WW II -- with the peace dependent upon the assessment of an aggressor of the relative strength of his conventional forces alone. However,



instead of the Panzer divisions that Hitler had at his disposal, we would face the challenge posed by the combined arms capability of the Soviet army. It simply is not clear that we can take the steps necessary to upgrade our own and NATO's conventional defenses sufficiently to have our security rest on conventional forces alone within 10 years. If we cannot, then the Soviet ability to coerce our allies -- to Finlandize other nations -- will increase, and our security decrease, as a result of the premature elimination of all nuclear weapons.

While our allies certainly are not happy having their security tied to the use of nuclear weapons to offset conventional forces, and the prospect of nuclear war in Europe is unacceptable to them, so is the alternative if they are faced with added expense for conventional forces and all they get as a result of that added expense is the replacement of the potential for nuclear war in Europe with the potential of an equally devastating high-tech replay of WW II.

Verification. Finally, we can't ignore that others have nuclear weapons. The elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles will be difficult to verify, but it is likely to be child's play compared to verifying the elimination of all nuclear weapons. In addition, the need for verification will be enormous since if we believe we are living in a nuclear free world and suddenly someone demonstrates that they have a covert nuclear stockpile, their ability to coerce this great nation would be immense. This, alone, is a fundamental reason for moving much more slowly on the path towards an agreement now on the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Bottom Line. All this being so, the main point of this paper is simply that neither our military experts or our allies would support the idea of moving to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons until the world conditions change so that such weapons are unnecessary -- and certainly not within 10 years.

Our military experts (and some of our allies) can support a goal of the elimination of all ballistic missiles. However, even in this regard, our military planners would prefer to have a longer period than 10 years to implement such a proposal.

The elimination of offensive ballistic missiles would remove not only the nuclear threat posed by such weapons, but the chemical threat as well. It would also enhance our conventional capability by removing the direct threat of rocket attack against our conventional forces, our airfields, the sites where we store the tanks and vehicles that our troops coming from the US in a crisis which would reinforce NATO reinforcements coming from the US would need in a crisis. It would make the planning of a quick disarming first strike by a conventional aggressor much more difficult. [The full rationale for these arguments is provided in NSDD 250.]

Conclusions. Immediately following Reykjavik, the President reviewed the above rationale and concluded that:

(1) the United States would continue to reject eliminating all nuclear weapons in 10 years, and focus attention on the proposals that you handed over to General Secretary Gorbachev in writing in Iceland which were focused on the elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles in 10 years; however,

(2) the United States would stand firm by our long-term commitment to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, but always cast this in terms of a long-term goal which will require the correction of existing conventional force imbalances and other conditions that require us to have the nuclear weapons in the first place.