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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING
BY
ADMIRAL JOHN M. POINDEXTER,
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

The Briefing Room

4:05 P.M. EDT

MR. HOWARD: Good afternoon. This briefing is ON THE RECORD, but not for camera, and our briefer is Admiral John Poindexter.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Because these issues are so complex, we made a decision yesterday evening that we would go ON THE RECORD with a great deal of detail about the discussions and talks in Iceland. So what I'd first like to do is to go through each of the major areas, specifically in the arms control, because I think the arms control areas are the most complex, and indicate to you what -- how the discussions went and what we achieved, and then after I finish all that, I'll take your questions. And then I may read something to you at the end, which is kind of a closing statement.

Q Why don't you read that first?

Q Yes, could we get to -- is there anything --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: The bottom line first.

Q Yes.

Q -- that deals with the speech tonight?

Q Because we do have that pool report.

Q We're up against a deadline --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: All right.

Q -- that's going to force us to --

Q Is it true -- did you really kneel at the feet of the press on the plane yesterday? (Laughter.)

Q He asked our apologies.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Not very long. It was too uncomfortable.

This very short statement here kind of summarizes what I think was the bottom line. We offered the Soviet side an agreement concerning strategic defenses that held the promise of a far safer and more stable world -- a world unburdened by offensive ballistic missiles in which defense would serve to ensure us both against third countries that might acquire these missiles and would ensure the free world against Soviet cheating.

In response to Soviet concerns, we offered to defer the

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deployment of strategic defenses for 10 years, until after all ballistic missiles have been eliminated. And we agreed that during the 10 years in which the disarmament process went forward we would abide by the terms of the ABM Treaty.

But Mr. Gorbachev demanded more than that. He demanded that we agree to limit research on strategic defense immediately in a manner that went far beyond the restrictions of the ABM Treaty. This demand could have no other purpose than to force the United States to abandon any hope of successfully developing the defenses that we would acquire to ensure that the disarmament process did not leave us hopelessly vulnerable to Soviet cheating as the last of our ballistic missiles were dismantled. And it would have required that we now abandon meaningful research on strategic defense without any assurance that the other elements of our proposed agreements would in fact be implemented fully and properly.

Again and again, the President asked Mr. Gorbachev what possible objections he could have to the deployment of defenses after ten years. And after having eliminated all offensive ballistic missiles. Again and again, the President pressed him to explain how defensive systems, wholly lacking in offensive capability could threaten the Soviet Union. The President never received a satisfactory answer, or even a plausible response.

To go through each of the areas -- well, let me give you a little bit of color, I guess, first. (Laughter.) We went to Iceland --

Q Empty-handed.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Not empty-handed, by any stretch of the imagination. (Laughter.)

Q It's better than empty-headed.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That's the Soviet line, though.

Q You've got that down, Helen. (Laughter.)

Q Come on --

Q Let's go.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: We went to Iceland very well-prepared. Granted, we took all of you by surprise by agreeing to go so rapidly, but don't forget that we have been working toward a summit in the United States sometime near the end of this calendar year. We have been working for months on all of our arms control proposals, we had had expert-level meetings with the Soviets, both in Moscow and in the United States, as well as Geneva. So we very well knew what their positions were, and what our maneuvering room was. We had had expert- and political-level meetings in the other areas of our agenda on regional issues, human rights and bilateral issues.

But because we weren't sure whether the Soviets were ready to move on these various issues, we thought the best that we could probably hope to get out of Iceland was a focusing of the agenda for a Washington summit. But we were surprised, pleasantly surprised, that the Soviets were ready to talk in detail about some of the obstacles to progress, especially in Geneva.

So, out of the heads of state meetings and the working-level meetings that we held all throughout Saturday night and early Sunday morning, we were able to reach some significant solutions to many of the obstacles to progress. In the START area, we agreed with the Soviet Union that both sides, in a START agreement at some point in the future, would come down to 1,600 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles on each side, that we would come down to 6,000 nuclear warheads on each side. We cleared up some of the problems that we'd been having with the Soviets on the counting rules, on how you count those 6,000 warheads.

We wanted to, and did engage them in discussions of some sublimits that we think should exist in a START agreement, but they were unwilling, at least at Iceland, to agree on any of these sublimits, so those sublimits remain a matter for negotiation in Geneva. They did say, though, that they were prepared to make significant cuts in the heavy ICBMs, which is a very high priority for us. And we were unable to pin them down, though, on exactly what "significant" means. But I think we're moving in the right direction.

Q What was the 50 percent, then?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Okay. The 50 percent, essentially is the 6,000 nuclear warheads -- is about 50 percent of where we are today.

Q But in the sublimits there were no percentages?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: We had some percentages. I don't want to get into those right now, because we don't have agreement on them. But they were unwilling to agree to some of the specific sublimits. They were unwilling in Iceland to agree to a structure of sublimits. They said why not disagree on the 6,000 and then both sides can have whatever mix they want to make up the 6,000. We're not prepared to do that, because we want to make sure that we get proportional cuts in the more urgent, prompt delivery systems, such as the ICBM's.

Q Was this over a five-year period?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: In the discussions in -- on START up to this point, there wasn't any discussion of time periods. I'll get to that in a minute. That came later.

Q Was this the first time they've ever made the suggestion that they were willing to make significant cuts in the big ICBM's?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I don't have --

Q -- heard that before?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I don't have my arms control expert here and I'm not sure enough to answer your question. I believe it is the first time, but I can't swear to that.

Q Well, presumably they're referring to the 308 SS-18s.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes, exactly.

Q And do you have any notion what they mean by significant cuts at all?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: No.

Q What would be significant from our perspective?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I don't want to get into that -- it gets into our negotiating position that's not agreed upon yet. But they say significant; we'll have to wait and see what that means.

All right. So, all of those things that I went over were agreed upon in the discussions on START.

Q When? This was on Saturday?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, it was Saturday and Saturday night, Sunday morning -- the late night meeting.

Q When you -- Admiral, when you say these are agreed upon --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, yes --

Q -- do you feel that they remain agreed upon, despite the failure to reach an overall agreement?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, we are going to, as they say in the negotiating business, pocket these various pieces that they've said they would agree to. I think clearly whether they will admit now that they have agreed to these things or not remains to be seen,

but in the meetings they did agree to them and we will try to hold them to that agreement at some point in the future.

Q Didn't Gorbachev say that all of these proposals remain on the table?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Gorbachev -- that's what I was going to add, Sam. In the press conference, at least the summary of it that I read that he conducted in Reykjavik last night -- my read of that is that he's leaving these things that they're prepared to agree to on the table. So we will hold him to that.

Q As linked or --

Q -- a link?

Q -- as a link package or as a package in its individual --

MR. SPEAKES: Let me make a suggestion. Would it be better to have John walk everybody right through the whole thing, hold your questions until he finishes and then pick them up.

Q Yes.

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Because he's going to answer a lot of them as he goes through and he'll go through the negotiating back and forth in the evening and Sunday.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: All right. On INF, it was raised on Saturday afternoon. Our position was that the Soviet SS-20s in Asia must be addressed and they must be reduced by some amount, roughly in proportion to the reductions in Europe. The Soviet position was zero-zero in Europe for both sides, and they wanted a freeze on the systems in Asia with the U.S. having the right to deploy an equal number in the United States as they had in Asia. That was unacceptable to us because we have not wanted to shift the locust of the problem from Europe to Asia and burden our Asian allies with a problem -- a bigger problem than they now face.

Also because of the mobility of the SS-20s, they could be moved back and forth across the Ural Mountains, and because in the Western parts of Asia the SS-20 can still reach parts of Europe, we felt that we had to simply get them to agree to some sort of reduction in Asia.

So the President held out there for cuts in Asia and finally on -- and the negotiating -- the working group that night held firm with that position for the Soviets. And finally on Sunday morning, Gorbachev agreed to make some cuts in Asia. What he agreed on was 100-100 warheads globally. With the 100 for the Soviets in Asia and the 100 for the U.S. in the United States.

We agreed to that. That would make a 100 percent reduction in Europe and an 80 percent reduction in Asia. Or, stated another way, that would bring the Soviets from today 1,323 warheads down to 100.

On INF, earlier in the discussions, they had agreed on freezing their short-range INF and beginning negotiations on short-range INF after the long-range INF agreement was signed. There was discussion on verification. We have three major points that we want to get accepted on verification -- an exchange of data both before and after the reductions take place; second, we want on-site observation of the destruction of the weapons; and third, we want an effective monitoring arrangement to put in place after the weapons are destroyed with the provision for on-site inspections during this monitoring.

The Soviets although did not want to -- as usual, they did not want to get into detail in talking about verification, indicated that in principle they didn't have any problem with those provisions. But I'm not naive enough to think that we don't have a lot of hard work ahead negotiating out these verification provisions. But we're very pleased with this agreement on INF. We think that this substantial reduction in Asia accounts for what we were looking for and certainly the zero-zero in Europe is desirable from our point of view.

On nuclear testing, I think you're all familiar with the statement that the President made, or Larry made for the President, the night we arrived in Iceland, which was a slight change to our game plan on nuclear testing. Are you familiar with that, or do you want me to go through that?

Q We're familiar with that.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Okay. The -- in the discussions with the Soviets, they essentially agreed with that sort of game plan -- that we would begin negotiations in which the first item would be improved verification procedures, and we would not move beyond that first agenda item until it was agreed upon, and then we would move on to negotiating further limitations on nuclear testing, with the ultimate goal being a comprehensive test ban, as we reached the point that we no longer have to rely on strategic nuclear weapons for deterrence.

Now, there was disagreement, though, with the Soviets on how we characterize such negotiations. They want to characterize the negotiations as negotiating a comprehensive test ban and we want to characterize it as negotiations on further limitations on nuclear testing. And there is, of course -- the reason for the difference in the way it's described, there's a -- each side has a slight different objective out of a set of negotiations like this.

They want us to agree to a comprehensive test ban very soon. We have indicated that we will agree to a comprehensive test ban in the future, but it's in conjunction with a program that brings the offensive forces down so at the time you reach zero strategic nuclear weapons, at that point we would be willing to agree to a test ban.

But I think, as time goes on, we will be able to work this out with the Soviets and begin a set of negotiations in the nuclear testing area that will result in improved verification procedures. And then we can get the two treaties fully ratified and move on to discussing further limitations.

So all of these things that I've said were agreed upon at this point are held hostage by General Secretary Gorbachev to our agreeing to what they want on the ABM Treaty. Their opening position in the meetings in Iceland was that the United States should agree not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for ten years and that we also agree to modifying the ABM Treaty to make it more restrictive than it presently is, even under our restricted definition of the ABM Treaty.

Q That was their opening position on Saturday morning?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That's correct. In effect, they have -- that's not a new position for them. They have maintained that for a long period of time in Geneva, that they want us to agree to tightening up, making more restrictive -- they refer to it as strengthening the ABM Treaty.

Q The ten years was new.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: The ten years was new in Iceland. Because up to this point, they had been talking about up to 15. Recall when they first started talking about this -- and I've lost track of time, but Gorbachev talked about 15 to 20 years. And then in -- I guess that was their June proposal in Geneva, 15 to 20 years.

And then, in Gorbachev's letter to the President, in response to the President's letter to him of July the 25th, Gorbachev said up to 15 years, and in Iceland, they came to 10 years.

Q Yes, sir. You mentioned -- you indicated that you believe that these agreements remain viable, yet Mr. Gorbachev holds him hostage to --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, let -- yes?

Q I'm wondering whether they are viable in their separate parts, in your view, or whether it still is all interlinked?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, they're still linked. But let me go on, because I haven't quite finished the basic facts here. The Sunday morning session was devoted almost exclusively -- well, they got the INF issue out of the way rather rapidly, and the rest of the session was devoted essentially to ABM and SDI.

After the break that came, I guess at 1:30 p.m. or so on Sunday when they stopped the morning session, Secretary Shultz and I and some others met with Shevardnadze and some of his people at 2:00 p.m., in which we sat down and tried to see if we could find some way of getting around this problem with the Soviets wanting us to adhere to the ABM Treaty for 10 years, and make this more restrictive change to the ABM Treaty.

After the session that the Secretary and I had with Shevardnadze, we met with the President when he came back to Hofdi House, and we worked out a compromise position, a new proposal for us, that the President then tabled when he met with Gorbachev at 3:00 p.m. It was about 3:30 p.m., I guess. And the proposal goes like this: that the United States is prepared not to withdraw, or is willing not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for five years, during which time both sides would achieve the 50 percent cuts that they had agreed upon in START, and the United States would continue the research, development and testing which is permitted by the ABM Treaty, and at the end of the five-year period, if the reductions take place,

and if the Soviets are willing to continue to reduce offensive ballistic missiles for the next five years so that by 1996, in this case, both sides would have eliminated all offensive ballistic missiles. Under those conditions the United States would be prepared not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for the second five-year period, so for a total of 10 years.

At the end of that 10-year period, both sides would be free to deploy a strategic defensive system if they so chose unless both sides agreed otherwise.

Now we felt that that was an imminently fair position, it was a change to what we have proposed in the past, but we thought that if Gorbachev was really interested in eliminating offensive ballistic missiles, this would clearly indicate to him that we were not interested in developing any sort of first-strike capability and we couldn't see that there was any way that deploying a strategic defensive system after the offensive ballistic missiles were eliminated could in any way threaten the Soviet Union.

After tabling this proposal, Gorbachev almost immediately said that they didn't agree, and they came forward with a revision to ours, which would have had us agree that all research, development and testing of space-based strategic defense systems would be banned except that that was done in the laboratory.

Q Was that tied to reductions? Was that their version of the ABM side of the equation?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That is correct. That was also -- that was tied to reductions.

Q May I just -- is this the -- when they came forward with this counterproposal, was it one that you suggested earlier, you were really familiar with from the Saturday discussion?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes, they had never -- they hadn't put it quite that precisely, and linked in that way. They had talked about wanting to make more restrictive the provisions on research, development and testing in the ABM Treaty,

and they had talked in terms of strengthening it.

Q So, they had on Saturday morning said they wanted to make more restrictive the treaty. And here came the exact language of the proposal.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That's right. The way that they would make it more restrictive.

Q Thank you.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: At that point, or shortly after that, both sides caucused and we went over their rewrite of our proposal and moved their rewrite back in our direction by insisting on the ability to conduct research, development and testing, which is permitted by the ABM Treaty during the whole 10-year period. Their counter to our first one did not make explicit that at the end of the 10-year period, both sides would be free to deploy a strategic defensive system. They, obviously, would want to interpret that as being uncertain at that point and still open to negotiations at the end of the 10-year period, which we were unwilling to accept.

So we added the research, development and testing that's permitted by the ABM Treaty back into their proposal and we added the ability at the end of the 10-year period to deploy strategic defense -- we added that back in. After the caucus, the President -- in the caucus, the President decided that would be our last and final offer and he took that back in and Gorbachev would not agree. He insisted upon the research being restricted to the laboratory.

Now --

Q How long did that take, Admiral? Did that -- after the President goes back in with his final offer and the General Secretary turns him down, how long is this discussion at this point?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, let's see, I lost track. It was --

Q 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: -- 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. It would be about -- I guess --

Q 5:35 p.m.?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, you probably have it better than I. I don't remember -- yes, I don't remember the times, because I wasn't looking at my watch.

MR. SPEAKES: It's just the end time of the second meeting. It started at 4:33 p.m.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: It was the time from the -- when they went back in after the caucus until we -- they finally broke up about 7:30 p.m.

Q Do you have any color on that in terms of what was said and how it finally was broken off?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: The President said that after they had discussed it for a good long period of time, he realized they weren't going to get anyplace and so the President pulled his papers together and got up. And Gorbachev got up and they both walked out.

Q Can you explain how seriously would the Soviet restrictions on testing hurt us?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, it would be, we think, essentially killing the SDI program.

Let me just see if I've got any other points I want to

make and then I want to assess what I think all this means and then I'll take your questions.

Q Well did the President say anything when he pulled the papers together?

Q Was there an exchange on that?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I'm sure there was but I don't have it verbatim and so I don't want to --

Q Do you have the gist of it -- I mean --

Q Can you take that question?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Beg your pardon?

Q Could you take that question? It's a fairly important historical point, what was said in the meeting, and I wondered if you would take the question and get us an official --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: They want us to take the question on exactly what the President said when he got up.

MR. SPEAKES: We take a lot of questions.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: All right. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: We'll ask him when he comes over tonight and see if he --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Okay. We'll take the question.

Q Do you have the tone of it?

MR. SPEAKES: We'll take a family newspaper first.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, I think that the President was somber. We recognize -- the President certainly recognized that what he was proposing was an historic proposal. It would have resulted in 10 years in both sides eliminating all ballistic missiles. The world would be a lot safer. But our problem is and we're not questioning the sincerity or the trustworthiness of the present Soviet leaders, but the history --

Q Why do you want insurance, then?

Q Let him finish.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Let me finish here. The history of the relationship is such that in the past they have not complied with treaties. And when the national security of the country depends on the Soviets complying with a treaty such as this, and the national security of much of the free world, then it absolutely essential and the only prudent thing to do is to have some sort of insurance policy against failure to make the reductions or failure to comply with the total ban on into the future.

The other problem is the problem of nuclear weapons possessed by third countries -- if at some point in the future non-proliferation breaks down, nuclear weapons spread -- I mean, there are third countries today that have nuclear weapons that we would prefer not have them -- and it is only prudent and reasonable that not only the United States but the Soviet Union, in reality, would want some sort of defensive system to guard against non-compliance or the weapons of a third country.

Now I think -- those are all of the main points I wanted to make so I'll open it up to questions now.

Q I'm -- what I don't understand is why you expected that the Soviets would buy off on this in view of their -- the position that you say has been their traditional position they've maintained about SDI. Why was there a surprise that they wanted to restrict it to the laboratory and stick so strongly to this view?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, you know, one has to try to assess, you know, why are the Soviets opposed to SDI? Now, presumably, one of their concerns would be that they don't trust us, maybe, and they would think that what we were doing is working on a system that, once we achieved it, would give us a first-strike capability. So, you know, if we're willing before deployment to eliminate all offensive ballistic missiles, then the problem of first-strike doesn't exist. So if that was their problem, this would have solved it.

Q Admiral, I'm going to make sure I understand you now. You're saying the President broke off the final hour of the talks, and at that point, can you give us any sense of what Gorbachev said, when the President took his papers --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I just -- you know, we have been so busy today --

Q I understand that --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER -- and we have not gone back, and I have not read the translators' record, so I don't know exactly what was said.

Q But what did Gorbachev do when the President took his papers?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That Gorbachev folded up his folder and he got up, and they both got up, and they both walked out of the room.

Q Admiral, is it correct that at no point during these discussions the U.S. side tried to, say, sweeten the pot by delving into the difference between the narrow interpretation of ABM and the broad interpretation? You never told the Soviets, well, instead of this -- confined only to the laboratory, let's talk about definitions of what's in the treaty right now. That never took place?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: No, that did not, and you would not expect that to take place in such a short session. That's a very complex subject.

Q John, can you give us a little help on what's going to happen in the speech tonight -- what the President's trying to achieve, and --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: What he's trying to achieve is a clearer understanding by the American people what he proposed to the General Secretary, what that would have meant in terms of a safer world, why the strategic defense system is essential for our future, and why he was -- is unwilling and strongly supported by all of his advisers -- unwilling to give up the possibility of having a strategic defensive system in the next 10 years.

See, the problem here is -- I mean you can argue that, well, why not just restrict yourself to the laboratory for the ten years, then if you want to deploy a system, you go ahead and do it. But the problem -- there are several problems with that. One is that we feel that, frankly, SDI has been what has brought the Soviets back to the negotiating table. We think that SDI will be the guarantor of their following up on the reductions they agreed to, and that, in the end, it will be the insurance policy against non-compliance.

Now, if you don't have a healthy SDI program, at the ten-year point, it's not a threat because you're still going to have maybe another ten years before you would ever be able to deploy such a system.

Q Admiral?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Barry.

Q Yes. You just said that, frankly, that SDI is what brought the Soviets back to the negotiating table. That suggests that you understand clearly that they see it as a bargaining chip, do you not?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, bargaining chip is not the right way to describe it. I think it's the lever that makes the bargaining possible. And what I'm adding today, as I think we've said before but maybe not put so much emphasis on it, we've always felt that it was the thing that would guarantee compliance.

Q But is it not clear from this weekend session that, in fact, without the Soviets seeing it as a bargaining chip which drew them back, that that's where its value lies almost exclusively?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: No, I disagree because I don't think that we're through with this process. The Soviets in the past have broken off negotiations on various subjects and they come back. And I think that it's going to take a little time. Both sides need to reflect on what happened and we're going to continue to push ahead for progress in all the areas. And as I said in the beginning, even though he has linked all these other agreements to our agreeing to their position on the ABM Treaty, he himself has said that those agreements are still out there.

Way in the back.

Q Sir, why have you all allowed this impression to go out over the world since the conference was over that we lost, that we failed, that we're the cause of everything that failed, and from what you say in your speech here today, it sounds like there's a lot of good things here?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, we think --

Q -- we've lost this initiative on public relations or propaganda by not saying something -- this utterance sooner.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: We can't control what the press prints or what the media shows on their television. (Laughter.) Wait, wait.

Q On that point, Admiral --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, I just want to finish answering her question. We have tried very hard to get our story out. Secretary Shultz had a press conference last night in Iceland. The President spoke at Keflavik.

I had staff members on the press plane flying back last night. I spent an hour and a half on the record on Air Force One trying to set the record straight. And that is why the President is going on the air tonight.

Now --

Q Well, that speech tonight, Admiral, if we could focus on that.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Just a second.

Q Do you feel that the Soviets reneged on their promise, not as a link with SDI, but with INF?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: They certainly backed -- went back on a position that we thought they had agreed on before.

Now, Terry?

Q On that point, will the speech tonight try to deal with the disappointment that has been expressed by some allies, and some of the public response, including the Congressional and others?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well --

Q Will the President try to deal with that?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes, I think so, in laying out the facts of what was proposed, why he took the position that he did, and why we feel that the Soviet position is so -- not understood by us as to why they won't agree to what is -- what we feel is a very reasonable, fair, non-threatening plan. And I'm convinced that we have a very strong understandable position, and the American people and the Congress, once they understand all the facts, will be very supportive. I'm very optimistic.

Q Admiral, I wonder if you could tell us if, at the end of this 10-year plan, the agreement had been implemented, what would have been left in the way of strategic bombers, cruise missiles, and other non-ballistic weapons -- tactical nuclear weapons?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes, our proposal would have left the -- well, they would have been reduced under the START agreement, but we weren't proposing to make reductions in the non-ballistic missile strategic weapons in the second five-year period. We were proposing just offensive ballistic missiles.

Q So what would have been left in the arsenals of both countries?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: It would have been cruise missiles and air-breathing aircraft.

Q Admiral, the way you describe this today, the Soviets made a series of concessions on Saturday and Sunday -- START, some things on testing, INF on Sunday morning -- then finally came in at the end with the threshold that the President couldn't meet. Has anybody in the administration, reflecting on the whole range of events, come to the conclusion or even thought that maybe this was a trap that Gorbachev was setting for Reagan?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, I don't think it was a trap. I think, you know, we have known all along that they were linking progress in START to agreement on the ABM Treaty, and

their way of thinking about strategic defense. So we were not surprised by that, but frankly, we saw a possibility of making an historic move forward here and that's why the President was willing to move to stay in compliance with the ABM Treaty for a 10-year period, which is twice as long as we've ever talked about before with the possibility of getting this major reduction in our strategic forces.

Q Well, if you knew all along that it was linked to that, although clearly from your description you didn't know at the outset how -- the specific language they were going to propose, why did you leave that to the end? Didn't anybody calculate that that was the toughest thing to do and they may come in at the end with a proposal you couldn't --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, no -- we -- I don't want to mislead you. I mean, it was very clear from the beginning -- before we got up there, as I said -- the connection with START. When we got to Iceland, it became clear -- the discussions -- and, as the discussions went on it became clearer -- and I think their position may have hardened a little bit, too, that they were linking the progress in START -- not only START, but INF and nuclear testing to our agreeing to their provisions on the ABM Treaty.

Q Admiral, you made a major point here -- and others have, too -- that the SDI got them at the negotiating table. What's the point of being at the negotiating table if SDI prevents you from reaching any agreement?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, SDI is not just simply a mechanism to get them to the negotiating table. We view SDI as the mechanism to eliminate ballistic missiles. That's been the vision all along that SDI would eventually make ballistic missiles obsolete, because they would be vulnerable to such a system. And so it doesn't make any sense just to use it for the factor of getting them to the negotiating table if you don't follow through. Because that's what drives the whole process we feel.

Way in the back.

Q Was there any discussion of technology sharing at the meeting?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes. The President reiterated his proposal to share technology with the Soviet Union and indicated that he was willing to sign a treaty now that would be triggered at some point in the future when we decided to go into full scale engineering and development of such a system. And at that point, as he told the General Secretary in the July 25th letter, we'd be prepared to sit down and offer them a plan to share the benefits of SDI.

Q At what point in the meeting was that suggestion made?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That was made on Saturday afternoon.

Q What was their response to it?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: This was simply -- but I must make clear, I mean, this was a reiteration of what he told the General Secretary July 25th. Their response is they don't believe that we would actually share it with them.

Q Sell it or give it to them -- the technology?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I'm sorry.

Q Sell it or give it?

Q Will we sell it or --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: We have said share. We have not specifically gotten in to the details of how we would share, because at this point it is too difficult, not knowing exactly how the systems are actually going to be designed and built, to figure out what sharing arrangements might be possible. And you can also -- you can envision sharing that doesn't necessarily involve both sides having the equipment, their command and control systems that could be shared and all sorts of other things.

Q Admiral, what evidence is there now to refute the notion that both were at a serious impasse -- that each side was in an intractable position and relations and negotiations have essentially gone down the drain.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, it's our observation that the Soviets have taken very tough positions that look insurmountable in the past. Just for example, on INF -- they have consistently said they wouldn't make any reductions in Asia. Well, they're prepared to do that. And I think that we need to continue discussions with them and explore -- if they're doing this in good faith and we don't have any real reason to doubt otherwise, then we may be able to explain to them and overcome their concerns by adjusting our position a little bit.

Q But it seems at this point that SDI for each side is somewhat of a sine qua non. How do you get over this hurdle that you mentioned earlier that the Soviets perhaps mistrust us and think that we're going to use this for offensive purposes? How do you get over that?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, now, at one point we did think that the Soviets -- one of their concerns of SDI was their fear that we would somehow develop an offensive system that could strike targets on earth. And we spend a lot of time looking at that -- the physics of the matter don't make that a realistic threat and we have talked informally with their scientists, they understand that. That, frankly, is a propaganda point with them and they aren't really worried about that.

Q They just came out with a study last week that reiterates that.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, they simply -- the problem is that from a, let's say, a space-based laser -- you can't get

enough energy down through the atmosphere to the Earth to cause massive destruction. I think -- you know, even with the largest type of laser that we've thought about, it would take something like a week to burn a city block. And that's not a credible threat. And if you want to destroy targets on Earth, the systems we've got today do that a hell of a lot better -- and cheaper.

Q Can you achieve a deployable SDI system in 10 years without going outside the existing ABM Treaty? I thought the existing treaty restricts certain things you need to do to make a full-scale SDI --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes, that is correct. Well, when you run it under the treaty, you run into problems when you begin to integrate the components into a system. And limiting the research, development and testing to the laboratory, we will need to calculate exactly how much time that would add to the development process. But it would be substantial, and we don't think that it is the same credible incentive to continue with the reductions. We'd also have problems on the Hill in terms of Congress continuing to support the program.

Jerry?

Q But excuse me. Can I follow-up? You said that after 10 years, you would then deploy. So if you stayed with an ABM for 10 years, what you're saying is, you would not be able to deploy, then, under the existing treaty. Is that right? That was the President's second proposal, another five years under ABM.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes. The President's second proposal would add some more time on the end. It would probably be maybe as much as a couple of years.

Q Twelve years --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Maybe 12 years.

Jerry?

Q Sir, when the President and all of the senior advisers left Washington to go to Iceland, what was the element of surprise when the Soviets made so many, in spite of concessions, laid down -- characterized the "99 yard line." Can you describe that to me? Did you expect that?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, as I said earlier, Jerry, we weren't sure exactly what issues they were prepared to move on. They didn't move on any issues that hadn't been discussed. I would say in Geneva, they have talked about strategic nuclear delivery vehicles around 1,600 in that category, we've talked about numbers around 6,000, plus or minus a couple of thousand. Counting rules was an achievement, and that gets rather complex, but it involves how you count the bombers with the bombs and the short-range attack missiles.

The movement on Asia was hoped for, and we were pleased that they moved. I don't know whether I would characterize it as unexpected. It's just that I think the point here is that when we went to Iceland, we thought that the only thing that we might get out of it was just a decision by the two heads of state that we would push on INF, for instance, and nuclear testing, so that by the time of the Washington meeting, they would be prepared to sign agreements.

What we didn't expect them to do in Iceland, very frankly, was to agree to make these moves in START, that although the moves are not surprising; it's just that we didn't think they were ready to do that, because in Gorbachev's last letter to the President, I don't even think he mentioned START.

Q So when you went to Iceland, in effect, you had the summit there you expected to have in Washington?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: No, I don't think so. I wouldn't call that a summit because there wasn't enough time and there was no joint statement issued at the end. Even if we had reached all these agreements, we probably would have been much more closed-mouth at this point and had a very short thing, that they met, worked on the agenda and --

Q May I follow that up, sir? Given that you had rather minimal expectations when you left, and came back without those -- mainly INF, impulse or a summit date -- is the President sorry he went to Reykjavik?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Not at all. Not at all. We think that we've made -- we know what solutions are possible in these areas where there's been conflict in the past and if we can figure out a way to bring the Soviets to our way of thinking about defense, I think that there's great promise.

Q Admiral, you said last night that now we know each other's barriers a little more clearly. You've also said that each side would go back and reassess, but that the President also wants to pursue these issues in other fora in Geneva. How long a time period will this reassessment take? When will you be able --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, our negotiators -- yes -- our negotiators are heading back to Geneva -- if not today, they'll probably leave tomorrow. I mean we're --

Q But will they take this matter up immediately or will they first take a reassessment time and go over what was and was not --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Karpov, their chief negotiator and the one that handles the defense and space talks, was in Iceland. Max Kampelman who handles it for us was there. And they were both -- they're both fully involved in all the discussions in Iceland. So they will pick up the agenda and keep working on it, keep trying to hammer away. And we'll try to get them to agree in Geneva to these INF provisions and to the START provisions.

Q Why would they agree there if they didn't agree in Iceland?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: You know, it's like a drop of water on a rock. You know, just keep trying, just keep trying.

Q Do you think Gorbachev will change his mind and transfer to Karpov new instructions on this issue? Or you hope he will?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Not right away.

Q Admiral, how do you read what you describe as the failure of the General Secretary to give the President the satisfactory or even plausible explanation for his concerns about SDI?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, that's a hard question that I don't want to speculate on the record. I've got some ideas as to what --

Q You said it's not a matter of questioning his sincerity. What does that leave?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well --

Q Could he have been testing our commitment?

Q You said they don't trust us.

MR. SPEAKES: Tell them you need it on background --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me -- let's go on BACKGROUND and I'll answer that question. I think there are two possibilities. One is that Gorbachev has gotten himself out on a political limb so far on being opposed to SDI that he can't figure out a way to back off of it. So I don't think politically that he could go back to Moscow -- assessing and thinking about it since last night, I don't think that he --

he may have felt that he couldn't go back to Moscow, agreeing to a plan in which we could say that he gave in on SDI. That's one possibility.

The other possibility is that their rhetoric about their willingness to reduce offensive ballistic missiles has gotten out in front of reality. In other words, their claims about wanting to and being willing to reduce offensive, nuclear ballistic missiles, is beyond what they're really prepared to do at this time.

Q Sir, can we get back to the --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Back ON THE RECORD.

Q -- back to the question of SDI timing, were there not the strictures of the ABM Treaty, how soon could you deploy? In other words, how much are you actually giving away by saying we won't deploy for 10 years?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, I don't have a precise answer to that because we still don't have -- we're not at the point in our research and development to be able to specify the milestones that precisely. But that, Charles, is not so much the point as it is of the necessity we see of having a healthy, strong SDI program moving ahead as rapidly as we can afford because we think in the end it is a much safer way for us to be -- either with our having ballistic missiles or if we don't have them -- and certainly if we don't have them.

Q Let me follow-up on that, because you've given us two other time spectrums in saying that by the Soviet system it would take you an additional 10 years to reach a point of deployment, and by the President's proposal it would take you perhaps an additional two years. Earlier on you proposed this 5-2-6 month thing. Where would you have been in that sense? What I'm trying to do is establish the real technology vis-a-vis proposals here.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, what we have -- what we've generally said is sometime in the mid-90s, a lot of that -- it depends still of course on -- there's a lot of guess work, educated to be sure, as to how long it's going to take to get some of these technology improvements that we need, but 10 years is roughly right and that's why in the original proposal we agreed to a five-year, two-year, six-month provision and we think that's on the optimistic side as to what we'd be able to do.

Q Admiral, was there any discussion at all of these 25 Soviet Union employees? Did that come up?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes. The President had not planned to raise that. That was to be a discussion between Shultz and Shevardnadze. And to my knowledge I don't think it was discussed because there just simply wasn't time. Shultz and Shevardnadze, except for the first hour of the meetings on Saturday, participated in all the other head-of-state meetings and so I'm relatively sure that George didn't have time to discuss that. But our position is still firm that 25 leave --

Q Today -- the deadline?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Beg your pardon?

Q Today's the deadline? Tomorrow's the deadline?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Tomorrow, I think, is the deadline. But I haven't talked to the Secretary about this and he may feel because they did agree to talk together about it in Iceland. If they haven't had an opportunity to do that, we may want to adjust that a few days.

Q Admiral, what is it in the September 19th letter that took the President to Iceland? And, in effect, didn't he break off the talks? He picked up his marbles and went home.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, no. The --

Q I mean, what was it that Gorbachev told him in this letter that took him to Iceland?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: No, Helen. The President generally is always willing to talk and he felt that it was possible to get some decisions in some of these areas like INF, in particular. He thought that if you made it clear enough to Gorbachev that he wasn't going to agree on INF unless Asia was addressed, that he could get Gorbachev to move. And, in fact, he did. And the President still believes -- as I think I've told many of you before -- that he can be very persuasive in a face-to-face conversation. Now --

Q Well, what did Gorbachev tell him? I mean, did he say we can negotiate here and we can --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: No. What he said was -- and I don't think I brought the letter with me -- what he said was that he thought that it would be helpful if both heads of state met promptly in Iceland or another location to discuss the issues that are between us so that when we meet in Washington, progress can be made and out of these discussions he envisioned that there would be instructions to their foreign ministers to proceed ahead in making progress in specific areas.

Q Admiral? Admiral, you mentioned that you were surprised that the Soviets opened the agenda in a far more ambitious range than you had expected. You went in with a fairly modest agenda hoping to get INF, nuclear testing, and then go on to Washington summit. What puzzles me is now you're talking about pocketing INF. Did nobody on our side try to pocket INF when that was agreed to and say to the Russians, look, if we don't come out with a whole big package, can you at least agree to keep INF separate and let's go on to a Washington summit and take care of START and SDI at a later date?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Certainly we tried that. And that would be our preferable way of doing it. We are --

Q When did you try that in the two days of talks?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That was tried from the very beginning when arms control -- when the President discussed our position on arms control on Saturday afternoon. And that was discussed in the working talks on Saturday night and Sunday morning.

Q And did they immediately, then, link INF to SDI?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Yes. And that -- although in Gorbachev's discussion on Saturday afternoon, it was not clear but reviewing it in hindsight, it's pretty clear that even on Saturday afternoon he was linking progress in all the areas to our agreement on ABM and SDI.

Q What I'm trying to find out is were you, perhaps, lulled into a going along with a very dramatic range of objectives in Reykjavik and did not sufficiently stick to your moderate agenda and not insist enough to hold the things to what could be achieved instead of going for the whole thing and lose everything?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: No. Look, we're not in this thing to play games, you know. We're in this to make progress on these many serious issues that divide us. If they're prepared to talk about making -- agreeing to solutions to some of these knotty problems -- and, you know, it may seem trivial to you, but in terms

of reaching a START agreement, getting agreement on counting rules is an important achievement. And we're not -- if they're offering to talk about these things -- if they offer to talk about these things, we're not going to say, well, we didn't talk about them. We're always ready to talk and we're always ready to reach agreements.

But they've got to be agreements that are in our interests.

Q What is going to happen to SALT II now? Anything --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Interesting question. SALT II interim restraint did not come up over the whole weekend in Iceland.

Q Sir, could I follow up on that?

Q Did the President not make up his mind about --

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: He has not made up his mind yet. He will by the end of the year.

Q You said that the -- that Gorbachev went beyond the ABM restrictions in his counterproposal, but isn't it true that there is controversy within this administration and certainly in this country, including among the authors of the ABM Treaty, exactly what those restrictions are?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: You are correct. There -- we have -- we are presently following what we call a restricted -- restrictive interpretation of the ABM Treaty. We believe that a broader interpretation is legal. This is a result of a very substantial legal analysis of the treaty and the negotiating record, and there are some disagreements with some Members of Congress, and Abe Sofaer, the Counselor at State, and Paul Nitze are working with the Congress to resolve this misunderstanding, and if at some point in the future we want -- the President decides to move to the broader interpretation, we will certainly be consulting with Congress.

But the point I want to make is that what Gorbachev is talking about is not the difference between what we call the restrictive interpretation and the broad interpretation. He is talking about modifying the treaty to make it more restrictive than either side ever intended for it to be in the beginning.

Q But would his position coincide with --

Q -- the broad or the narrow interpretation?

Q Would his position coincide with the Warnke-Reinlander interpretation? Would Gorbachev's position coincide with the Warnke-Reinlander interpretation of the ABM Treaty?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I am not that familiar with that -- their specific interpretation, so I can't answer that.

Q In Reykjavik, Admiral, were you -- was the administration offering five and 10 years delay on the broad or the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Our position on that is that the five-year -- the way it was worded, it would be the same position that we've had since the July 25th letter to Gorbachev -- that we still reserve the right to go to the broad interpretation of the treaty at some point in the future, but at present we are -- our program is designed to be consistent with the restrictive interpretation, and that is what we're still following.

Q So it's really the broad one. As far as Gorbachev is concerned, he is entitled to say, that's what they're up to.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: That would be correct.

Q Admiral, you said that -- to make progress. I was reminded this morning about Robert McNamara's electronic wall that was supposed to stop infiltration in Vietnam. If we are in this to make progress, why allow a chance to get this much of a deal to be held hostage to something that may or may not be technologically

practical?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, I'll use a word that has been used in the press for -- recently. Our problem is that we are afraid that the reductions that we would get without SDI would be illusory.

MR. HOWARD: One last question, please.

Q Admiral, you said -- Secretary Shultz gave us a very bleak report on the outcome of the summit. He not only said you came away with nothing, but indicated that he does not expect any sort of summit. There's no talk at all of a summit in '87. You seem to be trying to put a better face on it now, and as a matter of fact over in Brussels today he seemed to be trying to put a better face on it.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: Well, I think last night everybody was tired.

Q Do you disagree with the assessment that Secretary Shultz gave us immediately after the summit?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I think -- you know, we recognize that there was the possibility here of achieving an historic agreement. And when we were unable to do that, everybody was somewhat disappointed. But I think, on reflection, everybody involved in the process -- and we were all tired. We'd been working hard and you become deeply involved in the issue. But upon reflection, I think overnight we realized that we've made significant progress and the possibility of, indeed, getting agreement outside of an agreement of SDI and ABM is a significant possibility.

Q Well, whose move is it now?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I don't think that I would want to characterize it that way. Our negotiating position will be reviewed and we will reflect on what moves they made and, as I said earlier, try to figure out some way to figure out what their concerns are, if they're being -- if they're negotiating here in good faith and if we find some way of convincing them that it's in both of our interests to move forward to a strategic defensive system.

You see, the think that's so imponderable here is if they're really serious about reducing nuclear weapons, it doesn't make any sense that they should be concerned whether we deploy a strategic defensive system or not at that point in the future because we would have -- except for our air-breathing and cruise missiles, we wouldn't have any nuclear weapons to attack them with. And that -- then you have to get into the question that I addressed on background as to, well, why won't Gorbachev agree. And maybe time will help solve some of those problems.

Q Admiral, you mentioned SALT II, and the President has not decided yet. Would you expect that, whether or not you're able to hold the Soviets to the concessions they have made piecemeal will be part of that decision?

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: I'm sorry, I missed the first part, and I've really got to go.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

5:15 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 1986

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MEMORANDUM FOR MARI MASENG

FROM: TOM GIBSON ^{16.}

SUBJECT: Iceland Meeting and SDI

Attached for your use is the Iceland Meeting and SDI package.

Please note that there are two sets of materials, identical except for letterhead.

1. Talking Points are for Administration spokesmen.
2. Issue Briefs are for private individuals and supporters (including governors, state legislators, mayors, etc.)

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMEN

FROM: TOM GIBSON *TG*
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: White House Talking Points

Attached for your information and use are talking points on the President's Iceland meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev, arms reduction, and the Strategic Defense Initiative. Also included is the text of the President's address to the nation on October 13, 1986.

If you have any questions concerning these materials, please contact the Office of Public Affairs at 456-7170.

THE PRESIDENT'S ICELAND MEETING WITH GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV

Executive Summary

The President went to Iceland to promote the main objectives of American foreign policy: true peace and greater freedom in the world. He met with General Secretary Gorbachev for 10 hours of frank and substantive direct talks. We achieved our objectives.

The President focused on a broad four point agenda for improved U.S.-Soviet relations: Human Rights; Arms Reductions; the Resolution of Regional Conflicts; and Expanding Bilateral Contacts and Communications.

Increasing and Overwhelming Public Support

Private media polls immediately following the Iceland meeting found overwhelming support by the American people for the President.

- o The Wall Street Journal/NBC News and the New York Times/CBS News polls registered 71% and 72% (respectively) approved of the President's handling of the Iceland meeting.

Building Upon Iceland Meeting

- o Never before in the history of arms control negotiations has so much progress been made in so many areas, in so short a time.
- o The U.S. and Soviet Union came very close to an agreement that would secure massive reductions of the most threatening weapon systems: offensive ballistic missiles.
- o Mr. Gorbachev's non-negotiable terms on the President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) would have perpetuated America's vulnerability to Soviet missiles. Where the security of the American people and our Allies is involved, no agreement is better than a bad agreement.
- o SDI was a main inducement for the Soviets to negotiate for deep cuts in offensive arsenals. SDI remains the best insurance policy that any future arms reduction agreements will be implemented and complied with by the Soviets.
- o Notwithstanding the disagreements on SDI, the President is calling upon the Soviet leadership to follow through on arms reduction accomplishments at Reykjavik and continue to discuss our differences on strategic defense, which have been narrowed.
- o We will vigorously pursue, at the same time, progress in other areas of the agenda, especially human rights.

ARMS REDUCTION AT ICELAND -- HISTORIC PROGRESS

Unlike the past, the U.S. is now dealing from a position of strength and confidence. General Secretary Gorbachev suggested the Iceland meeting, and the President accepted in an effort to further the US/Soviet dialogue in all four areas of the agenda.

- o Because of U.S. strength and confidence, and the inducement of SDI to negotiate, unprecedented progress was made toward dramatically reducing offensive nuclear arsenals.
- o Mr. Gorbachev held progress in all areas, including arms reduction, hostage to his non-negotiable demand that the U.S. cut back and effectively kill SDI. The President insisted that SDI remain viable under the terms of the 1972 ABM Treaty, which, unlike the Soviet Union, the U.S. has complied with.
- o To break the deadlock, the President offered: A 10 year commitment not to deploy any future strategic defense system, coupled with 50% reduction in U.S. and Soviet strategic forces in the next five years and mutual and total elimination of all U.S. and Soviet ballistic missiles over the following five years.
- o Mr. Gorbachev rejected the President's offer, refusing to allow SDI testing -- the heart of any research program.

Current Impasse; Future Opportunities

- o Mr. Gorbachev's non-negotiable terms on SDI would have perpetuated America's vulnerability to Soviet missiles. Where the security of the American people and our Allies is involved, no agreement is better than a bad agreement.
- o The USSR wants to continue to base global security on the threat of mutual annihilation. President Reagan seeks a safer world with peace and deterrence based increasingly on defensive means.
- o In 1984, when the Soviets failed to achieve their objectives to weaken NATO's defensive capability in Europe, through negotiating intransigence and continuing SS-20 deployments, they walked out of all nuclear arms negotiations. In 1985, they were back at the table and, in 1986, for the first time, dramatic progress has been made toward mutual reductions.
- o The President believes that additional meetings can build on the major progress toward arms reduction and achieve final breakthrough agreements. The President's invitation for a U.S. Summit -- the objective that Iceland was intended to prepare for -- remains open.

SDI Not the Problem: It's the Solution

- o In SDI, we are investigating defensive systems to enhance future security for America and our Allies by being able to destroy attacking missiles. It will have no offensive function. There is no rational reason to oppose SDI research.
- o Insurance -- Why should the Soviets, in opposing SDI, insist that America and its Allies remain vulnerable to Soviet missile attack? Strategic defenses would help underwrite arms reduction agreements against cheating or abrogation, while defending against attack from other countries.
- o By denying a potential attacker hope of gaining meaningful military benefit, SDI is the best lever to achieve real arms reductions. SDI deters use of offensive systems, thereby rendering future investments in offensive systems imprudent.
- o The Soviets have longstanding and massive strategic defense programs of their own, going well beyond research, and have the only operational anti-ballistic missile system in the world, a system they are steadily improving.
- o By refusing the President's far-reaching arms reduction offer and making his own non-negotiable demand on the United States, Gorbachev refused an historic opportunity for progress toward ridding the world of nuclear weapons.
- o Nonetheless, the ideas and progress for radically reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons presented at Reykjavik can be built upon at the table in Geneva.

Human Rights

Respect for human rights is as important to peace as arms reductions because peace requires trust. The President told Gorbachev the Soviets' human rights performance is an obstacle for improved relations between our two countries.

- o A country that breaks faith with its own people cannot be trusted to keep faith with foreign powers.
- o The Soviet Union signed the 1975 Helsinki Accords. The Soviets should abide by them -- allowing free emigration and the reunification of divided families, and religious and cultural freedoms -- instead of throwing those who monitor the Soviet compliance (e.g. Yuri Orlov) in jail.
- o We will continue to press for improvements in the coming weeks and months.
- o The Soviets, for the first time, agreed to regular bilateral discussions on humanitarian and human rights issues.

Expanded cultural exchanges -- The President reaffirmed his commitment to continue to broaden and expand people-to-people exchanges -- where Soviet citizens and Americans may see first hand more of each other's country and culture.

Regional Conflicts -- The President raised the serious problems caused in the world by Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan, and continued military support of the regimes in Angola, Nicaragua, and Cambodia, that are waging war on their own people. We cannot take seriously the token troop "withdrawals" from Afghanistan which they have announced.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SDI

The media and political opponents of SDI have found it convenient to present SDI in caricature, as the "so-called 'Star Wars' proposal." It is no wonder that many Americans are confused about the President's proposal and think the U.S. currently has a defense against missiles!

- o An Associated press-Media General poll released in August found that 60 percent of Americans felt that the U.S. had either a good or an excellent defense against a Soviet missile attack.
- o In fact, the U.S. is utterly defenseless against Soviet rockets.

Americans Want Enhanced Security

When the American people are asked to evaluate concepts, rather than the labels such as "Star Wars," they support SDI. Evidence:

Two days after the President's return from Iceland, polls taken by major news organizations showed the public supports President Reagan's refusal to surrender his Strategic Defense Initiative.

- A New York Times/CBS News poll shows 68 percent support.
- Nearly 60 percent polled by the Washington Post/ABC News poll said Reagan should retain his commitment to SDI.
- According to the Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, only 15 percent of the American people think SDI is a bad idea.

Penn + Schoen Associates (9/27/86)

Question: SDI is a research program to develop a system to destroy incoming nuclear missiles before they reach their targets. Do you favor or oppose the U.S. going ahead with the research and development phases of SDI?

Favor -- 81% Oppose -- 13%

Question: If such a system could be developed, would you favor or oppose using it in the United States?

Favor -- 78% Oppose -- 13%

ABC News (1/4/85 - 1/6/85)

Question: Do you favor or oppose developing such defensive weapons (which use lasers and particle beams to shoot down enemy missiles), or what?

Favor -- 49% Oppose -- 44%

Heritage Foundation/Sindlinger & Co. Poll (5/27/85)

89 percent of the American people would support a Strategic Defense program if it would make a Soviet Missile attack less likely.

THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE (SDI)

The U.S. and her Allies are defenseless against a deliberate or accidental nuclear attack.

- o The U.S. presently deters nuclear attack by threatening retaliation. SDI offers a safer and more moral alternative: employing technology to protect people instead of threatening their annihilation.

Challenge for the Present and Insurance for the Future

- o SDI is a broad-based program to demonstrate the feasibility of effective strategic defenses. Like the Apollo Project, SDI is a revolutionary program that merits a full-scale national effort.
- o SDI taps the finest scientific minds in the U.S. and other countries to investigate a range of defensive technologies. This research will lead toward an informed decision on defensive options in the early 1990s.
- o SDI has induced the Soviets to negotiate for deep cuts in offensive arsenals. It is the best insurance policy that any future arms reduction agreements will be implemented and complied with by the Soviets, and it guards against ballistic missile attack by third countries.

SDI Progress

- o Some in Congress would cripple SDI with short-sighted budget cuts giving the Soviets a key concession they have not been able to win through negotiations. Sustained research has already produced major technical advances:
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SDI: Also a Prudent Hedge Against Existing Soviet Strategic Defense Programs

- o The Soviet Union has upgraded the world's only deployed Anti-Ballistic Missile defense system, which protects Greater Moscow, and is constructing a large missile tracking radar in Siberia, in violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty.
- o The Soviets have deployed the world's only operational weapon for destroying satellites.

SDI -- Enhance Peace/Safer World

Gallup Organization (1/25/85 - 1/28/85)

Question: In your opinion, would developing this system (Star Wars or space-based defense against nuclear attack) make the world safer from nuclear destruction or less safe?

Make world safer -- 50% Make world less safe -- 32%

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Question: SDI, is a good idea because it will help deter a Soviet attack, increase the chance of reaching an arms control agreement, and reduce the risk of war. Others say that SDI, is a bad idea because it will upset the balance of power, accelerate the arms race, and increase the risk of war. Is SDI research a good idea or a bad idea?

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Question: Agree or disagree...Once the Russians knew we were successfully building a new anti-nuclear defense system, they would be much more willing to agree to a treaty that would halt the nuclear arms race.

Agree -- 52% Disagree -- 44%

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Question: Would the United States' developing this system Star Wars, a space-based defense against nuclear attack, increase or decrease the likelihood of reaching a nuclear arms agreement with the Soviet Union?

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THE PRESIDENT'S ICELAND MEETING WITH GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV

Executive Summary

The President went to Iceland to promote the main objectives of American foreign policy: true peace and greater freedom in the world. He met with General Secretary Gorbachev for 10 hours of frank and substantive direct talks. We achieved our objectives.

The President focused on a broad four point agenda for improved U.S.-Soviet relations: Human Rights; Arms Reductions; the Resolution of Regional Conflicts; and Expanding Bilateral Contacts and Communications.

Increasing and Overwhelming Public Support

Private media polls immediately following the Iceland meeting found overwhelming support by the American people for the President.

- o The Wall Street Journal/NBC News and the New York Times/CBS News polls registered 71% and 72% (respectively) approved of the President's handling of the Iceland meeting.

Building Upon Iceland Meeting

- o Never before in the history of arms control negotiations has so much progress been made in so many areas, in so short a time.
- o The U.S. and Soviet Union came very close to an agreement that would secure massive reductions of the most threatening weapon systems: offensive ballistic missiles.
- o Mr. Gorbachev's non-negotiable terms on the President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) would have perpetuated America's vulnerability to Soviet missiles. Where the security of the American people and our Allies is involved, no agreement is better than a bad agreement.
- o SDI was a main inducement for the Soviets to negotiate for deep cuts in offensive arsenals. SDI remains the best insurance policy that any future arms reduction agreements will be implemented and complied with by the Soviets.
- o Notwithstanding the disagreements on SDI, the President is calling upon the Soviet leadership to follow through on arms reduction accomplishments at Reykjavik and continue to discuss our differences on strategic defense, which have been narrowed.
- o We will vigorously pursue, at the same time, progress in other areas of the agenda, especially human rights.

WHITE HOUSE TALKING POINTS

STORAGE

- o We achieved historic steps because of renewed confidence and strength from: new cohesiveness and optimism on the part of the American people, renewed economic dynamism, refurbished military strength, and allied cohesion.
- o Our differences on strategic defense center on the fact that the Soviets wish to perpetuate a strategic situation based on the threat of mass annihilation of populations.
- o In our view, if our research succeeds (and recent results make us optimistic) we think it far better to rely increasingly on defensive systems--which threaten no one--with sharp reductions of offensive nuclear weapons, near-term elimination of all U.S. and Soviet ballistic missiles, and hopefully the ultimate elimination of ALL nuclear weapons.
- o We ask the USSR to consider: Do they really want to hold up historic achievements just so they can continue to have the capability of destroying the world?

ARMS REDUCTION AT ICELAND -- HISTORIC PROGRESS

Unlike the past, the U.S. is now dealing from a position of strength and confidence. General Secretary Gorbachev suggested the Iceland meeting, and the President accepted in an effort to further the US/Soviet dialogue in all four areas of the agenda.

- o Because of U.S. strength and confidence, and the inducement of SDI to negotiate, unprecedented progress was made toward dramatically reducing offensive nuclear arsenals.
- o Mr. Gorbachev held progress in all areas, including arms reduction, hostage to his non-negotiable demand that the U.S. cut back and effectively kill SDI. The President insisted that SDI remain viable under the terms of the 1972 ABM Treaty, which, unlike the Soviet Union, the U.S. has complied with.
- o To break the deadlock, the President offered: A 10 year commitment not to deploy any future strategic defense system, coupled with 50% reduction in U.S. and Soviet strategic forces in the next five years and mutual and total elimination of all U.S. and Soviet ballistic missiles over the following five years.
- o Mr. Gorbachev rejected the President's offer, refusing to allow SDI testing -- the heart of any research program.

Current Impasse; Future Opportunities

- o Mr. Gorbachev's non-negotiable terms on SDI would have perpetuated America's vulnerability to Soviet missiles. Where the security of the American people and our Allies is involved, no agreement is better than a bad agreement.
- o The USSR wants to continue to base global security on the threat of mutual annihilation. President Reagan seeks a safer world with peace and deterrence based increasingly on defensive means.
- o In 1984, when the Soviets failed to achieve their objectives to weaken NATO's defensive capability in Europe, through negotiating intransigence and continuing SS-20 deployments, they walked out of all nuclear arms negotiations. In 1985, they were back at the table and, in 1986, for the first time, dramatic progress has been made toward mutual reductions.
- o The President believes that additional meetings can build on the major progress toward arms reduction and achieve final breakthrough agreements. The President's invitation for a U.S. Summit -- the objective that Iceland was intended to prepare for -- remains open.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 1986

Dear Editor:

Attached, for your information, is an issue brief on the President's Iceland meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev, arms reduction at Iceland, and the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Also included in this package is the address by the President to the nation on October 13, 1986.

If you have any questions concerning these materials, please contact the Office of Public Affairs at (202)456-7170.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tom Gibson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas F. Gibson
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of Public Affairs

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- o We will vigorously pursue, at the same time, progress in other areas of the agenda, especially human rights.

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- o In 1984, when the Soviets failed to achieve their objectives to weaken NATO's defensive capability in Europe, through negotiating intransigence and continuing SS-20 deployments, they walked out of all nuclear arms negotiations. In 1985, they were back at the table and, in 1986, for the first time, dramatic progress has been made toward mutual reductions.
- o The President believes that additional meetings can build on the major progress toward arms reduction and achieve final breakthrough agreements. The President's invitation for a U.S. Summit -- the objective that Iceland was intended to prepare for -- remains open.

WHITE HOUSE ISSUE BRIEF

SDI Not the Problem: It's the Solution

- o In SDI, we are investigating defensive systems to enhance future security for America and our Allies by being able to destroy attacking missiles. It will have no offensive function. There is no rational reason to oppose SDI research.
- o Insurance -- Why should the Soviets, in opposing SDI, insist that America and its Allies remain vulnerable to Soviet missile attack? Strategic defenses would help underwrite arms reduction agreements against cheating or abrogation, while defending against attack from other countries.
- o By denying a potential attacker hope of gaining meaningful military benefit, SDI is the best lever to achieve real arms reductions. SDI deters use of offensive systems, thereby rendering future investments in offensive systems imprudent.
- o The Soviets have longstanding and massive strategic defense programs of their own, going well beyond research, and have the only operational anti-ballistic missile system in the world, a system they are steadily improving.
- o By refusing the President's far-reaching arms reduction offer and making his own non-negotiable demand on the United States, Gorbachev refused an historic opportunity for progress toward ridding the world of nuclear weapons.
- o Nonetheless, the ideas and progress for radically reducing and ultimately eliminating nuclear weapons presented at Reykjavik can be built upon at the table in Geneva.

Human Rights

Respect for human rights is as important to peace as arms reductions because peace requires trust. The President told Gorbachev the Soviets' human rights performance is an obstacle for improved relations between our two countries.

- o A country that breaks faith with its own people cannot be trusted to keep faith with foreign powers.
- o The Soviet Union signed the 1975 Helsinki Accords. The Soviets should abide by them -- allowing free emigration and the reunification of divided families, and religious and cultural freedoms -- instead of throwing those who monitor the Soviet compliance (e.g. Yuri Orlov) in jail.
- o We will continue to press for improvements in the coming weeks and months.
- o The Soviets, for the first time, agreed to regular bilateral discussions on humanitarian and human rights issues.

Expanded cultural exchanges -- The President reaffirmed his commitment to continue to broaden and expand people-to-people exchanges -- where Soviet citizens and Americans may see first hand more of each other's country and culture.

Regional Conflicts -- The President raised the serious problems caused in the world by Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan, and continued military support of the regimes in Angola, Nicaragua, and Cambodia, that are waging war on their own people. We cannot take seriously the token troop "withdrawals" from Afghanistan which they have announced.

THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE (SDI)

The U.S. and her Allies are defenseless against a deliberate or accidental nuclear attack.

- o The U.S. presently deters nuclear attack by threatening retaliation. SDI offers a safer and more moral alternative: employing technology to protect people instead of threatening their annihilation.

Challenge for the Present and Insurance for the Future

- o SDI is a broad-based program to demonstrate the feasibility of effective strategic defenses. Like the Apollo Project, SDI is a revolutionary program that merits a full-scale national effort.
- o SDI taps the finest scientific minds in the U.S. and other countries to investigate a range of defensive technologies. This research will lead toward an informed decision on defensive options in the early 1990s.
- o SDI has induced the Soviets to negotiate for deep cuts in offensive arsenals. It is the best insurance policy that any future arms reduction agreements will be implemented and complied with by the Soviets, and it guards against ballistic missile attack by third countries.

SDI Progress

- o Some in Congress would cripple SDI with short-sighted budget cuts giving the Soviets a key concession they have not been able to win through negotiations. Sustained research has already produced major technical advances:
 - June 1984 -- a non-nuclear interceptor destroyed an unarmed warhead in space;
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PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SDI

The media and political opponents of SDI have found it convenient to present SDI in caricature, as the "so-called 'Star Wars' proposal." It is no wonder that many Americans are confused about the President's proposal and think the U.S. currently has a defense against missiles!

- o An Associated press-Media General poll released in August found that 60 percent of Americans felt that the U.S. had either a good or an excellent defense against a Soviet missile attack.
- o In fact, the U.S. is utterly defenseless against Soviet rockets.

Americans Want Enhanced Security

When the American people are asked to evaluate concepts, rather than the labels such as "Star Wars," they support SDI. Evidence:

Two days after the President's return from Iceland, polls taken by major news organizations showed the public supports President Reagan's refusal to surrender his Strategic Defense Initiative.

- A New York Times/CBS News poll shows 68 percent support.
- Nearly 60 percent polled by the Washington Post/ABC News poll said Reagan should retain his commitment to SDI.
- According to the Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, only 15 percent of the American people think SDI is a bad idea.

Penn + Schoen Associates (9/27/86)

Question: SDI is a research program to develop a system to destroy incoming nuclear missiles before they reach their targets. Do you favor or oppose the U.S. going ahead with the research and development phases of SDI?

Favor -- 81% Oppose -- 13%

Question: If such a system could be developed, would you favor or oppose using it in the United States?

Favor -- 78% Oppose -- 13%

ABC News (1/4/85 - 1/6/85)

Question: Do you favor or oppose developing such defensive weapons (which use lasers and particle beams to shoot down enemy missiles), or what?

Favor -- 49% Oppose -- 44%

Heritage Foundation/Sindlinger & Co. Poll (5/27/85)

89 percent of the American people would support a Strategic Defense program if it would make a Soviet Missile attack less likely.

WHITE HOUSE ISSUE BRIEF

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 16, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR WHITE HOUSE STAFF

FROM: PAT BUCHANAN 

SUBJECT: Iceland

On making SDI a partisan issue -- we are late.

ON THE RECORD

"The only way Star Wars is going to become a bargaining chip [in future negotiations] is if Congress comes back next year and takes a meat ax to it."

--- Rep. Ed Markey
Washington Post, 10/15/86

"...it is difficult to believe that any other President since World War II would have ignored the opportunity that knocked at Reykjavik."

--- Sen. Teddy Kennedy
New York Times, 10/16/86

"Apparently the President got right up to the brink of making and accepting those initiatives and then backed away for some strange reason."

--- Sen. Gary Hart
ABC News, 10/13/86

"The President came within a whisper of getting an agreement and held it all up because he wanted to pursue his dream of 'Star Wars.' To me, his dream is a nightmare." (emphasis added)

--- Rep. Tom Downey
CBS News, 10/13/86

"He [Reagan] made a mistake in rushing to a 'no' judgment. He should have kept the process going."

--- Rep. Bob Edgar
Democrat candidate for Senate
Washington Post, 10/14/86

"The negotiations have broken down over the Administration's commitment to a non-existent system. They seem to ignore the fact that the Soviet warheads are real. I must admit I find difficulty with the logic."

--- Senator Patrick Leahy (VT)
Rutland Herald, 10/14/86

"I think it was a serious mistake to let star wars destroy the chance for real arms control now."

--- Sen. Donald Riegle
Congressional Record, 10/14/86
p. S16014

"...the House gave in to his pleas and untied his hands, and all he did was sit on them at the summit."

--- Rep. Pete Stark
Congressional Record, 10/15/86
p. H10138

"...the United States delegation went to Iceland empty handed, and returned to the United States empty handed and confused."

--- Rep. Berkley Bedell
Congressional Record, 10/14/86
p. H9904

"...the question is why rather than compromise his dream of a 'Star Wars' defense President Reagan walked away from the possibility of achieving the most significant progress on nuclear arms control since the nuclear age began."

--- Sen. Teddy Kennedy
New York Times, 10/16/86

"This weekend we had a chance to cash in Star Wars for the best deal the Russians have offered an American President since they sold Alaska for \$7 million and Ronald Reagan turned it down cold."

--- Rep. Ed Markey
NBC News, 10/13/86

"The President promised results and came back without one. He came back empty-handed. We pay these men alot of money and give them alot of honor to produce results. Every predecessor in the nuclear era has come to an agreement with the Soviets in some way on nuclear arms, but Ronald Reagan.... We lost an historic opportunity."

--- Mark Green, Democrat candidate
for Senate, press conference,
10/16/86

"Mr. Reagan has fueled the widespread fears that when the chips are down he is not serious about arms control."

--- Sen. Teddy Kennedy
New York Times, 10/16/86

U.S. Senate candidate Endicott Peabody charged here yesterday that President Reagan missed an "opportunity for real arms reduction" at the mini-summit the Democrat called the "wreck of Reykjavik."

--- Manchester Union Leader. 10/15/86

"Plainly, the summit was a failure. I'm concerned that the President failed to nail down an opportunity for elimination of nuclear weapons in Europe, for a 50 percent cut in missiles worldwide, and probably an opportunity for some reduction in repression in the Soviet Union. That was not nailed down because the President stuck to a visionary, theoretical, unproven defense of the United States that most scientists feel won't work, a defense that will not be ready for at least another 10 years, whereas these agreements could have been fulfilled instantly."

--- Alan Cranston
San Francisco Chronicle, 10/14/86

"The President has sent the world a message that he doesn't want arms control -- that he has put his faith in the stardust and moonbeams of his Star Wars fantasies."

--- Rep. Ed Markey
Wall Street Journal, 10/14/86

"The Administration has only itself to blame for a summit that was hastily agreed to and poorly prepared. Now it must take responsibility for getting the arms control process back on track."

--- Sen. Edward Kennedy
Congressional Record, 10/14/86
p. S16016

"The administration negotiators had their chance, and they failed."

--- Rep. Tom Downey
Congressional Record, 10/14/86
p. H9904

"Congress should not hesitate to fill the void. Mr. Reagan has not taken us to any summit, on the contrary, he seems to have led the way into one of the deepest valleys in recent arms control history."

--- Rep. Jim Moody
Congressional Record, 10/15/86
p. H10104

"...the Soviets made virtually all of the concessions at Reykjavik on offensive forces. When the President was called upon to make concessions on SDI, he refused -- and the summit fell apart."

--- Sen. Edward Kennedy
Congressional Record, 10/14/86
p. S16016

Seconding the motion:

"We had proposed large-scale, significant proposals and ones that were based on compromise but we saw no attempt on the U.S. side to respond in kind, to meet us halfway."

--- General Secretary Gorbachev
New York Times, 10/15/86

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 15, 1986

STATEMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY

General Secretary Gorbachev's report to the Soviet people was unprecedented in its detail. He emphasized the same areas of progress upon which U.S. officials have commented over the past two days, namely, strategic arms reductions and potential agreement on intermediate nuclear forces. He also clearly indicated, just as we have done, that the sticking point which prevented an overall agreement in Iceland was the Soviet Union's demand for an end to the U.S. program on strategic defense.

It is our view that the agreements and positions reached in Iceland remain on the table. The meetings which reconvene in Geneva today will begin where we left off in Iceland. The Iceland talks were a very important and significant step in moving negotiations forward. We want to build upon the groundwork of Reykjavik.

We take note of some of the political rhetoric in the General Secretary's speech, but that was expected and unexceptional. What was remarkable was General Secretary Gorbachev's explanation of the progress made.

We are pleased to note that, both at his press conference in Reykjavik and his address to the Soviet people, General Secretary Gorbachev stated that the work that was done in Reykjavik will not go to waste, and the way has now been cleared for further movement towards significant arms reduction. That is our view.

We believe we can go forward from this moment in a businesslike way. We must listen to the each other, each explore the views of the other, and seek common approaches and agree on solutions. We think that goal was accomplished at Rekyjavik and should be the goal whenever we meet.

We, like the General Secretary, believe that the meeting overcame obstructions and minute details and that new approchaes have been developed. We believe there is no going back on what was developed at this meeting, and we look forward to continued negotiations which will build on the progress achieved in Reykjavik.

#

*File
Iceland*