SUMMITRY, SDI, AND ARMS CONTROL

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I. The Limits of Summitry

The most notable achievement of the recent summit between U.S. and USSR, it seems, was the agreement to hold another summit. Thus, it is tempting, at the outset, to ask what previous summit conferences have contributed to arms control—if not to address the prior and more fundamental question of what arms control itself has contributed to national security.

A detailed, empirical analysis of previous summit meetings, extending back to the final events of World War II (Yalta and Potsdam) would yield the conclusion that such meetings, whatever their contemporary symbolic significance, probably raised at least as many problems as they solved. In all cases they were followed by a deterioration in the political relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union.[1] I would not claim that there is necessarily a causal relationship. From an American perspective, however, the deterioration in the superpower relationship was the result of Soviet actions that violated either the spirit or the substance, if not both, of agreements reached during the respective summits.

This is specifically true of arms control accords. The SALT I agreements, signed at the 1972 Moscow summit, but of course negotiated beforehand, may serve as an instructive example. While the United States placed constraints on its own armament programs—no new strategic systems were deployed between 1972 and the early 1980's—the Soviet Union continued its own strategic buildup largely unconstrained.

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1. Consider the following sequence:

Eisenhower meets Khrushchev—1955:	Hungary and The Middle East—1956
Kennedy meets Khrushchev—1961:	Cuban Missile Crisis—1962
Johnson meets Kosygin—1967:	Czechoslovakia—1968
Nixon meets Brezhnev—1972:	The Middle East—1973
Carter meets Brezhnev—1979:	Afghanistan—1979

This process was not interrupted by SALT II, which codified the asymmetries that grew during the 1970's. The USSR was not only able to achieve a vast superiority in heavy and accurate landbased missiles, which can be perceived as first strike weapons, but also developed and deployed a number of other systems.

II. The November 1985 Summit and SDI

The November 1985 summit furnishes yet another focal point for an analysis of the respective goals of the United States and the Soviet Union in arms control. In the weeks before the summit, each put forward arms control proposals designed to shape the strategic arsenal of the other side in accordance with its own security interests. Quite properly, the United States seeks to achieve strategic stability based upon lower levels of highly accurate warheads with counterforce potential. The Soviet Union has 6500 of such warheads while the United States has only 2000.

In contrast, the USSR has sought to use arms control negotiations, and especially the summit, as a platform for derailing the strategic defense research program of the Reagan Administration. The Soviet motivation is a simple one: Moscow seeks to prevent the United States from developing the technologies that would enable us to provide a defense against the huge number of counterforce warheads already deployed by the Soviet Union.

At the same time, the Soviet Union is maintaining its own strategic defense program—much greater in magnitude than that of the United States. Soviet scientists, for example, are devoting more time and effort than their American counterparts to the development of laser and particle beam technologies. Yet the Soviet Union continues to criticize the United States for pursuing research in these same areas.

In fact, the USSR has already installed systems components capable of being used for strategic defense. The Krasnoyarsk radar, for example, is not deployed along the periphery of the Soviet Union's territory, nor is it located within the 150 kilometer radius specifically required by the ABM Treaty. The Soviet Union has also upgraded its own ballistic missile defenses around Moscow—no other country maintains an ABM system. Finally, the Soviet Union has constantly upgraded its elaborate air defense system, for which the United States has no counterpart.

Soviet behavior with respect to the ABM Treaty raises important questions about compliance with existing treaties as well as questions about future agreements. Failure to insist on Soviet compliance with present treaties invites even greater violations in the years ahead.

If we cannot respond to existing violations, how would we react to a Soviet violation of a ban on strategic defense research? Indeed the Soviet

Union has called for a prohibition against SDI research in the negotiations in Geneva as a prerequisite for other arms reductions. Private sector groups such as the free press and the arms control lobby would monitor American compliance with a ban on such research. Unfortunately, similar institutions do not exist in the Soviet Union.

III. Other Areas of Arms Control

Setting these difficulties concerning arms control and strategic defense aside for a moment, let us focus on the other areas of contention in the Geneva talks. Both sides put forward proposals for limits on offensive systems in the weeks before the summit. At first glance, they appear to offer some basis for compromise with cuts of about 50 percent in missile launchers and bombers, as well as warhead totals.

More specifically, the Soviet Union proposed a cut of 50 percent of missile launchers and aircraft with a ceiling of 6000 on what they call "nuclear charges." No more than 60 percent of the permitted nuclear charges could be deployed on any one component of the nuclear triad (ICBM's or SLBM's or "delivery aircraft"). All "new" nuclear delivery systems would be banned or severely curtailed. Such a ban would include Midgetman, the D–5 submarine warheads and the advanced technology bomber. The Soviet SS–X–24, the SS–25, and the SS–MX–23 missiles, some of them mobile, would be excluded, nor would the Blackjack bomber be covered. Furthermore, the United States would be barred from deploying any further INF systems, thus freezing the current imbalance in favor of the Soviet Union.

At the core of the Soviet proposals has been a definition of "strategic delivery systems." That definition would include those systems that, by virtue of their location, can strike the territory of the other side. It would encompass all U.S. INF forces capable of striking the Soviet Union, including aircraft deployed on the carriers of the United States Navy, while excluding the Soviet SS–20 or other forces capable of striking targets in NATO Europe or the Asian Pacific areas. This is reminiscent of the position taken by the Soviet Union 15 years ago. Neither the United States nor its allies could accept it then or at any time since then.

The U.S. proposal calls for a reduction in warheads on both sides to 4500, with no more than 3000 on landbased missiles, with separate totals to be negotiated for intermediate range missiles and warheads. It also includes a limit on cruise missiles at 1500.

IV. Conclusion

The recent summit conference, like its predecessors, did not, and could not, resolve the fundamental differences in the American and Soviet

relationship. Given the historical record, one should not be optimistic about a lasting contribution to arms control resulting from summit conferences. Key issues remain: The Soviet Union while pursuing its own strategic defense program, has sought to deny a similar opportunity to the United States. Questions about Soviet compliance with the ABM and other arms control treaties remain unresolved. Finally, the principal option available to the United States is the pursuit of a strategic defense research program to ascertain whether technically it will be possible eventually to deploy a strategic defense capability more cheaply than it will be for the Soviet Union to build additional offensive strategic systems designed to saturate or overwhelm such a system. If strategic defenses are proven to be cost effective, the basis will have been laid for real reductions in strategic offensive forces within, or even outside, a formal arms control framework.