

# **President Ronald Reagan Oral History Project**

## **Briefing Materials**

**Edward Rowny**

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## GENERAL EDWARD L. ROWNY TIMELINE

*Prepared by Jeff Chidester*

*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 05/08/2006*

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- 1937** Rowny receives a B.S. from Johns Hopkins University.
- 1941** Rowny graduates from the United States Military Academy as a Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers.
- 1941-1979** Rowny serves in the United States Army, retiring in 1979 at the rank of Lt. General. During his service, Rowny's positions include Unit Commander in Africa and Italy during World War II; spokesman for General Douglas MacArthur in Korea; Commander of the 38<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment; a tour of duty in Vietnam (1962-1963); Deputy Chief of Staff for the U.S. European Command in Germany (1965-1969); Commander of the I-ROK Corps in Korea (1970-1971); Deputy Chairman of the NATO Military Committee (1971); and representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) in Geneva (1973-1979).
- 1949** Rowny earns both an M.S. in Engineering and an M.A. in International Relations from Yale University.
- 1977** Rowny completes his PhD in International Studies at American University.
- 1979**
- June* Rowny resigns as representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the SALT II talks in protest against the new treaty. He says the treaty fails to meet the three criteria set out by the Joint Chiefs: that the treaty is equitable, verifiable, and in the interests of the U.S. Rowny feels SALT II is a bad treaty for the U.S. and says, "A bad treaty is worse than no treaty." (*Newsweek*, 07/16/1979)
- 1979-1980** Rowny is a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.
- 1981**
- April* *The Washington Post* reports that Rowny will join the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and serve as the chief negotiator for SALT. The conservative wing of the Republican Party is initially concerned when Eugene Rostow is named as ACDA Director over Rowny, but are assuaged when Rowny is given control over SALT negotiations. Rowny also reportedly requests additional responsibilities outside of ACDA, but after running into opposition on

the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he agrees to stay exclusively in ACDA as long as no one supersedes his authority on his portfolio of negotiations. (*The Washington Post*, 04/17/1981)

On the 30<sup>th</sup>, Reagan formally nominates Rowny to be Special Representative for Arms Control and Disarmament Negotiations. Rowny will serve as the Chief Negotiator and head of the U.S. Delegation for Arms Control Negotiations. Reagan also announces his intention to nominate Rowny to have the rank of Ambassador while serving in this capacity. (*Public Papers of the President of the United States: Ronald Reagan*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982)

## **1982**

*June* Secretary of State Alexander Haig resigns and is replaced immediately by George Shultz. (*The Washington Post*, 06/26/1982)

The U.S. and Soviet Union begin a new round of strategic arms reduction talks in Geneva. In the opening session, attended by only the top negotiators from each side, Rowny reads a letter written by Reagan to his Soviet counterpart, Ambassador Viktor P. Karpov. In the letter, Reagan says the U.S. and Soviet Union are “trustees for humanity in the great task of ending the menace of nuclear arsenals.” (*The Washington Post*, 06/30/1982)

*September* Rowny, intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) negotiator Paul Nitze, and mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) negotiator Richard Starr meet with Reagan to update him on their respective talks. Rowny reports that his talks are proceeding at a “much more rapid” pace than in the 1970s, but says that a breakthrough is not imminent. (*The Washington Post*, 09/22/1982)

*December* The House of Representatives votes, 245 to 176, against the production of the first MX missiles. In a closed meeting with Republicans leading the charge for the MX missile, Rowny, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and national security advisor William Clark are told the bill failed because the White House offered support too late. (*Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 12/13/1982)

During a television interview, Rowny says many of the preliminary problems have been cleared faster than expected in the START negotiations and that there is a 50-percent chance an agreement will be reached by the end of 1983. Rowny does add, however, that the government of Soviet General Secretary Yuri Andropov is negotiating with “more sophistication and more cleverness” than the Brezhnev government. (*Financial Times*, 12/30/1983)

## **1983**

*March* An internal State Department memo surfaces which questions the toughness of some of the U.S. arms negotiators currently in discussions with the Soviet Union. The memo is widely seen as coming from Rowny’s office. Rowny issues a

statement saying, “They do not represent my views then or now. I have full confidence in the entire START delegation.” The Administration also releases a statement saying that “the White House fully supports” Rowny. (*The Washington Post*, 03/12/1983)

*October* Rowny presents the Administration’s “build-down” plan to Soviet lead negotiator Viktor Karpov. Under the plan, existing weapons will be destroyed at a faster rate than new weapons are produced. The Soviet TASS news agency says the proposal is “meant to disguise Washington’s intention to pursue the old course aimed at instigating an arms race to achieve military strategic superiority over the USSR.” (*Financial Times*, 10/06/1983)

*December* Following the U.S. deployment of Pershing II intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe over Soviet objections, Moscow decides to suspend all arms control negotiations. Rowny issues a statement expressing regret that “developments outside the scope of these negotiations” have affected the START talks. (*The Washington Post*, 12/09/1983)

Rowny announces that the U.S. will not offer any new proposals to the Soviets to entice them back to the negotiating table, saying that any new concessions at this stage would be interpreted as a sign of weakness. Rowny says he is confident the Soviet Union will return to talks in the near future. (*Financial Times*, 12/16/1983)

## 1984

*January* After meeting with Reagan, Rowny says the U.S. is now open to the possibility of merging the START talks with discussions about INF missiles like the recently-deployed Pershing IIs. Rowny admits the willingness to combine the two negotiations is a shift in U.S. strategy. He adds that the U.S. will not make the first proposal for both sets of weapons. (*Financial Times*, 01/31/1984)

*June* In a speech to the Royal United Services Institute in London, Rowny rejects suggestions that the U.S. should introduce a new arms reduction proposal to draw the Soviet Union back into talks. Says Rowny, “We must not appear to be overly eager for an arms control agreement. If we want to be in a position to negotiate arms reductions with the Soviets, we first have to convince them that we have the will to match them in the absence of an agreement.” (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 06/22/1984)

Rowny announces that the U.S. is prepared to reduce its arsenal of bombers and air-launched cruise missiles, and discuss controls on SDI, if the Soviet Union is open to comparable cuts in their own nuclear arsenal. “The United States is ready to resume negotiations at any time, without preconditions on nuclear arms reductions,” says Rowny. (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 06/25/1984)

*December* Rowny says the U.S. should let the Soviets offer the first proposal at the upcoming arms negotiations in Geneva. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 12/17/1984)

**1985**

- January*      *The Christian Science Monitor* reports tensions between the State and Defense Departments over arms control policy. It states that Secretary of State George Shultz has earned the support of Reagan at the expense of those in the Administration more suspicious of arms control, including Rowny and Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle. (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 01/08/1985)
- Reagan announces the members of the negotiation team for the new round of arms control talks with the Soviet Union. Max Kampelman is selected to head negotiations on the national missile defense system (SDI), while former Senator John Tower will replace Rowny in leading talks on strategic arms. (*The Guardian*, 01/19/1985)
- April*      Rowny breaks the U.S.-Soviet understanding on confidentiality and tells the media that negotiations in Geneva appear to be making little progress. He accuses the Soviets of “diverting attention” from the important issues by fixating on U.S. research on a missile defense program. (*The Guardian*, 04/03/1985)

**1986**

- February*      Rowny and Paul Nitze are sent to Europe and Asia to consult with allies about the Soviet Union’s latest INF proposal. The trip is in response to Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev’s recent proposal to remove all INFs from NATO territory and the European USSR, and to freeze Soviet INF development in Asia. (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 02/24/1986)
- July*      Rowny and Nitze are again sent to Europe, this time to discuss with allies the Administration’s response to the Soviet Union’s February arms control proposal. Reagan has approved the basic outline of his response, but will wait to hear from his allies abroad before finalizing the proposal. (*Financial Times*, 07/22/1986)
- August*      The U.S. and Soviet governments agree to high-level meetings between their arms control experts in Moscow in preparation for the upcoming summit in Reykjavik, Iceland. The U.S. team is led by Paul Nitze and includes Rowny, Max Kampelman, Ronald Lehman, Maynard Glitman, and Richard Perle. (*Financial Times*, 08/08/1986)
- October*      Following the Reykjavik Summit, Rowny is dispatched to Japan to brief Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone’s government on the breakdown of talks. He tells officials that “many issues were narrowed” in Reykjavik and that he is “optimistic that a way can . . . and will be found to reach agreements.” After the briefing, Rowny tells reporters that Japan “has expressed strong support for our continued allied solidarity.” (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 10/16/1986)

**1987**

*April* Rowny says publicly that the White House's focus on reaching an arms agreement with the Soviet Union on intermediate and short-range missiles in Europe focuses on "the wrong problem." The White House responds by saying Rowny's comments are not "particularly helpful" and that some officials are "certainly upset" he went public with his opinion. Speaking to reporters, Reagan says he expects his arms control advisors to hold diverse opinions, but is confident that once he makes the final decision on how to proceed, they will execute his policy "no matter how they may have felt about it." (*Financial Times*, 04/30/1987)

*June* Rowny tells the media that major differences still remain between the U.S. and Soviet Union on an INF agreement, but that he is confident Moscow will concede some of their key demands that have become an obstacle to completing an agreement. He says the types of weapons to be included in the treaty have caused problems, but "verification was the big sticking point, the achilles heel of an INF agreement." Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze will meet in Washington, D.C. in July in a last-ditch effort to finalize an agreement. (*The Guardian*, 06/24/1987)

**1988**

*January* Strategic arms reduction talks between the U.S. and Soviet Union begin in Geneva. The talks mark the final effort of the Reagan Administration to achieve a strategic arms reduction agreement before the end of his presidency. Speaking to reporters, Rowny says it is possible that an agreement may be reached before the end of the term, but he is not "highly optimistic" about the chances. Rowny also says that if the Soviets try to link START and SDI, "I would advise the President not to sign" such an agreement. (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 01/14/1988)

**1989** Rowny receives the Presidential Citizens Medal from Reagan.

*April* The International Security Council, a conservative, non-profit organization, holds its annual conference in St. Louis. Rowny is among seventeen scholars and public officials to speak at the conference. Following the closed meetings, the group issues a consensus statement which says that Gorbachev's reform efforts are a "false image" and that the U.S. should not relent on its development and deployment of advanced military technology. It also says, "Repeatedly in history, and continuously over the past 20 years, the Soviets have used the lure of arms control to restrain allied arms efforts and to facilitate their own drive for military superiority." (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 04/02/1989)

**1990**

*April* Rowny resigns from his position as a special arms control advisor to President George H.W. Bush, effective June 30<sup>th</sup>. He warns that the U.S. "had better be careful" in its desire to reach a nuclear arms agreement with the Soviet Union. Rowny claims that "policy disputes" were not the reason for his resignation, but

senior officials say he was increasingly “frozen out” of policy decisions by those in the Administration seeking an arms agreement. (*Toronto Star*, 04/27/1990)

## **GENERAL EDWARD L. ROWNY SUGGESTED TOPICS**

*Prepared by Jeff Chidester*

*Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 05/08/2006*

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### ***Origins of Relationship with Reagan***

- When did you first meet Ronald Reagan? What were your initial impressions of him?
- How did you feel about Reagan's public statements in the 1970s about arms control, particularly his position on the SALT treaties?
- Discuss your decision to resign from your position in the SALT negotiations in 1979.
- What role, if any, did you play in the 1980 presidential campaign and transition?

### ***Arms Control and Summitry***

- Discuss your selection as chief negotiator for SALT during the Reagan Administration. Did you have any discussions with President Reagan about his vision for the SALT negotiations before accepting the position?
- How did your previous experience as representative for the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the SALT negotiations shape your views as you joined the Reagan Administration?
- With whom in the State Department did you work most closely? Describe your working relationships with Secretary Haig and Secretary Shultz. Did they have different ways of prioritizing or handling arms control issues? Did you work closely with any other departments or agencies?
- Describe your relationships with the other relevant members of the arms control negotiating team (Paul Nitze, Max Kampelman, Kenneth Adelman, Richard Perle, Eugene Rostow, etc.). How did the divisions among Reagan's foreign policy advisors affect how arms control was pursued? How did the President manage this factionalism?
- How often and under what circumstances would you usually meet with President Reagan? Describe the content of your interactions with him.
- Discuss your foreign travels with President Reagan. Did you attend the summits in Geneva, Reykjavik, Washington and Moscow? If so, discuss any special recollections from these events. Assess his partnership with Mikhail Gorbachev.
- Characterize President Reagan's negotiating skills. Did he enjoy this part of his job? How knowledgeable was he about your issue areas at the beginning and how did he educate himself further about those issues?
- Discuss Soviet negotiators' impressions of President Reagan. How did they view the President's role in the arms control process?
- Comment on your role in the major arms control issues and events of the Reagan presidency ("zero option," SDI, deployment of Pershing IIs, INF Treaty, etc.). Assess the impact of other important events in U.S.-Soviet relations ("evil empire" speech, KAL007 incident, Daniloff affair, etc.) on the arms control process.
- Discuss your role as liaison to officials in allied governments on developments in arms control negotiations. Who were America's closest allies on arms policy throughout the 1980s? Which nations presented the most problems?
- Why did you remain as an arms control advisor in the Bush Administration? Discuss your decision to leave in June 1990.

***The Reagan Presidency in Retrospect***

- What do you consider your greatest accomplishments as arms control negotiator during the Reagan presidency?
- What features of the Reagan Administration and your role in it were overlooked or misunderstood by the press? Do you think historians have accurately captured Reagan's beliefs about arms control and, more broadly, nuclear weapons?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Reagan Administration in the realm of arms control?
- Comment on President Reagan as a foreign policy leader and a world leader.
- What will be President Reagan's lasting impact on foreign affairs? What will be his legacy on U.S.-Soviet arms control?
- How should the Reagan presidency be viewed in history? What episodes or events are especially instructive or revealing for the historian trying to assess this presidency?

## **TIMELINES**

- General Edward L. Rowny Timeline, prepared by Jeff Chidester, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 05/08/2006.
- Reagan Administration Arms Control Timeline, prepared by Kelly Erickson, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, 09/12/2003.

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