September 26, 1980

Military Balance

Q. Your Administration has been accused of allowing the military balance with the Soviet Union to deteriorate to a position of US inferiority and ushering in a period of grave danger to US interests around the world. The Secretary of Defense has said that even with the post-Afghanistan defense spending increases, it would require 40 years to catch up to Soviet expenditures.

How do you view the trends -- and the implications of these trends -- in the military balance? Are we, in fact, number two today in military strength as Governor Reagan has charged?

And, do you believe that our security over the next several years would have been helped or hurt if your Administration had moved more aggressively on production of such weapons as the neutron bomb, B-I, MX and Trident II?

Response

The charge that the United States has fallen into a position of military inferiority is false. Those who claim that the United States is weak, that the United States cannot carry out its objectives, that the United States cannot deter conflict, and it cannot win a conflict -- I think they do a disservice. We have very substantial capabilities. The Soviets are aware of it.

Over the past 20 years, the military forces of the Soviets have grown substantially, both in absolute numbers and relative to our own. Discounting inflation, since 1960, Soviet military spending has doubled, rising steadily in real terms by three or four percent a year.

These Soviet efforts would put the USSR in a most advantageous military position if we do not counter their programs with force improvements of our own. We will not allow any other nation to gain military superiority over us.

In the strategic area, the Soviets have reached parity with us. By some measures, we are ahead; by others, the Soviets are ahead. We have, for example, thousands more warheads than the Soviets do. They have more intercontinental ballistic missile payload. We have more submarine-launched ballistic missile payload. We have a better balanced strategic capability because we have bombers on alert. We have roughly half of our submarine-launch ballistic missiles deployed at all times. They have an edge in land-based ICBMs. So, the balance in these terms is reasonably even.

What is also clear, however, is that in strategic nuclear forces, the Soviets have come from a position of substantial inferiority 15 years ago to one of parity today. Their forces have improved in quality as well as numbers. The Soviets have a potential for strategic advantage, if we fail to respond with adequate programs of our own.

We are responding. Today the United States is engaged in the most comprehensive military modernization program since the early 1960s.

In the strategic area, we are moving ahead on strengthening all three legs of our Triad of land-based missiles, submarine-launched missiles and bombers. Four years ago there was no program for a survivable mobile ICBM. Four years ago the Trident missile submarine program was bogged down in contractor disputes and way behind schedule. Four years ago there was no long-range,

air-launched cruise missile program. Four years ago, the only major proposal to modernize our bomber force was the B-1. We cancelled this program because it was clear then -- and it is even clearer today -- that it would have been dangerously vulnerable to improving Soviet air defenses. Quite simply, the B-1 was obsolete and a waste of money.

My Administration has also taken steps to reverse a decade of decline in the military strength of the Atlantic Alliance.

-- When I first began to meet with Atlantic Alliance leaders almost four years ago, I found them very troubled by the state of our military strength in the Atlantic Alliance. I promised to raise our own level of defense spending in real terms by some three percent per year and our NATO Allies responded by making the same pledge.

-- With American leadership, NATO also took the crucial step of adopting a bold Long-Term Defense Program which will extend over 15 years. That program is helping us to increase our capacity to deter or defeat any surprise attack that may be launched against our European Allies and therefore against ourselves.

-- Last year, the Alliance agreed to respond to Soviet nuclear missile and bomber deployments by modernizing and upgrading our long-range theater nuclear forces with 572 PERSHING II missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles. Today, this program is underway and on schedule.

NATO is responding in a determined and coordinated fashion to the military competition posed by the Warsaw Pact. Never in the history of the Alliance has its military solidarity been greater than it is today.

The recent chaos in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan have emphasized that the challenges to our vital interests and our security are not confined to one geographic area. It has also demonstrated that we need to correct deficiences in our conventional power projection capabilities. The United States must be able to respond quickly and effectively to military challenges anywhere in the world.

Power projection is not new for the United States, but the demands change over time. That is why we are engaged in a systematic and significant enhancement of our capabilities to move forces rapidly to distant trouble spots.

Four years ago, we did not have adequate capability to respond to threats in far way places such as the Persian Gulf region as quickly and effectively as our interests required. Our intensified effort involves a number of different programs, including creation of RDF, prepositioning the weapons and supplies for Marine troops and Air Force tactical fighters in the region, increasing our naval presence in the Indian Ocean, gaining access to key port and airfield facilities in the area.

We all hope and work and pray that we will see a world in which the weapons of war are no longer necessary, but now we must deal with the hard facts, with the world as it is. In the dangerous and uncertain world of today, the keystone of our national security is still military strength -- strength that is clearly recognized by Americans, by our Allies, and by any potential adversary. As long as I am President, I am determined to maintain that strength.

Gov. Reagan on the Military Balance

"...in military strength we are already second to one: namely, the Soviet Union."

Chicago Council on
Foreign Relations
March 17, 1980

"At the time (1965) we led the Soviet Union in about 40 strategic military categories. Today, they lead us in all but 6 or 8 and may well surpass us in those if present trends continue."

Veterans of Foreign Wars
August 18, 1980

September 26, 1980

Defense Spending

Q: The Republican platform accuses your Administration of "massive cuts in US defense spending." They charge that you have reduced defense spending by over $38 billion from President Ford's last Five Year Defense Plan and have underfunded a great number of unglamorous Defense activities such as research and development, manpower, the reserves, just to name a few areas.

How do you respond to these charges?

Also, how will it be possible to maintain 3-5% real growth through 1985 in the defense budget, as you have promised, in light of growing public support for stemming public spending and the great difficulties in cutting back domestic programs?

Response: I am eager to compare my defense record of steady, sustained increase over the last four years with the record of underinvestment and decline during the previous eight years of two Republican Administrations.

Governor Reagan is fond of comparing the real accomplishments of my Administration with President Ford's FY 1978 budget, submitted after his defeat at the polls left Republican officials free to propose a budget that would neither have to be defended before Congress nor executed; that would not have to meet the tests of affordability and consistency. For example, that bogus lame-duck document proposed twice as many ships per year as the average number authorized during the previous seven years.

In contrast the real Republican record, from fiscal years 1970 through 1977, shows that outlays for

defense in constant dollars -- the measure of how much we are actually spending for defense -- declined every year. During the eight years prior to my Administration defense spending declined in real terms -- after inflation -- about 35%. Again, in real terms, Republican requests to Congress declined over $30 billion in the eight years before FY 1978.

Eight consecutive years of decline cannot be reversed overnight. We are now taking corrective action to reverse the shrinking size of our Navy, the increasing vulnerability of our intercontinental ballistic missile force, the growing obsolescence of our tanks and armored personnel carriers.

When my commitment to national security is evaluated under the appropriate measure of defense expenditures -- outlays -- the record reveals that outlays rose steadily from just over $134 billion in FY 1978 to almost $147 billi in FY 1981 -- over 10% real growth in constant 1981 dollars over the four-year period. As projected in my current Five-Year Defense Program, defense spending will have increased, over the eight years of my Administration, by 27%. By 1985, the defense programs and plans I will have sent to Congress will involve a cumulative real increase of almost $150 billion above the last budget yeat of the Ford Administration.

Moreover, my Administration is the first Administration to commit itself to protecting the level of real growth in defense spending from the effects of inflation. This commitment underscores my determination to preserve the Defense program in the face of unforeseen events such as oil price rises and the cost of expanded military operations in the Indian Ocean.

I intend to carry out my current five-year plan. The most wasteful and self-defeating thing that we could do would be to start this necessary program, then alter it or cut it back after a year or two when such an action might become politically attractive. It would also be harmful for the Commander-in-Chief to attempt to justify to the American people billions of dollars in unnecessary and unneeded programs. Although Governor Reagan has been very imprecise about how much his defense program would cost, the plans outlined in the Republican Platform would cost this nation over $50 billion annually by 1985 above the substantial increases I have planned.

The defense program I have proposed for the next five years will require some sacrifice -- but sacrifice that we must afford. I am confident that the American people understand the threats our country faces, and will support this program.

Gov. Reagan on Defense Spending

Reagan has never wavered from his strong support of increased defense spending. Reagan and the Republican party call for a military buildup to attain military superiority. By engaging in an arms race with the Soviets, Reagan believes that we can use our economic might to defeat the Russians.

"They (the Soviets) know they can't match our industrial capacity."

New York Post
May 29, 1979

However, neither Reagan nor the Republican party has made it clear how they would fund this build-up.

"...I've always believed that defense is something in which you do not make the determination (of a budget)--it's made for you by your possible opponent."

Washington Post
April 20, 1980

It would appear that Reagan would rely on Reagan-Kemp-Roth to provide the needed revenues for the military build-up:

"We would use the increased revenues the federal government would get from this tax decrease to rebuild our defense capabilities."

Flint Journal
May 18, 1980

When pressed for figures on how much would be necessary to achieve military supperiority, Reagan avoids specifics.

"Well, I've never gone by the figures. In fact, I think it's wrong to say we're safe because we're spending 5 percent more or 3 percent more or anything. No, go by the weapons. Now, I have outlined a number of weapon shortages that we have, but I don't have access to the high command. Just ask these men who would have to fight the war what are the essential weapons, the top priority that we must have now to restore our ability to deter the Soviet Union. I tell you, I think we're talking about the next few years that we must change the situation, not eventually down the road."

National Journal Interview
March 9, 1980

Gov. Reagan on Defense Spending

Recently, Reagan spelled out his case against the Carter Administration record on defense spending:

"(Secretary Brown) argues that defense spending dropped more than 35% between 1969 and 1976 under Republic administrations, and it has risen 10% under (the Carter) administration. The truth is that defense spending did go down between 1969 and 1975--and may I point out for the record that it went down by six percent not 35 percent as Mr. Carter erroneously charges. But the fundamental problem I have with Mr. Carter's rewriting of history is its sheer, blatant hypocrisy. Who was it who was principally responsible for the decline in defense spending in those years? You and I know the answer very well: The Democrats who controlled the Congress--men like Walter Mondale and Teddy Kennedy. Those Democrats in Congress cut more than $40 billion from the Republican defense budget, and they block or delay almost every new weapons systems but even more incredibly, let me ask: Who was it in 1976 who campaigned up and down the land against Gerald Ford's attempts to restore those defense cuts? Who said the military budget had to be slashed even more? You know and I know that it was Jimmy Carter.

President Ford had begun the restoration of our margin of safety in 1975 with a five-year program for increasing our defensive capability. In these last three years, President Carter has cut that program by $38 billion. His defense budget authorization requests reverted to the annual decline that had been halted by the Ford Administration.

He has since lobbied steadily against congressional efforts to increase defense spending.

Now, by such untruthful devices as manipulating inflation factors, shifting the base from authority to outlays, changing base years, and even ordering planned defense spending this year reduced so it would look as if he had met his promised percentage increase for next year, the Carter Administration tries to manufacture increases that in fact are largely phony."

American Legion
August 20, 1980

Strategic Program Cancellations

Q: Your critics have claimed that your Administration has scaled down, cancelled or delayed every strategic weapon program proposed by your Republican predecessor, including production of Minuteman missiles, the B-1, ground-, sea- and air-launched cruise missiles, the M-X, the Trident submarine and the Trident II missile. During this time, the Soviets have not shown similar restraint, continuing to deploy several new types of ICBMs and SLBMs with multiple warheads, and developing a new generation of even more threatening missiles.

How do you respond to the charge that your Administration has failed to recognize the importance of maintaining the strategic balance and that only in the past year have you moved to fully fund necessary strategic programs?

Response: That list of charges made by Governor Reagan is a combination of half truths, falsehoods and misleading statements. Let me summarize the strategic programs as I found them when I entered the White House four years ago and where we are today.

In 1977 there was no program for a mobile ICBM. No final decisions had been made on the M-X missile, nor on how to deploy it. There was no program for long-range, air-launched cruise missiles; no program for ground-launched cruise missiles; no program for sea-launched cruise missiles. There were no plans to deploy additional Minuteman III ICBMs, so a continuing production line would have been a useless, senseless waste of $300 million per year.

The Trident ballistic missile submarine program was bogged down in contractor disputes and way behind schedule. There was no Trident II ballistic missile. In the past

three years I have resolved these disputes and gotten the Trident program back on schedule. The first Trident submarine went to sea last summer. The 4,000-mile range Trident I missile is now being deployed on 12 Poseidon submarines and will be deployed on all Trident submarines. Looking further into the future, my Administration is committed to developing the Trident II missile, with even longer range and greater accuracy.

When I entered office, the only long-range bomber program was the B-1. It had been on the drawing board so long -- in part because Presidents Nixon and Ford were doubtful it would work -- that it was growing obsolete before it could be put in the hands of the Strategic Air Command. I cancelled the B-1 in 1977 because it had very doubtful prospects of being able to penetrate anticipated Soviet defenses. In the three years since then, it has become even clearer that this was the correct decision because the Soviets have gone ahead and improved their air defenses and have programs in the works that will improve them further.

Instead, because the existing cruise missile program at that time was inadequate, I initiated the long-range, air-launched cruise missile program. These missiles are designed to be launched from outside the Soviet Union, thus the B-52 or other aircraft may be used. These cruise

missiles are smaller and harder to detect and defend against than the B-1. They will be able to penetrate Soviet air defense system at the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s when the B-1, as I said, would have had very doubtful capability to penetrate. At the same time, we are studying a number of different advance manned bombers -- including Stealth -- for possible deployment in the 1990s.

With respect to the growing vulnerability of our Minuteman ICBM force, in 1976 there was indeed an M-X program, but there was no program to solve our strategic problem -- ICBM survivability -- the ability to survive a massive Soviet attack of high accuracy intercontinental ballistic missile warheads in large numbers. The preferred M-X basing plan on the part of the officials at that time -- 1976 -- was to put tham in Minuteman silos. The other scheme in 1976 was one of underground tunnels, which at least recognized the need for a different deployment system in orde for the M-X missiles to survive. Neither of these proposals was workable. Neither would have solved the problem of survivability. We then spent about two years trying to find a survivable system and we did. It's not inexpensive. But it will cost no more than the Minuteman system or the B-52s. And it will be able to survive. So, yes, we cancelled a basing system for the M-X that wouldn't work and we substituted a system that would.

Governor Reagan on Strategic Programs

Reagan has been a constant supporter of all weapon programs. In fact, he has never publicly opposed any major weapon system in the last 15 years.

The Republican platform calls for development of virtually every weapon system under consideration:

"o the earliest possible deployment of the MX missile in a prudent survivable configuration;

o accelerated development and deployment of a new manned strategic penetrating bomber that will exploit the $5.5 billion already invested in the B-1, while employing the most advanced technology available;

o deployment of an air defense system comprised of dedicated modern interceptor aircraft and early warning support systems;

o acceleration of development and deployment of strategic cruise missiles deployed on aircraft, on land, and on ships and submarines;

o modernization of the military command and control system to assure the responsiveness of U.S. strategic nuclear forces to presidential command in peace or war; and

o vigorous research and development of an effective anti-ballistic missile system, such as is already at hand in the Soviet Union, as well as more modern ABM technologies."

1980 Republican Platform

September 23, 1980

M-X (including ABM)

Q: There have been a number of reports that the M-X is losing support as a result of its high cost, concern about its impact on the states where it would be deployed, and its viability in the absence of SALT.

In light of these problems, do you think M-X is still a viable weapon? If, as seems likely, M-X is delayed, what harm do you see to the national security? Should the Administration be pursuing alternatives, in the event of an extended delay in M-X? And, what is your position on an ABM system to protect MX?

Response: The M-X system is viable, and it is necessary for the security of our nation. Our land-based Minuteman ICBM force is becoming vulnerable and we must act promptly to restore its invulnerability.

When I entered office in 1977 there was no program for a survivable M-X. One alternative under consideration would have put the M-X missile into Minuteman silos -- and the M-X would have been just as vulnerable to a Soviet attack as the Minutemen are now. Another alternative at least recognized the need for improved survivability, but detailed analysis of this alternative -- the trench or tunnel system -- showed that it would not work either.

During the next two years I directed the Defense Department to pursue a determined search for a M-X basing system which would be able to survive and retaliate after receiving the most devastating Soviet attack possible, and allow the Soviets to verify how many missiles were deployed.

After studying dozens of options, we found a deployment system for the M-X which meets these criteria. Governor Reagan has criticized my decision. I would challenge him to be more specific about the alternative he favors. Does he want to build a missile and have no place to put it? Does he want to put it in the Minuteman silos where they will be vulnerable to a nuclear Pearl Harbor? Perhaps he wants to build thousands and thousands of M-Xs and proliferate them all over the country, as some of his advisors have stated, at a cost of untold billions and a highly dangerous arms race.

The missile deployment I have approved will protect us from a Soviet surprise attack and yet be consistent with trying to curb arms and not engage in an arms race. I am confident we have made the right decision.

Strategic nuclear forces necessary for our nation's security are costly, but it is a burden we must bear to protect our freedoms. The Defense Department cost estimate for the M-X of about $33 billion in FY '80 dollars was worked out with care, and not artificially squeezed to make the M-X more saleable -- a tactic that has been used to sell military programs in the past. Even at this cost, M-X will be no more expensive than the Minuteman or the Polaris missile systems, or the B-52 bombers.

While we have focused on the strategic and security necessity for M-X, I have carefully reviewed the Air Force's plans to ensure that the M-X will not place an unfair burden on any of our citizens. I have met with the Governors of Utah and Nevada to assure them that, in deploying the M-X, we will respect all state water laws and will do everything possible to deal with the other economic impacts on the states. I am determined to see that these issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the residents around the deployment areas. I believe this can be done while planning to have the first missiles in service by 1986.

Finally, many Republican critics of my Administration favor abrogating the ABM Treaty and deploying ABMs to protect M-X. I believe that would be a gross mistake at this time. The ABM Treaty is a very important achievement, the most important achivement of SALT I, and one which holds down the arms competition. A decision to deploy ABMs should not be made lightly. But if in the absence of the constraints of the SALT II Treaty, the Soviets deployed tremendous numbers of warheads capable of attacking M-X shelters, perhaps as high as 20,000 or 30,000 warheads, then we might consider other responses, such as an anti-ballistic missile system. We have a vigorous long-standing technology program to develop ABMs and we would consider deploying such a system if that becomes necessary in the future.

Governor Reagan on MX

"To prevent the ultimate catastrophe of a massive nuclear attack, we urgently need a program to preserve and restore our strategic deterrent. The Administration proposes a costly and complex new missile system. But we can't complete that until the end of this decade. Given the rapidly growing vulnerability of our land-based missile force, a faster remedy is needed."

Address to Chicago Council
on Foreign Relations
March 17, 1980

The race-track deployment proposed by the Carter Administration is enormously expensive and complicated, and will require years to build. This proposed mode of deploying the MX should be scrapped, because it is unworkable.

Response to question posed by
Arms Control Today, May 1980

Representative Anderson on the MX

I have opposed development and deployment of the MX missile system as currently planned. Not only will this system be outrageously expensive and environmentally unsound, it will fail to address the fundamental need to enhance American security. We should not add thousands of new targets for Soviet military planners to contemplate, but should instead take advantage of technological advances in guidance, propulsion systems, command and control systems, and platforms to develop a secure and invulnerable system before the end of the decade. While the need for prompt counter-silo capability has not been completely resolved in my own mind, any such capability should not be deployed in a manner that invites attack on the United States.

Response to question posed by
Arms Control Today, May 1980

New Strategic Bomber
(Including Stealth Controversy)

Q: Three years ago you cancelled the B-1 bomber in favor of less expensive cruise missiles. Now your Administration is apparently on the verge of agreeing with the Air Force that a new bomber may be needed for conventional missions as well as for a strategic role.

Given the increasing anxiety over the effectiveness of the aging B-52, do you still believe your 1977 decision to cancel the B-1 was justified?

Also, your Administration has recently come under attack for alledgedly leaking the so-called "Stealth" technology for election year political purposes. Even if the original leaks did not come from the Administration, Defense Department officials seemed most eager to brief reporters and draw attention to the once-secret technology which, in Secretary Brown's words, "alters the military balance significantly."

How do you answer the charge that your Administration's handling of Stealth was politically motivated and has damaged our national security?

Response: Four years ago, the only major proposal to modernize our bomber force was the B-1. In 1977, I cancelled this program because it was clear then -- and it is even clearer today -- that by the time the B-1 could have been off the assembly lines and deployed at our SAC bases, improved Soviet air defenses would have made this aircraft dangerously vulnerable. Quite simply, the B-1 was obsolete and a waste of money. Yet Governor Reagan has continued to cite the B-1 as a bomber that should have been built. The Republican program is a program of obsolescence. They want to resurrect decommissioned ships. They want to revive the ABM system, which President

Nixon discarded. With vulnerable bombers, mothballed ships and obsolete missiles, they would waste billions of defense dollars.

Instead of the B-1, I chose to modernize the bomber force by exploiting some of the most advanced and effective military technology in the world -- the air-launched cruise missile. When I entered office four years ago, no long-range, air-launched cruise missiles were included in the defense program. Today, we are well on our way to equipping our B-52s with over 3,000 of these very highly accurate, long-range cruise missiles. They will be able to penetrate Soviet defenses not only in 1982, when the first full squadron will be ready, but through the 1980s and beyond.

At the same time we are studying a new bomber to meet any requirements for the 1990s -- the Stealth aircraft is part of this study. This is a major technological achievement that will affect the military balance in the coming years. Programs to make aircraft less visible to radar -- to give them a so-called Stealth capability -- have existed for 20 years. When this Administration came into office, Stealth was a low-level technology program and its existence was not classified as secret. The program had been dealt with in open testimony and in open contracts. In the spring of 1977, I turned Stealth into a major development and production program. The existence of this

new program was classified at the highest level. The funding level is now more than 100 times larger than it was in early 1977. There have been major achievements in the program.

Hundreds of contractor personnel are now working on Stealth. Dozens of Members of Congress have been briefed on the existence of the program. The increasing size of the program and the increasing numbers of persons aware of it made certain that its existence would have come out in the near future.

Governor Reagan's charge that the information provided by Secretary Brown's press conference would be helpful to the Soviets is simply nonsense. The information doesn't tell them how to change their air defense. They are already developing and building the best air defenses they can. Even if they could push their research harder to develop yet better air defenses, they have no idea of what characteristics to design against, or how much better their defenses must be. Secrecy of the details of the program, combined with our technological achievements, will enable us to keep ahead of the Soviets in this program for decades to come.

Stealth is one of a number of major technological advantages that the U.S. possesses. These technological advantages weigh heavily in the military balance and keep

us second to none. We have publicly discussed our advantages in other technologies in the past, and will continue to do so in the future because it is important that our potential enemies, our allies and the American people understand our military strength. This is an essential factor in deterring war.

Governor Reagan on the B-1 and Cruise Missiles

"I don't think that the current administration (Carter) is doing what should be done - not when it cancels the B-1 bomber, which is probably the foremost advance in aircraft that has ever been -- or has been presented since we went to the jet engines..."

Face The Nation
May 14, 1978

* * *

"We have an administration (Carter) that in three years has done away with...the cruise missile...and you could go on with weapon after weapon..."

San Jose News
March 10, 1980

September 27, 1980

Neutron Bomb

Q: Critics of your Administration have cited your surprise decision in April 1978 not to deploy the so-called neutron bomb as a prime example of inconsistency that has seriously harmed our position of leadership in the NATO alliance. At that time you said the ultimate decision on the neutron bomb would be made in light of Soviet restraint.

What considerations led you to decide so precipitously against deploying the neutron bomb in 1978? What is the status of your decision to defer production? What signs of Soviet restraint have, so far, prevented you from deciding to proceed with the neutron bomb?

Response: My decision of April 7, 1978 to defer a deployment decision still stands. I have directed that the Defense Department proceed with programs to modernize battlefield nuclear forces with improved weapons -- the LANCE missile and 8-inch nuclear artillery shell. I have further directed that the new warheads for these weapons be so designed that they can accept enhanced radiation elements and thus be converted to enhanced radiation warheads in the future, should we and our Allies decide on the need for such systems.

The military need for enhanced radiation weapons is not clear. NATO is deploying highly sophisticated, conventional "precision guided munitions" in anti-armor roles that are so accurate that there is a high probability that each shot would destroy an enemy tank. We and our NATO Allies are deploying these precision guided munitions by the tens of thousands.

The question of enhanced radiation weapons remains a sensitive one for our European Allies, on whose soil such weapons would be stationed. Governor Reagan's bland assertion that he would deploy enhanced radiation weapons in Europe betrays an insensitivity to European political concerns that

could cause serious strains in the Alliance. Governor Reagan ignores one essential fact: NATO is an Alliance of sovereign states. We do not tell our Allies that we are going to deploy a weapon on their territory. We consult with them, we examine the military requirements, we consider the political implications, then we as an Alliance decide.

On December 12, 1979, NATO adopted a plan for modernizing the theater nuclear forces (TNF) through the deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles. This plan is focused on long-range TNF because of their special contributior to deterrence. This decision was the product of model political and military consultations with our Allies.

Governor Reagan on the Neutron Bomb

Reagan strongly opposed any funding cuts in the development of the neutron bomb. He views the neutron bomb as "an offensive weapon that could bridge the gap for conventional weapons."

New York Times
May 6, 1980

Reagan has called the neutron bomb the closest thing to the ideal weapon.

> "Very simply it is the dream of death ray weapon of science fiction. It kills enemy soldiers but doesn't blow up the surrounding countryside or destroy villages, towns and cities. It won't destroy an enemy tank -- just kill the tank crew.
>
> "Now some express horror at this and charging immortality, portray those who would use such a weapon as placing a higher value on property than human life. This is sheer unadulterated nonsense. It is harsh sounding, but all war weapons back to the club, the sling and the arrow, are designed to kill the soldiers of the enemy. With gunpowder and artillery and later bombs and bombers, war could not be confined to the battlefield. And so came total war and non-combatants outnumbering soldiers in casualties."

Reagan Radio Transcript
March 1978 - April 1978

Reagan supports deployment of the neutron bomb in almost every available delivery system.

> "I favor development and deployment of the neutron warhead for U.S. theatre nuclear forces, including ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, artillery and bombs."

Washington Post
April 24, 1980

Nuclear Strategy

Q. The Republican Platform charges that your Administration relies on a nuclear strategy known as mutual assured destruction (or MAD) which would limit the President in a crisis to choose between mass mutual suicide or surrender. Yet you have recently signed Presidential Directive 59, widely reported in the press to call for giving the President greater flexibility to retaliate with nuclear weapons against limited groups of targets.

How do you answer the charge that your directive was timed to refute the Republican Platform statement? Why was a Presidential Directive on this extremely important and sensitive subject undertaken during a political campaign?

Also, other critics claim that increasing the President's flexibility to order nuclear attacks will only make nuclear war more thinkable, hence more likely. How do you answer this concern?

Response

I deeply regret the ill-informed attacks on our Nation's nuclear deterrent strategy. There has been a great deal of exaggeration put out about Presidential Directive 59 in this campaign, and I welcome the opportunity to state once again the true facts about America's deterrent doctrine.

The United States has never had a doctrine based solely and simply on spasmodic, massive attacks on Soviet cities and populations, as Governor Reagan knows -- or at least he should know. The President is not faced with a Hobson's choice between suicide and surrender if the Soviets launch a nuclear attack on military targets, while sparing our cities. Previous Administrations going back at least two decades recognized the danger of a strategic doctrine that relied too heavily on the threat of attacking

Soviet cities to deter Soviet aggression. Therefore, since the early 1960s, the United States has had the capability to launch limited nuclear attacks on Soviet targets other than cities. This capability has grown as our nuclear forces have become more accurate and sophisticated.

Our strategy and our capability to inflict massive destruction in retaliation provide the means of convincing the Soviet leaders that there is no rational objective they might gain by using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against the United States or our allies. The strategy set forth in Presidential Directive 59 directs our Nation's military leaders to further develop our plans to carry out selective, limited attacks on those targets we know the Soviet leaders value most. It restates and redefines our plans to respond to any level of Soviet nuclear attack by striking back in ways that damage the political and military structure without hitting Soviet cities and population.

Therefore, it should be clear to all that the strategy contained in PD-59 is not a radical departure from previous policy of both Democratic and Republican Administrations. It is the result of a gradual evolution of our doctrine over a number of years in response to growing Soviet strategic capabilities and to better understanding of Soviet military doctrine and operational planning. U.S. strategic forces are now, and will continue to be, capable of implementing this strategy.

I want to stress that the United States remains fully capable of devastating the Soviet Union under any circumstances. Assured destruction of the Soviet Union as a modern industrial society remains the cornerstone of the strategy expressed in PD-59. It does not signify a shift to a US plan to strike first at the Soviet Union with nuclear forces, nor does it mean the United States intends to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons to gain foreign policy objectives. The only sane purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter their use by the other side.

I do not believe either side could "win" a limited nuclear war. In PD-59, I want to ensure as best I can that the Soviets do not believe so either.

Representative Anderson on Nuclear Strategy

In a speech before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York on September 24, Anderson charged that both President Carter and Ronald Reagan "have formed an alliance of folly" in their positions on nuclear war strategy.

> "Both seem to harbor the fatal illusion that nuclear wars can be limited and perhaps even won. That conclusion is reflected in Mr. Reagan's platform and in Mr. Carter's twin commitments to the MX counterforce missile and to the new targeting doctrine formulated in Presidential Directive 59."
>
> "Obviously, neither Mr. Carter now Mr. Reagan is advocating nuclear war. But I consider both of them to be seriously misguided in their endorsement of the so-called nuclear war fighting thesis."
>
> "[Both] would build super-accurate counterforce weapons to threaten Soviet missiles. Both would target weapons not only on missile silos but on command centers as well. And both insist that such weapons would be used only in a second strike to disarm any Soviet missiles remaining after an initial attack on the United States."

Anderson then spelled out his views.

> "Any missiles capable of destroying enemy silos in a second strike could obviously do so in a first strike. The creation of these weapons and plans would move both sides toward a hair-trigger posture in which each would feel more inclined to launch its land-based missiles on warning of attack, lest they be destroyed on the ground."
>
> "The futile pursuit of a capacity to wage limited nuclear war may only make more likely the very event we dread."

September 23, 1980

Defense Manpower

Q: According to the GOP, Carter Administration "mismanagement" of the all-volunteer force concept has turned it into a "shambles", a "national scandal" and "disgrace." The Party Platform blames your Administration as well for a "dramatic exodus" of skilled military personnel from the services, a loss which is "the direct result of neglect by the Commander-in-Chief." Additionally, this year it became known that tens of thousands of military families are eligible for food stamps.

How do you answer the charge that your Administration permitted this situation to deteriorate? What is your assessment of the strength and morale in our armed services? What measures have you proposed to solve the problems that do exist?

Response: The continuing ability of our Armed Forces to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of qualified young men and women is a matter of the highest national priority. I am keenly aware, from my own personal experience in the Navy and from close attention to the subject as President, of the real sacrifices as well as satisfactions involved in military service. I greatly admire those who are working so hard to protect our country.

I realize that many experienced men and women are leaving the Services because of a feeling that they are not adequately compensated. I have taken several steps to improve this situation and I will continue to look for ways to help our service people as long as I am President. In early September, I signed into law legislation specifically targeted to the areas of most immediate need. These included an increased subsistence

allowance, a 25% increase in aviation career incentive pay, increased pay for enlisted personnel serving at sea, and reenlistment bonuses for persons with 10-14 years of prior service.

I also signed into law a 11.7% pay increase for military personnel effective October 1. Pay and benefits for the Armed Forces will rise more than $4 billion in 1981, the greatest increase in the history of our nation, in either war or peace.

These measures, by themselves, are only a first step toward solving our manpower problems. In the past my efforts have been complicated by a number of limiting factors -- inadequate attention to the problem before I came to office, Congressional cuts in my defense budget, the need for fiscal restraint in the fight on inflation.

This year we have been very successful in building support in the Congress for higher pay and benefits. Our continued success through the 1980s will depend on recognition of the hard fact that sustained commitment of the American people will be required to pay the costs of retaining and supporting a voluntary military force.

Defense Readiness

Q. In recent years, increasing publicity has been given to the low readiness of our military forces: shortages of spare parts, fuel and ammunition, growing backlogs of deferred maintenance through inadequate facilities to meet peacetime needs (let alone wartime requirements) and shrinking industrial capacity to supply defense goods.

More recently, Army Chief of Staff General Meyer has stated that we have "a hollow Army". Four years ago, all 10 Army divisions based in the US were rated fully combat ready. Now 6 of these divisions are rated not combat ready and the other 4 are rated marginally combat ready.

How serious do you believe this problem is? Where do the most critical problems exist and what steps has your Administration taken to correct them?

Response

Today our land, naval and air forces are fully capable of substantial and successful combat. My Administration has made extrordinary efforts to maintain readiness in the face of rapidly escalating costs -- such as the dramatic fuel price increase over the last year -- and the shortfalls and inadequate programs when I entered office.

In FY 81 we will spend over $52 billion to support the maintenance and operations of our forces, an increase of almost $5 billion, or about 10%, in real terms over President Ford's last budget year. During the past four years, one-third of total military spending has supported readiness-related operations and maintenance. Expenditures on procurement of munitions and spares -- another indicator of immediate combat readiness -- total another $16 billion during this same 78-81 period.

Four years ago, munitions and spare parts inventories and production suffered from low baseline requirements established by previous Administrations. Immediately after taking office I commissioned, and followed through on a sustainability study of unprecedented detail and comprehensiveness. In part as a result of this study, the record of the past four years is of real improvement in munitions and war reserves. However, much work needs to be done and it will be several years before those inventories will be fully adequate to support all of our combat forces at wartime sortie rates.

Let me address some of the specific problems we have and the steps I have ordered to correct them.

Today the Army has 16 divisions, of which 10 are combat ready. The forward deployed divisions in Europe and the Pacific represent 45 percent of the Army and are maintained at highest readiness status. The Army classifies divisions as fully-combat ready to not-combat ready according to personnel, equipment and training conditions. A division rated low in one of these resource areas is capable of operating with two of its three brigades if required to deploy immediately. But all Army units could not be transported at the same time. While early deploying units are moving, the later units are brought up to full capacity.

Our current efforts to improve Army readiness are showing results:

- First, recruiting for the past year has fully met objectives and those soldiers are now beginning to arrive in units.

- Second, non-commissioned officer shortages will be improved through reducing unneeded personnel in forward deployed forces.

- Third, in recruiting, I am expanding bonus programs that are keyed toward critical skills. I have also supported legislation to improve educational benefits, including provisions that pass on unused educational benefits to dependents. To alleviate the shortage of middle-grade NCOs, I am expanding bonus programs to include mid-range NCOs (6-10 years' service) in infantry, armor, field artillery, and other selected skills. (By comparison only a third of Soviet divisions are combat ready. The remaining two-thirds are at reduced or cadre strength, having varying percentages of active duty personnel and equipment assigned to them, and would have to be filled out in an emergency with reservists.)

There has also been much attention focused on the readiness of our tactical air forces. It is untrue that a significant percentage of our aircraft can't fly. The index used by the Air Force is a measure of the peacetime logistic support system, not of how the air forces would perform in war. If we were to make a transition to war from our normal day-to-day peacetime posture, we would selectively defer non-urgent inspections and preventive maintenance; we would also, of course, have unlimited

access to our war reserve spares and would, as necessary, use serviceable components from out-of-commission and damaged aircraft to maximize our wartime capability.

Today, our armed forces stand ready to fight, if that should become necessary. In response to events in Southwest Asia, I ordered the rapid deployment of two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Indian Ocean. Since the beginning of this year, we have deployed two aircraft carriers; over 25 other ships and more than 150 combat aircraft in one of the areas of the world most remote from the United States. To be sure, there have been sacrifices and hardships on the crews and their families. But we accomplished this deployment rapidly and smoothly, and can sustain it in the Indian Ocean as long as it is needed. No other Navy in the world could have performed as well.

September 26, 1980

Military Draft

Q. Critics on your left have attacked your reinstitution of draft registration as the first step to resuming the peacetime draft. Critics on your right have claimed that the draft registration program is an empty, symbolic gesture and would do nothing to speed mobilization in a crisis.

What were your objectives in ordering draft registration? How can you claim draft registration will expedite mobilization in a crisis when a Selective Service report early this year concluded that it would have no effect?

Response

I have repeatedly stated my opposition to the peacetime draft. With the personnel initiatives I have taken to raise military pay and benefits closer to compensate civilian occupations, I believe that a peacetime draft will not be necessary.

But it is important for us all to realize that the U.S. is committed to a sustained response to a long-term strategic challenge. We should be prepared to make the necessary sacrifices and that these sacrifices be borne by all. We should be prepared to reinstitute the draft on very short notice, if that becomes necessary.

What is the argument against registration? That we should not be prepared? I for one do not believe this is the case. I feel it is a fundamental matter of patriotism that Americans support. Symbolically, we would also be saying to the Soviet Union that the simple act of registration was too high a price to pay to enhance our security -- certainly a reckless notion to impart.

Moreover, our allies continue to look to us for leadership of the Atlantic Alliance. They rightly require of us wisdom and strength -- political, economic and military -- to properly manage the changing international security environment.

Draft registration is a tangible demonstration to our allies and potential adversaries of our national strength and will. It also assists our planning for national emergencies in which an actual draft could be necessary.

Governor Reagan on the Military Draft

Reagan opposes both the President's move to reinstate draft registration and any peacetime draft.

"I do not favor a peacetime draft or registration."

Acceptance Speech
July 17, 1980

He also challenges the underlying premise for registration.

"Indeed, draft registration may actually decrease our military preparedness, by making people think we have solved our defense problem..."

Quoted by Senator Hatfield
Congressional Record
June 4, 1980

Asked for an alternative to the peacetime draft, Reagan calls for a buildup of reserves. (It is not clear if he favors the same buildup as an alternative to registration.)

"There is a need for a million-man active reserve, a reserve that is equipped with the latest weapons, trained in them and combat ready. We've allowed (our reserve force) to deteriorate very badly. It is much too small, it is not equipped with the latest weapons and it doesn't have the training."

National Journal
March 8, 1980

To finance this force, Reagan would rely on pay incentives.

Q: So you believe we can have a million-man reserve strictly on a volunteer basis?

Reagan: Yes.

Q: How, with pay incentives?

Reagan: Yes, it could be pay incentives.

National Journal
March 8, 1980

Rapid Deployment Force

Q: The Administration's critics have charged that the RDF is just a paper organization, a political gimmick designed to draw attention away from four years of neglect. They also charge that since all of the military forces assigned to the RDF are already in existence, the main value of the Administration's initiative is more political than military. Would you comment on these charges.

Also, since our existing forces are stretched so thin, how can they be drawn down to take on new commitments elsewhere? What will the RDF be able to accomplish that could not be done before? If the challenges to our security worldwide are really on the rise, don't we need to increase the size of our armed forces and step up purchases of new equipment? Finally, does the formation of the RDF signify an increased willingness of the US to intervene militarily in regional disputes?

Response: Those who charge that the RDF is a political gimmick are demonstrating their lack of understanding of military forces. The present international challenges we face and the interests we must be prepared to defend require us enhance our capabilities, not add to our current force structure.

Force structure aside, we are dramatically improving our capability to engage and support more of our forces at greater distances from the United States. This is the essence of the Rapid Deployment Force. Having Rapid Deployment Forces does not increase the probability that we will use them. On the contrary, we intend for their existence to deter the very developments that would otherwise invoke their use.

The Rapid Deployment Force draws its forces from Army; Navy; Air Force; and Marine units which are oriented toward non-NATO contingencies and that can respond quickly to crises, primarily in areas in which we have no permanent military presence. The specific composition of the Rapid Deployment Force is not fixed -- the forces employed by the Rapid Deployment Force would be dependent upon the situation we faced. A company of 200 men might be sufficient to respond to requests by friendly countries to provide a natural disaster assistance team or communications-and-command support teams; a Marine Amphibious Force of 50,000 men or a mechanized Army Corps of over 100,000 men might be required to provide sufficient warfighting capability to regain territory overrun by the enemy or to hold critical objectives until reinforcements could reach the area.

Although the forces for the Rapid Deployment Force currently exist, we are buying selected items to improve significantly its mobility and responsiveness. We are developing special ships for prepositioning several brigades of Marine Corps heavy equipment -- tanks and artillery. We are buying additional KC-10 cargo/tanker aircraft to support our long-range airlift, and we are developing a new transport aircraft, the C-X, for hauling outsized cargo, like tanks. Our 1981 shipbuilding program has been increased to 95 units over the next five years.

We have already deployed a seven-ship, prepositioned support force afloat at Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean. The seven-ship group is composed of chartered Roll-on/ roll-off ships, cargo ships and tankers. This group of ships stores Marine Corps armored equipment, artillery and other large items of rolling stock that place the largest demand on airlift.

Today, the RDF is ready to respond to a broad range of military contingencies in defense of our vital national interests. Through carefully selected procurement programs we are improving significantly that capability. It is important that our potential adversaries understand that we have the ability and the will to defend our interests and that any miscalculation on their part would be extremely costly to them.

September 12, 1980

Naval Strength

Q: In comparing your defense record with that of President Ford, the most dramatic area of cuts is naval shipbuilding. During the last four years, the naval share of the DOD budget has shrunk from 40 percent to 33 percent. President Ford's last five-year ship contruction plan was cut from 157 ships to 83. Your shipbuilding proposals since then have gone up and down, showing no consistent pattern. In 1979, you vetoed the Defense bill because it contained a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. And you have requested only about one-third the Marine amphibious ships needed to maintain the current force level.

Have you downgraded the Navy's role in our national defense? How do you answer the charge that you have been dismantling the nation's naval and marine forces?

Response

I am glad to compare the record of my Administration with those of the previous Republican Administrations often quoted by Governor Reagan. During the decade before I entered office, the size of our Navy was cut in half as older ships were retired and the Republicans debated the future role of the Navy. Shipbuilding during those years was actually significantly less than the program we are now following.

Like President Ford's defense budget for fiscal year 1978, submitted after his defeat at the polls left Republican officals free to propose a budget that would neither have to be defended before Congress nor executed, the Ford 1977, 156-ship five-year plan was a lame-duck document that did not have to meet the tests of affordability and consistency. The program proposed twice as many ships per year as the average number authorized during the previous seven years of Republican Administration.

In contrast, the program I have followed is based on a policy to structure a realistic, executable five-year shipbuilding program within available resources, rather than to continue to delude ourselves with unrealistic shipbuilding plans or to resurrect old mothballed ships.

My Administration's five-year shipbuilding plan provides for the construction of 97 new ships, and for major modernization of five other ships, including three aircraft carriers. Two-thirds of these new ships are combatants, the rest are support vessels. My shipbuilding plan reflects two deliberate decisions to increase our strength and military flexibility: the construction of highly capable combatant ships (as exemplified by the construction of sixteen CG-47 class, AEGIS-equipped guided missile cruisers), and support for our Rapid Deployment Forces. through the procurement of 14 newly designed maritime prepositioning ships.

I am determined to keep our naval forces more powerful than those of any other nation on earth. Our shipbuilding program will sustain a 550-ship Navy in the 1990s; and we will continue to build the most capable ships afloat. Seapower is indispensable to our global strategy -- in peace and also in war.

Governor Reagan on Naval Strength

Reagan has criticized the Carter Administration for slashing Navy programs.

> "In 1969, Admiral Thomas Moorer, then Chief of Naval Operations, told Congress that a Navy of 850 ships should be attained by 1980. By the end of this fiscal year, only 5 or 6 weeks away, our conventional Navy will consist of only 415 active ships. Carter has slashed the Navy shipbuilding program in half, and has provided for -- at the very best -- a one-and-a-half ocean Navy for a three-ocean global requirement.
>
> Reagan Speech to American Legion
> August 20, 1980

Reagan calls for a reversal in this trend.

> "We must immediately reverse the deterioration of our naval strength, and provide all of the armed services with the equipment and spare parts they need."
>
> Reagan Speech to American Legion
> August 20, 1980

The Republican Platform calls for building more aircraft carriers, submarines and amphibious ships:

> "Republicans pledge to reverse Mr. Carter's dismantling of U.S. naval and Marine forces. We will restore our fleet to 600 ships at a rate equal to or exceeding that planned by President Ford. We will build more aircraft carriers, submarines, and amphibious ships. We will restore naval and Marine aircraft procurement to economical rates enabling rapid modernization of the current forces, and expansion to meet the requirements of additional aircraft carriers.
>
> 1980 Republican Platform

September 18, 1980

Arms Control: Role in US Security

Q: What is your concept of the role of arms control in protecting US security? Do we pursue arms control in and of itself, or as a means of advancing specific foreign policy or national security objectives? Do you have a strategy which guides your Administration and ties our defense planning and arms control negotiations together? Why do you think there is so much suspicion of arms control in the last few years? Does arms control have any place in the present international atmosphere?

Response

I remain deeply committed to the process of mutual and verifiable arms control, particularly to the effort to prevent the spread and further development of nuclear weapons.

Preventing nuclear war is the foremost responsibility of the two superpowers. That is why we have negotiated the strategic arms limitation talks, treaties -- SALT I AND SALT II. Especially now in a time of great tension, observing the mutual constraints imposed by the terms of these treaties will be in the best interest of both countries. My decision to defer, but not abandon our efforts to secure ratification of the SALT II Treaty reflects my firm conviction that the United States has a profound national security interest in the constraints on Soviet nuclear forces which only that treaty can provide.

Governor Reagan denounces the SALT II treaty. He would turn away from that treaty to a fruitless pursuit of an unachievable military superiority. Then, he says, he would

negotiate with the Soviets. There are two problems with Governor Reagan's strategy: One, the Soviets will no more let us build to nuclear superiority over them than we will them over us; two, the Soviets are not going to negotiate under the conditions Governor Reagan describes. So, the American people would be left with an all-out -- and unwinnable -- arms race and no chance for negotiating limits on Soviet forces, as we have done in the SALT II Treaty.

Careful, balanced and verifiable arms control agreements can complement our defense programs in maintaining the military balance of power and preserving international peace and stability. Let there be no mistake: I believe the SALT Treaty is in the security interests of the United States. When conditions permit, I will seek its ratification, and press on to SALT III.

My Administration will continue to pursue arms control agreements where these clearly can contribute to the security of the United States and its allies and friends. Unlike Governor Reagan, I do not regard balanced, verifiable arms limitations, such as the SALT II treaty, as "appeasement."

September 27, 1980

Arms Control: Administration Record

Q: Your Administration began with a great emphasis on arms control. You sought agreements on strategic weapons, on anti-satellite weapons, on military forces in the Indian Ocean, on restraining conventional arms transfers, on chemical weapons, on force reductions in Europe, and others. With the exception of the SALT Treaty, which has not been ratified, none of these other arms control negotiations have come to anything.

How do you assess your Administration's arms control record after four years? What reason is there to believe you will be any more successful in negotiating with the Soviets in a second term?

Response: Significant progress in arms control -- particularly in controlling and reducing strategic nuclear weapons -- has been one of the basic goals of my Administration from the outset.

Except for concluding the SALT II Treaty, not nearly as much has been accomplished as I had hoped. But, I am not going to turn away from my deep commitment to the pursuit of mutual arms control agreements which enhance the security of the United States and its allies, and which strengthen international stability and the hopes for peace.

The SALT Treaty

The most prominent arms control achievement of my Administration is, of course, SALT II. The SALT process, and the SALT II Treaty, which Governor Reagan would abandon in favor of an impossible pursuit of military superiority, is the product of three Republican and Democratic Administrations

all of which were convinced that limiting Soviet strategic arms strengthens U.S. security and reduces the risk of nuclear war.

Because SALT II limits competition between the United States and the Soviet Union in the most dangerous arena, this Treaty is the single most important bilateral agreement of the decade:

-- SALT II will permit us better to maintain strategic equivalence in nuclear weapons and devote our defense spending more on our highest priority needs for conventional force improvements;

-- Without it, the Soviets can add more power to their forces and better conceal from us what they are doing;

-- Without SALT II, and the beginning of SALT III, deeper cuts would take many more years to achieve; and

-- Without SALT II, our efforts to control the proliferation of nuclear weapons will be more difficult.

I believe that the Senate will ratify SALT II because the Treaty is, in its simplest terms, in the interest of our Nation's security.

The successful negotiation of the SALT Treaty, of course, represents only one step -- although an enormously important one -- toward a very long-term goal. The short-

term milestone is a reflection of the treaty itself and I know that milestone seems to be getting farther and farther away instead of closer. I am determined to press on for greater reductions and tighter controls over strategic weapons in SALT III.

Other Arms Control Accomplishments

More broadly in the area of arms control, my Administration has made every effort -- against continuing adverse trends -- to reduce the international traffic in armaments and in that way to turn the funds which are spent in the Third World for swords into outlays for greatly needed plough shares. My Administration has also initiated the multilateral negotiations on a comprehensive test ban and is pursuing negotiations on controlling chemical, biological, and radiological weapons. We have also established a negotiating forum for limiting Soviet anti-satellite capabilities.

Progress has been slow. But my determination to pursue the goal of arms control is undiluted.

September 26, 1980

Arms Control - SALT Treaty

Q: What are the prospects for the SALT Treaty? Is it dead, or do you intend to seek its ratification if you are reelected? If this Treaty cannot be ratified, will you withdraw it from the Senate and try to renegotiate it with the Soviets? Why is a SALT Treaty that does nothing to reduce the Soviet threat or the levels of nuclear weapons worth so much effort? Might it be better to forget the treaty and start fresh negotiations for a real arms reduction treaty, as your Republican challenger says he wants?

Response

The SALT II Treaty is a major accomplishment of my Administration. It is not a favor we are doing the Soviet Union. It contributes directly and significantly to the security of the United Stated and our Allies. It is a fundamental element of political and strategic stability in a turbulent and dangerous world.

While the SALT Treaty is pending ratification, my Administration will observe its basic terms so long as the Soviet Union complies with those terms as well -- as monitored by us. I am determined to seek ratification of the Treaty at the earliest opportune time. I asked the Senate to delay voting on the Treaty not to kill it, but because I recognized that it lacked sufficient political support to win.

Governor Reagan and the Republican Party would abandon SALT and the arms control process built up by every President since Eisenhower. Instead, he would put

off negotiations with the Soviet Union until the US had achieved military superiority -- which in the real world means never.

I remain committed to the mutual, negotiated reduction and control of nuclear weapons. SALT II is such an agreement. The benefits of this Treaty to the security interests of the US are clear:

- Under the Treaty, the United States will not have to reduce any strategic systems, while the Soviets will have to reduce 250.
- Under the Treaty, the United States will be able to carry out all our planned strategic modernization programs, including the Trident I missile, the air-launched cruise missile, and the M-X land-based missile. The Soviets will be limited to deploying only one new land-based missile, instead of the four that they have been developing.
- The Soviets will be limited to a maximum of ten warheads on their large land-based missiles, while the US will be able to place ten on the M-X when it replaces the current Minuteman missile which carries only three.

These are the benefits of the SALT Treaty. I want the American people to understand clearly what the consequences of a world without the SALT Treaty, a world which Governor Reagan apparently wants, would be like:

- Without SALT, the Soviets could deploy over 3,000 bombers and missiles, instead of the 2,400 they are allowed under the Treaty.
- Without SALT, the Soviets could deploy as many warheads on their large missiles as they are capable of carrying, fifteen or twenty or even more on each missile instead of ten.
- Without SALT, the Soviets could target an additional three to six thousand more warheads on American cities and military targets than they would under the Treaty.
- Without the predictability of SALT, defense planning by our military leaders would be much more difficult. The M-X programs, a central element in our planned strategic modernization, would be harder to design and to build, and more costly, because we could not know what the size of Soviet forces would be and would have to predict the worst.
- Without SALT, our ability to monitor Soviet forces -- and thus to evaluate Soviet capabilities -- would be reduced, because the Soviets would be freed from the SALT constraints on deliberate concealment of strategic forces.
- Without SALT, the likely increase in Soviet strategic capabilities would require us to spend event more on defense, perhaps on the order of

an additional $30 billion over a 10 year period. This would compound our already difficult budget choices. We would of course spend what is necessary for our security, but with SALT, it would be less.

We did not negotiate this Treaty to make friends with the Soviet Union. We negotiated it because we are adversaries, and it is in our security interest to have reliable, effective and verifiable limits on Soviet forces. In a period of heightened tension, it is all the more necessary to have reliable constraints on the competition in strategic weapons.

After the SALT Treaty is ratified, I am determined to proceed in SALT III to more comprehensive and deep reductions in the numbers of nuclear weapons and to more stringent qualitative controls on weapons development. SALT III must also bring in new categories of nuclear weapons, such as long-range theater nuclear systems in Europe.

SALT I marked the first step towards slowing the arms race. SALT II will bring actual reductions and qualitative limits on Soviet forces. SALT III must go on to produce even more drastic reductions and tigher controls over weapons development.

Governor Reagan on SALT

Reagan opposed the SALT II Treaty as it was negotiated by both the Ford and Carter administrations. His objections, even before the details of the Treaty were known, were on the grounds it would allow the Soviets to achieve nuclear parity.

> "We should be far more aware of our bargaining strength than we seem to be. The Soviet Union seems most anxious to enter a SALT II agreement. They have reason to be worried about a defense weapons system in which we hold a huge technological lead, a bright spot for us called the cruise missile...The best way to have an equitable SALT II agreement is to negotiate from a firmly established position. We should not be so eager for an agreement that we make unnecessary concessions, for to grant such concessions is to whet the Soviet appetite for more."
>
> New York Times
> February 11, 1976

Reagan then changed his objections. He no longer objected to Soviet parity but rather he claimed the Soviets would become superior to the United States.

> "President Carter and his supporters in the Congress...are negotiating a SALT II treaty that could very well make this nation NUMBER TWO behind the Soviet Union in defense and offense capability."
>
> Ronald Reagan Letter
> February, 1979

Reagan did not change this latter objection and used it as a standard campaign line.

> "SALT II is not strategic arms limitation. It is strategic arms buildup, with the Soviets adding a minimum of 3,000 nuclear warheads to their inventory..."
>
> New York Times
> September 16, 1979

In late 1979, Reagan began to add his own SALT proposals to his criticism of SALT II. Where at first he had objected to the Soviets achieving nuclear parity, in 1979 he began to advocate a new policy.

> "...(an) arms limitation agreement that legitimately reduces nuclear armaments to the point that neither country represents a threat to the other."
>
> San Jose Mercury
> September 16, 1979

Governor Reagan on SALT

By early 1980, Reagan was joining his standard criticism of SALT II with his proposal of first achieving military superiority, and then negotiating a nuclear arms reduction treaty.

> "We also should have learned the lesson that we cannot negotiate arms control agreements that will slow down the Soviets move ahead of us in every category of armaments. Once we clearly demonstrate to the Soviet leadership that we are determined to compete, arms control negotiations will again have a chance. On such a basis, I would be prepared to negotiate vigorously for verifiable reductions in armaments, since only on such a basis could reductions be equitable."
>
> Chicago Council on Foreign Relations
> March 17, 1980

Reagan also believes that the United States should not abide by the provisions of SALT II prior to its ratification:

> "I believe the SALT II Treaty should be withdrawn, and I especially believe that the U.S. should not abide by its terms prior to ratification. To abide by the terms of the proposed agreement would violate Article XXXIII of the Arms Control and Disarmament Act of 1961.
>
> "SALT II is not Strategic Arms Limitation; it is Strategic Arms Build-up, with the Soviet Union authorized to add a minimum of 3,000 nuclear warheads to their arsenal, and the U.S. embarking on a $35 billion catch-up program which will not be complete until 1990, if then, and there will be ten very dangerous years in between."
>
> Response to question posed by
> Arms Control Today, May 1980

Finally, in August, he stated:

> I cannot, however, agree to any treaty, including the SALT II treaty, which, in effect, legitimizes the continuation of a one-sided nuclear arms buildup.
>
> Veterans of Foreign Wars
> August 18, 1980