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Ralph L. Dietl

Beyond Parity

Europe and the SALT Process
in the Carter Era, 1977–1981



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Umschlagabbildung: Jimmy Carter et Leonid Brejnev pour SALT II

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'It is easy to destroy and so difficult to build'.
Dobrynin, 21 March 1980

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PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

This is the second volume of a two volume monograph on Europe and the SALT Process. The first volume entitled '*Equal Security. Europe and the SALT Process, 1969–1976*' published in 2013 dealt with the European response to the SALT process during the Nixon-Ford Administration, 1969–1976. This volume focuses on the SALT process in the era Carter. The Carter era witnessed a stronger penetration of the US arms control decision-making process. NATO Allies started to co-shape US arms control and successfully broadened the traditional bilateral SALT process. The Intermediate Nuclear Force negotiations were the result. This volume ends with the resignation of the first Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration: Alexander Haig. Haig's resignation marks the end of the traditional SALT process. After his resignation the Reagan Administration finally broke with the Carter inheritance. The new start had major repercussions for NATO Europe's participation in strategic arms control. The Reagan Administration commenced to limit the influence of NATO Europe on arms control to the Intermediate Nuclear Force negotiations. The new credo was that NATO Allies should not dictate US arms control policy. The years 1977 to 1982 thus witnessed first an expansion of Western decision-making that was later rolled-back in order to gradually revive superpower control over arms control matters. Control was re-established during the second Reagan Administration.

This volume as the previous volume uncovers the inner working of Western decision-making on arms control. Both volumes do analyze the impact of strategic arms control on the 'Western' defense structures and European defense interests. Both volumes interpret arms control as a national defense policy controlled by the National Security Advisor and administered by the NSC Council Staff in conjunction with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the State Department. Strategic arms control must be distinguished from disarmament. Arms control is a rational and interest driven strategy in national defense policy to assure strategic stability and crisis stability by way of a codification and limitation of the arms race. The final aim is the establishment of a strategic balance among peer contenders – i.e. parity in counter-force capability or 'hard kill capability' and not in numbers of delivery systems. 'Kill capability' integrates yield, throw weight, numbers and accuracy of strategic weapons systems. The aim of administered 'mutually assured destruction' is strategic stability. 'Equal security' or 'mutual strategic security' (MSS) can be obtained at different levels of armaments. In arms control the level of armaments is not to be prioritized but the balance of power and thus the relative invulnerability of the contenders. Lower levels of armaments are not automatically enhancing 'mutual strategic security'. Lower levels could even be destabilizing if offsetting balances are destroyed. Thus the core task of arms control is to assure that none of the parties will obtain at any given moment in an arms control process a major

strategic advantage over a peer competitor. Vulnerabilities undermine crisis stability.¹ Thus quantitative and qualitative imbalances have to be tackled in common in order to forestall destabilizing technological advantages. The latter might tempt the less advanced party to pre-emptive actions or the more advanced party to the utilization of a ‘window of opportunity’ to strike first. Numerical parity is not necessary – but offsetting balances that assure a balance of power. Furthermore, transparency has to be assured in order to forestall cheating and surprise attacks. In short, arms control is the management of the strategic relationship to assure ‘mutual strategic security’. A strategic balance, however, can also be obtained without arms control just by unilateral timely adjustments to changes in the strategic environment. Thus defense advocates sometimes prefer the flexibility of traditional defense policies to slow moving and complex arms control regimes. Arms control, however, creates predictability and eases defense planning and military procurement.

Arms control and defense planning have to be strictly coordinated to obtain optimal outcomes. Doctrinal inclination to arms control or legal regimes have to be subordinated to the national security interest. The national security interest demands strict reciprocity. Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter’s National Security Advisor, totally concurred with the general arms control approach of his predecessors Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft. Brzezinski highlights that the arms control process has to be protected from domestic arms control lobbies who elevate ‘these negotiations almost to a fetish’ in order to eliminate the nightmare of human destruction created by the ‘appearance of nuclear weapons.’² For Brzezinski the ‘contamination of strategy by pacifism’³ undermines survival in the nuclear age. Demands for unilateral steps of disarmament, for the ‘no first use’ of nuclear weapons or a ‘nuclear freeze’ at a time of strategic imbalance can and will create or preserve asymmetries among the peer competitors that invite conflict instead of eliminating conflict. Unilateral steps in arms control always have to be related to strategic stability and not to a doctrinal disarmament agenda. Arms control thus is a branch of national defense policy.

The Carter Administration embraced the challenge to lower the level of armaments by way of arms control. While the Nixon-Ford Administration had worked towards a stabilization of the arms race to establish a platform for a general nuclear disarmament as envisaged in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Carter Administration sought to carefully reduce the level of nuclear delivery vehicles without threatening the nuclear balance, US national security or Alliance relations. The Vladivostok Accord of 1974 had established a common ceiling of nuclear delivery systems. President Carter sought to lower the aggregate total of the Vladivostok Agreement worked out by the Ford Administration. Carter envisaged embarking on a general reduction of the nuclear arsenal without

1 David S. Yost, *European Security and the SALT Process* Washington: Sage 1981, 11.

2 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Game Plan. A Geostrategic Framework for the Conduct of the US-Soviet Contest* Boston/New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press 1986, 149.

3 Ibid, 148.

undermining crisis and strategic stability and the relative position of the two superpowers during this process. President Carter, furthermore, sought to take another qualitative step. The SALT approach of the new Administration embraced quantitative *and* qualitative arms control for the first time. Real arms control was the aim – ‘mutual predictability and stability’ at lower costs. Strategic parity surely remained the guiding principle. The Carter Administration sought to lay the foundation for a future ‘global zero’ agenda in line with an overall strategic nuclear, tactical nuclear and conventional balance. A new nuclear and world order was dawning based on SALT, a reform of the NPT regime, a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), A Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR), a denuclearization of the Indian Ocean and a control of conventional weapons transfers globally.

Brzezinski’s seminal study *‘Game Plan – A Geostrategic Framework for the Conduct of US-SU Contest’* stresses a second facet of strategic arms control. Arms control cannot be isolated from geopolitics.⁴ Arms control regimes are the bone structure of any given world order. The distribution of power in the international system can be frozen or altered by way of arms control regimes. Access to or denial of nuclear weapons and its delivery systems decides the relative position of any player in the international system. Geographic factors feature whenever weapons systems are debated. Weapon ranges structure the strategic map. Thus arms control has always a geopolitical component. The codification of bipolarity through the emerging East-West strategic arms control regime threatened to replace the bloc architecture based on Alliance systems. A form of ‘condominium’ of the superpowers emerged that relegated conflicts to controllable geographically limited wars. The superpower parity created sanctuaries for the superpowers. Thus the Western Alliance system was disaggregated into two distinct strategic theatres. As a consequence a decoupling of Western-European and American security was threatening with wide-ranging politico-military and geopolitical consequences. European security was compromised by superpower *détente* and a strategic arms control agenda that prioritized the national security interests of the superpowers. The US Allies considered the development of indigenous European defense structures in case a re-coupling of transatlantic security was unobtainable.⁵

This volume – as the previous one – scrutinizes the interdependence of Western defense and arms control. This volume analyzes the European contribution to the SALT process during the SALT II and the so-called SALT III process. The Reagan Administration introduced the terms Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) to underline the break with the Ford-Carter approach to strategic arms control. The Carter Administration’s arms control policy is here under scrutiny. President Carter faced an upheaval within the NATO Alliance that led to co-decision-making on an unprecedented scale. A roll-back of European influence started with the Reagan Administration. The final chapter on the Reagan Administration was mainly included to underline the contours of the Carter approach to

4 Ibid, 153.

5 Yost, 17.

strategic arms control and to highlight alterations in the relationship with both the SU and NATO Allies. The previous volume established the historical background. The volume 'Equal Security' outlined Henry Kissinger's firm control over the strategic arms control process, the back channel negotiations between the President's National Security Advisor Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and the 'shuttle diplomacy' that provided the necessary strategic guidance for the SALT delegations. The SALT delegations were tasked to work out definitions, technical details and the legal aspects of the arms control proposals that were sketched by the principals. The first volume also captured the intra-Alliance consultation mechanism that had assured NATO Europe a voice opportunity in the SALT process. During the Nixon-Ford Administration Henry Kissinger himself briefed NATO Allies frequently. The Head of the US SALT delegation or key members of the NSC SALT staff briefed on a regular and institutionalized basis NATO Allies about the latest developments in Geneva. The NATO structures offered multiple *fora* to harmonize US and NATO Europe's interests: (1) the North Atlantic Council (NAC), (2) the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG); (3) the Defense Planning Committee (DPC). The core forum was the North Atlantic Council on the basis of the Permanent Representatives. SALT expert meetings complemented frequently the briefings in the NAC. The multilateral layer was complemented by a network of institutionalized bilateral consultation mechanisms on SALT. The Anglo-American SALT negotiations conducted in Washington D.C. were of prime importance to align the nuclear special relationship to the SALT process. Less formalized diplomatic channels were utilized to brief the West-German, French and Italian governments or other NATO Allies. The West-European members of NATO had established their own forum the 'Petrignani Group' to concert actions and to enhance NATO Europe's role in arms control. The 'Petrignani Group' of European SALT experts frequently had gathered in conjunction with NAC briefings to discuss European interests and to enhance NATO Europe's voice opportunity in the NAC. France was not partaking in the 'Petrignani Group' due to its NATO label. Anglo-French, French-German or Anglo-German politico-military talks complemented the European cooperation on strategic arms control.

The concerted actions assured NATO Europe an ever growing influence on the formulation of the SALT positions during the early SALT II process. Allied influence was often indirect. The NATO Allies used military to military contacts or forged alliances with Congressional leaders to penetrate US decision-making. The Europeans were in particular concerned about a SALT non-transfer clause. SALT was not allowed to undermine future NATO defense options. A non circumvention clause could potentially prohibit not only weapon transfers but the transfer of components, blueprints and technical information and thus undermine the future of the Anglo-American nuclear special relationship or of the NATO dual-key arrangements. Other SALT aspects were of vital importance for NATO Europe. The penetration capability of the British and French deterrent forces had to be preserved. The SALT I ABM level regulation forestalled a costly modernization of the British and French strategic forces. The history of SALT furthermore

reveals that NATO Europe categorically rejected that ‘forward-based systems’ (FBS) counted against the SALT aggregate total. FBS are US European-based nuclear non-central systems capable of striking the Soviet Union. FBS were part of the SALT endeavor since any system capable of striking the opposite party’s territory was deemed ‘strategic’ under SALT. The strategic arms limitation talks covered both home based central systems of intercontinental range and US forward based systems. No Soviet forward-based systems existed after the failed forward basing attempt in Cuba in 1962. The Soviet Union thus demanded an end to forward basing or an inclusion of US FBS in the SALT aggregate total to assure a balance of US and Soviet systems.⁶ Regulations of central systems were deemed inadequate since they were in the last resort freezing an existing asymmetry that favored the ‘West’. The one-sided FBS allowance for the ‘West’ threatened to undermine the principle of ‘equal security’, parity and crisis stability. NATO Europe totally rejected a FBS regulation. The US FBS were the primary weapon system of the ‘West’ to counter the euro-strategic or sub-strategic Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 IRBM – in case British and French systems were not taken into the equation. The FBS were of importance to preserve a Euro-strategic balance. A Euro-strategic balance, however, was beyond the scope of the bilateral US-USSR SALT process. The problem had remained unresolved during the Nixon-Ford Administration. Prior to the Vladivostok Agreement NATO Europe had constantly rejected the option to expand the SALT process to all non-strategic nuclear weapons. NATO Europe deemed the US FBS and the ‘third party’ systems of France and the United Kingdom superior to the old Soviet IRBM. A widening of the SALT process to include all ‘gray area systems’ was considered unfavorable for the Euro-strategic balance. Matters changed with the Vladivostok Accord of 1974. At Vladivostok the Soviet Union withdrew its demand to include FBS in the aggregate total. The FBS issue was removed from the SALT II agenda and earmarked for the SALT III process. SALT III would deal with reductions and non-strategic systems. Reductions raised the strategic importance of FBS. Thus reductions and non-central systems regulations were interdependent. Since FBS remained unregulated the Soviet Union commenced to replace the aging SS-4 and SS-5 IRBM with the more modern system SS-20 to counter both FBS and ‘third party’ systems.⁷ The Soviet modernization decision had been taken by the Soviet Union to enhance Soviet negotiation currency in order to finally ‘force US FBS onto the negotiating agenda at SALT III.’⁸ The SS-20 provided Moscow with an ideal bargaining chip. As a consequence of the Soviet IRBM modernization the Euro-strategic balance shifted gradually in favor of the Soviet Union. Thus NATO Europe’s view on the Euro-strategic balance altered. The existing FBS were

6 John Borawski, ‘Theatre Nuclear Arms Control and Forward Based Systems, Air University Review’, May/June 1982, <http://www.airpower.au.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1982/may-june/borawski.html> (access date: 1 September 2012).

7 Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Policies of Nuclear Weapons in Europe, 1969–1987. The Problem of the SS-20*, Basingstoke: Macmillan 1989, 58ff.

8 Ibid, 59.

deemed inadequate. The option to deploy cruise missile (CM) systems in Europe to counter the MIRVed and mobile SS-20 IRBM and the new Soviet Backfire bomber gained strategic importance.⁹ Helmut Schmidt's interest to widen the SALT II process to cover the SS-20 and Backfire bomber or the entire 'gray area' gradually emerged after the Vladivostok agreement.

The scope question once settled at the outset of the SALT process re-emerged due to the development of Cruise Missiles. Regulated so far were only ballistic missile systems of intercontinental ranges. Cruise Missiles had been developed under Nixon's Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird as a US bargaining chip to enhance US negotiation strength.¹⁰ The Vladivostok Accord was silent on CM. But an interpretative war emerged about the Vladivostok *Aide Memoire* and the interpretation of the term 'air-to-surface missile'.¹¹ The US interpreted the term restrictively. Missile stood for ballistic missiles. The Soviet Union interpreted the term to cover both ballistic and cruise missiles. By the end of 1974 both sides had grasped the potential of the new CM system. The SU sought a CM regulation or prohibition. The US and NATO Europe objected to a SALT regulation of the weapon system due to its Euro-strategic importance. The SU was alarmed. In case the CM weapons system was not limited in SALT up to 10 000 ALCM warheads might emerge given the bomber allowance of Vladivostok. This would totally invalidate the central systems regulation.¹² The whole SALT accord could be strategically circumvented. The Soviet leadership thus urged the US not to allow a circumvention of the central systems accord. It would not make sense to build a dam against ballistic missiles while cruise missiles would remain unregulated. Henry Kissinger deemed it advantageous to limit the CM and to complete a SALT II agreement during the term of the Ford Administration. The Soviet Union would acquire a CM capability in the future, as it had acquired a MIRV capability or an ABM capability.¹³ An early regulation thus was sensible. NATO Europe remained hesitant. Well, NATO Europe objected totally to an inclusion of the CM into the SALT process. The CM was a promising tactical weapon for nuclear and conventional strike options. Thus in 1975 and 1976 a co-operation between Jackson Democrats, Reagan Republicans, the Pentagon and NATO Europe emerged that defended NATO's future defense options. A clear Western concept was becoming discernible. Parity of numbers in central systems of the superpowers assured 'Western' superiority in case NATO defense options and 'third party' systems remained unregulated. This coalition of 'falcons' – who started to reject the arms

9 Ron Huiskens, *The Cruise Missile and Arms Control*, Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Center 1980, 8; see also: Richard Burt, 'The Cruise Missile and Arms Control', *Survival* 18,1 (1976), 10–17.

10 Ibid, 3

11 Zbigniew Brzezinski, SALT Negotiating History, Document IV 20–27, Carter-Brezhnev Project, National Security Archive; George Washington University, Washington DC, www.nsarchive.gwu.edu/carterbrezhnev/ (last access: 8 Sep 2015).

12 Ibid, 11.

13 Ralph L. Dietl, *Equal Security. Europe and the SALT Process, 1969–1976*, Stuttgart: Steiner 2013, Chapter 10 and 12.

control principle of 'sufficiency' of the Nixon-Ford Administration – blocked a quick conclusion of SALT II in 1976. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who had served as NATO Ambassador, totally sided with NATO Europe. Rumsfeld clearly stated in his memoirs that he was 'certainly comfortable with delaying a new treaty' for as long as 'a satisfactory resolution' of points of concern 'were not reached.'¹⁴ Rumsfeld acted accordingly. The SALT process froze. Kissinger blamed the Joint-Chiefs-of Staff (JCS) for 'intransigence.' Rumsfeld memoirs seek to correct this impression: The JCS 'were not the impediment, I told him – I was.'¹⁵ President Ford concurred. He placed 'responsibility for the failure to get a SALT agreement' on Rumsfeld and the SU.¹⁶ The coalition that opposed a Vladivostok type SALT II agreement was surely wider. The Pentagon, the JCS, NATO and the US Congress blocked progress. The Soviet Union joined the opposing block – since it started to fear that a SALT II Agreement signed by the Ford Administration would not be ratified by the US Congress – prior to the Presidential elections. The Kremlin feared that an incoming US administration would not honor a SALT II agreement. SALT II, a Ford inheritance, thus would be defeated by the future US Congress. The Ford Administration furthermore sought to disaggregate the SALT agreement into a central systems agreement and a separate cruise missile regulation. This raised the problem that only one of the two interdependent agreements might be ratified prior to an election. Thus delay was the best option.

The incoming Carter Administration – elected into office in November 1976 – faced a transatlantic conflict in case NATO's interests would not be taken into the equation. The European CM option had to be preserved or SALT might get targeted by NATO Europe. Under these circumstances it was to be expected that the incoming Carter Administration would heed the advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General George S. Brown and of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld. General Brown had advised Rumsfeld on 1 December 1976 that the US offset the upcoming deployment of a new generation of Soviet ICBM, SLBM, IRBM and of the Backfire bomber by a SALT approach that does not constrain the US technological advantage in the field of cruise missiles. The Chiefs of Staff recommended that 'the US negotiating slate be wiped clean. The US proposal should not offer significant cruise missile concessions unless Backfire is included in the aggregate.'¹⁷ In brief the Joint Chiefs advised to disregard aspects of the Joint Draft Text (JDT) on SALT. In other words the Joint Chiefs of Staff considered it best to eliminate the entire SALT negotiation record on CM limitations and the Backfire bomber. The incoming Carter Administration had to utilize the Vladivostok Agreement as its platform – in its original US interpretation.

14 Donald Rumsfeld, *Know and Unknown. A Memoir*, New York: Sentinel 2011, 239.

15 Ibid, 231.

16 Ibid, 232.

17 Memorandum From the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, 1 December 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII: SALT II, No. 145.

The Carter Administration faced a major problem from the outset. The Soviet Union was to insist on the negotiation record since Vladivostok. The Joint Draft Text not the Vladivostok Accord had to guide the future SALT negotiations. The difference was of importance for the Alliance. The incoming Carter Administration had thus to make one major key decision, namely to either prioritize superpower *détente* and strategic arms control or trans-Atlantic relations. At stake was the future of the 'West'. A prioritization of superpower *détente* could have negative repercussions on transatlantic relations. A prioritization of Alliance affairs was to revive 'Western' solidarity but could potentially destroy superpower *détente* and revive a bloc competition.¹⁸ A revival of the early Cold War competition would be the consequence.

18 William G. Hyland, 'The Struggle for Europe: An American View', in: Andrew Pierre (ed), *Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, New York: A Council on Foreign Relations Book, 1984, 15–44, *ibid.* 15.

I. CARTER'S SALT APPROACH: APPEASING THE NATO ALLIANCE

1. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION: THE VLADIVOSTOK INHERITANCE

President Carter instantly embraced the SALT process. In his Inaugural Address the President pledged to work towards 'the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons from the earth.'¹ This was good public diplomacy for a US politician who considered a liberal domestic constituency. Carter entered the presidency as a Wilsonian liberal. He was all aware of the domestic *critique* of the Vladivostok Agreement. The Vladivostok Accord ceilings were that high that they legitimized further arms acquisitions. Arms control had been devalued in the public eye. The NPT obligation to work in 'good faith' towards general nuclear disarmament had been done a gross disservice. The President deemed a qualitative change of the SALT negotiations necessary to revive public support for arms control and to build a strong support basis for SALT.² The new US President decided to instruct the NSC staff to devise SALT options that would 'push the limitation talks into reduction talks.'³ This was necessary for the US to bring US policy in line with the NPT obligation. Liberals and conservatives agreed that the Vladivostok Accord was unsatisfactory. The US national interest demanded a redraft of the Vladivostok framework. The high ceilings and the throw weight advantage of the Soviet Union posed a long-term danger for Western defense. US vulnerability was bound to increase in case the Soviet Union modernized its forces within the Vladivostok framework. The danger of a 'window of vulnerability' in the 1980s was mainly highlighted by the 'Committee of Present Danger' an influential lobbying group co-founded by the former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Paul Nitze.⁴ The former SALT delegate Nitze supported reductions to erase the Soviet 'heavy missiles' and to enhance the US qualitative margin. The Presidential decision-making was guided by the seminal question of President Kennedy's former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara: 'how much is enough?'⁵ Carter surely sought to reduce the nuclear arsenal without undermin-

- 1 Jimmy Carter, *Keeping the Faith. Memoirs of a President*, London: Collins 1982, 215; see also: Francis P. Hoerber, How Little is Enough?, *International Security* 3,3 (1978–1979), 53–73; Richard Burt, 'The Scope and Limits of SALT', *Foreign Affairs*, 56 (1977–1987), 751–770, *ibid*, 754.
- 2 Richard Burt, 'Reducing Strategic Arms at SALT: How Difficult, How Important?', *Adelphi Papers* 18:141 (1978), 4–14, *ibid*, 6.
- 3 Carter, *Keeping the Faith*, 216; Raymond Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation. American Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, Washington: Brookings 1994, 868,
- 4 Garthoff, *Détente*, 879.
- 5 Hoerber, 53.

ing strategic and crisis stability. Carter, however, was attracted by the Wilsonian concept that disarmament or reductions were stabilizing. This classic disarmament concept was at variance with Thomas Schelling's modern arms control concept and the SALT track of a Henry Kissinger. Arms control was about balance not reductions. Kissinger had never prioritized reductions but 'essential equivalence'. Reductions of the Vladivostok launcher numbers just hindered a compromise and thus the establishment of a common ceiling and of 'essential equivalence'. According to William Hyland, a Ford Administration official retained by the Carter Administration, a mere 'completion of the Vladivostok Accord' was anathema to Carter. An adoption of Vladivostok was 'an admission of failure.'⁶ For Carter an embrace of the Joint Draft Text that included the post Vladivostok compromises was totally out of the equation. President Carter, however, did not discard the Vladivostok Accord entirely. The Vladivostok Accord created a common ceiling. It furthermore had the support of the Soviet Union. But Vladivostok could not be the last word. Vladivostok had either to be revised or preserved but instantly replaced amended by an early SALT III agreement. President Carter had to merge two agendas – the agenda of reductions and self-interested national security interests. The leeway for reductions was limited since US extended deterrence demanded extended targeting. The US strategic deterrent had to be capable to cover both (1) missile sites that threatened the US and (2) IRBM sites that threatened NATO Europe in order to preserve 'Western' security and solidarity. A further obstacle had to be taken into the equation: reductions automatically narrowed the leeway for compromise – since in a reduction model national security depended on fewer systems. Any asymmetry mattered more. Thus any reduction proposal would automatically revive the question of forward bases, of FBS and of 'third party' systems. Geographic factors and linkages with 'gray area' systems and conventional force strength in Europe would become more prominent. The correlation of forces – to use a Soviet term – would matter.

It has been the charm of the Vladivostok Accord to be vague. The Vladivostok framework was not threatening the procurement plans of either party. Both parties could build-up their deterrent forces to meet the limits of Vladivostok. Few compromises were necessary. Vladivostok envisaged an aggregate total of 2400 delivery systems – ICBM, SLBM or heavy bomber. A sub-ceiling of 1320 MIRVed systems was agreed upon. A definition of MIRVs was missing and thus a fractionization limit per launcher. In other words fractionization limits were unknown. Yield or throw weight of warheads remained unaddressed. The parties maintained a freedom to mix thus the composition was left open for any party to decide. Off-setting balances mattered. The high ceilings and the possibility to unilaterally maintain the category of 'heavy missiles' had allowed the Soviet Union to postpone – temporarily – their demand for compensation for US FBS systems

6 William G. Hyland, *Superpower Relations – From Nixon To Reagan*, New York: Random House 1987, 208.

and for 'third party' systems.⁷ The Ford Administration had considered that at least the FBS would be off-set by the Backfire bomber – a medium range bomber unregulated by Vladivostok. Both systems FBS and Backfire would be discounted.⁸ That way the strategic balance was preserved also in the European theatre. The *Aide Memoire* thus spoke of an accord based on the principle of 'equal security' for both sides. Another question had remained unaddressed by the Vladivostok Accord: the cruise missile. The *Aide Memoire* demanded that heavy bomber equipped with nuclear bombs or with air-to-surface missiles of a range exceeding 600 km be counted against the aggregate total. In addition any air-to-surface missile with a range above 600 km would count against the aggregate total.⁹ The *Aide Memoire*, however, did not contain a definition of 'missile'.¹⁰ Thus the US was unwilling to count CM against the aggregate total – only ballistic missiles.¹¹ The Soviet Union insisted on a comprehensive reading of the term 'missile' – the term 'missile' had to apply to both ballistic and cruise missiles. The US position was finally reversed on 6 February 1975 with the National Security Decision Memorandum 285. The US now agreed to a CM limitation for ALCM.¹² After months of deliberations the Ford Administration tabled a CM regulation that foresaw to limit ALCM to 2500 km on heavy bombers. These bombers would count against the MIRV ceiling of Vladivostok. Any party would be limited to 300 heavy bomber armed with long-range ALCM. ALCM on other aircraft would be limited to 600 km. Thus a Backfire bomber could never acquire a strategic capability.¹³ In December 1975 possible options for a regulation of all outstanding problems were worked out. The option preferred by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff was a deferral of both the revived Backfire question and the wider CM question, i.e., SLCM and GLCM, to the future SALT III process that was to cope with 'gray area' systems.

7 Sachstand SALT II, 24 Jan 1977, PA-AA, B 150, 359; Memorandum From Jan Lodal of the National Security Council Staff to Secretary of State Kissinger, 30 Nov 1974, FRUS 1972–1980 XXXIII, No. 89; Minutes of a Meeting of the National Security Council, 2 December 1974, FRUS 1972–1980 XXXIII, No. 90; Lothar Ruehl, 'The Grey Area Problem', *The Adelphi Papers* 18: 141 (1978), 25–34, 26.

8 Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger to President Ford, [undated, October 1974], FRUS 1972–1980 XXXIII, No. 85, 376.

9 Aide Memoire, Attachment to Memorandum From Jan Lodal of the National Security Council Staff to Secretary of State Kissinger, 30 Nov 1974, FRUS 1972–1980 XXXIII, No. 89.

10 Memorandum From Denis Clift of the National Security Council to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft, 10 Nov 1975, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 110.

11 Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft to Vice President Rockefeller, 29 Jan 1975, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 92, 404.

12 National Security Decision Memorandum 285, 6 Feb 1975, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 93; Memorandum From the Counselor of the Department of State Sonnenfeldt and William Hyland of the National Security Council Staff to Secretary of State Kissinger, 15 Jul 1975, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 98.

13 Minutes of a Meeting of the National Security Council, 6 Aug 1975 and 17 Sep 1975, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, Nos. 103, 105; Note From the United States to the Soviet Union, [undated, September 1975], FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 108.

ALCM by contrast had to feature in the SALT II treaty text.¹⁴ In January 1976 the final SALT proposals of the Ford Administration emerged. The US seemed willing to compromise and to exempt the Backfire yet again since the SU continued to exempt the FBS. Kissinger considered a US compromise proposal necessary also due to the fact that the Soviet Union had adopted the ‘Kissinger formula’ to count any missile as MIRVed as soon as it was tested as a MIRVed system. The SU – so Kissinger – thus counted 120 SS-18 against the Vladivostok MIRV limit although they were not MIRVed as of 1976.¹⁵ The US proposal nevertheless failed. The US and the SU could not agree to limit all CM – as proposed by the Soviet Union. Brezhnev stressed that the Soviet MIRV concession had been conditional. It was ‘organically’ linked to a settlement of all outstanding questions – in particular the CM. The SU furthermore rejected the US suggestion to reduce the Vladivostok limit from 2400 to 2300. The Vladivostok ceilings were set. Finally, the US concept of a five-year interim agreement, i.e. a deferral of a regulation for ‘gray area’ systems as suggested by the US Chiefs of Staff, was rejected. The Soviet leadership insisted that CM had to be limited in the treaty and that the Backfire did not qualify as a strategic weapon. The latter had been the reason for its exemption at Vladivostok.¹⁶ The Backfire could not be turned into a strategic weapon due to the fact that ALCM with ranges above 600 km were limited to ‘heavy bomber’. The Backfire as a medium-range bomber was only allowed to carry CM below a range of 600 km.

The US retained an interest in the deferral option. A deferral would allow the US to codify Vladivostok – as highlighted by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in the NSC of 11 February 1976.¹⁷ Kissinger assumed that there was, indeed, a chance for a deferral. The condition was that a 600 km CM limit would be imposed for all CM to be regulated by the interim agreement. A second condition applied: a strict prohibition of deployments had to be agreed upon while R&D and testing would remain unrestricted.¹⁸ The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff urged the Ford Administration to embrace a deferral approach. A deferral would allow developing Vladivostok. ‘Vladivostok was simple, gave us symmetry, and provided equivalent balance for the US.’¹⁹ An interim agreement would not forestall a future deployment of the temporarily regulated systems.

14 Minutes of a Meeting of the National Security Council, 22 Dec 1975, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 113, 504.

15 Minutes of a Meeting of the National Security Council, 8 Jan 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 114, 515f.

16 Message From Secretary of State Kissinger to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft, 21 Jan 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 118; Message From the White House Situation Room to Secretary of State Kissinger, 22 Jan 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 123; Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft to President Ford, 22 Jan 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 124.

17 Minutes of a Meeting of the National Security Council, 11 Feb 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 130, 600.

18 Ibid, 600f.

19 Ibid, 602.

The Ford Administration confronted the SU again with a revised deferral approach on 16 February. The US proposed to defer all 'intermediate range' CM issues and the Backfire question and to proceed with the Vladivostok Accord amended by the agreed upon ALCM regulation that counts heavy bomber with ALCM as MIRVed systems. No CM deployments beyond a 600 km limit would be permissible during the interim agreement's duration. R&D and testing would remain unrestricted. The MIRV verification rule agreed upon previously would apply and both parties should pledge to reduce the Vladivostok limits in the future.²⁰ The parties would furthermore commit themselves to work towards a final regime for 'gray area' systems. A final point was worth noting, the 'gray area' negotiations were not to interfere with the conduct of further negotiations for a more comprehensive SALT III agreement.²¹ The Kremlin rejected the US proposal on 17 March 1976. The SU was unwilling to accept the uncertainty of a division of the arms control package into two different instruments. The MIRV counting rule would be regulated in SALT II while the CM regulation would be deferred. Both questions were interdependent and thus had to be solved in common to avert possible asymmetries. The fact that testing and research and development of the systems governed by the proposed interim agreement were not to be restricted hinted at a US intention to deploy CM after the expiration of the interim agreement.²² In brief, the US proposal had to create the impression in Moscow that the US and NATO Europe were carefully guarding the CM option. General Secretary Brezhnev expressed his concerns openly to Governor Carter's special emissary Averell Harriman who visited Moscow on 16–22 September 1976.²³

President Gerald Ford came to a sobering conclusion: the US had either to change the proposal or 'abandon SALT.'²⁴ The attitude of NATO Europe – but also of the Chiefs-of-Staff and the Pentagon – limited the leeway of the Ford Administration. NATO Europe stubbornly rejected any bargain that restricted the cruise missile option. NATO Europe considered the CM vital for European security. The Soviet deployment of SS-20 had left a visible mark on NATO Europe. The NATO 'Petrignani Group' and France lobbied constantly against a direct or indirect regulation of the theatre weapon system CM in the SALT agreement. The SALT II non-transfer and non-circumvention regime was not allowed to undermine US transfers of CMs or CM technology to NATO Europe. The CM was deemed indispensable to bolster NATO Europe's nuclear defense capability and thus to preserve a Euro-strategic balance threatened by the Soviet IRBM moderni-

20 Note From the United States to the Soviet Union, undated [16 February 1976], FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 132; Zbigniew Brzezinski, SALT TWO Negotiation History, 2 Feb 1977, Document IV-20-27, Carter-Brezhnev Project.

21 Ibid, 608.

22 Letter from the Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev to President Ford, 17 Mar 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 608ff.

23 Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence. Moscow's Ambassador To America's Six Cold War Presidents*, New York: Times Books 1995, 378.

24 Minutes of a Meeting of the National Security Council, 30 Jul 1976, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 139.

zation.²⁵ The NATO Allies harshly rejected any range limitations for the various launch platforms under debate in order to preserve the CM as a potential NATO deep strike weapon for conventional or nuclear strikes.²⁶ The UK was interested in a SLCM.²⁷ The FRG in GLCM with adequate strike ranges for conventional or nuclear strikes against the Western Soviet Union. The US should under no circumstances give away indispensable tactical or theatre nuclear cruise missile options – ‘neither for herself nor for the European Allies.’²⁸ NATO Europe considered ranges of 1500 km as the absolute minimum. 2500 km were deemed the optimum. The Soviet Union by contrast insisted on CM ranges below 800 km – the distance from West-Germany to the Soviet Union.²⁹ New Western nuclear system, such as GLCM, should not be allowed to enhance the FBS threat to the Soviet Union proper but had to remain mere European theatre nuclear system.

The sensible suggestion by Senators Kennedy, Humphrey and Javits to ‘seek an agreement with the Soviets prohibiting the flight testing or deployment of land based or sea-based CM having ranges of more than 373 miles [or 600km]’³⁰ was anathema to NATO Europe. Even the US deferral proposal was disliked in Europe as a betrayal of European interest. Deferral, however, remained the only valid option. A CM exemption would revive the entire FBS question. CM with ranges above 800 km were nothing else but new FBS. A SALT II CM limit at 600 km by contrast would raise the ‘condominium syndrome’ in NATO Europe. Intra-Alliance conflict would be assured.³¹ The Ford Administration therefore tried to dampen the enthusiasm of the Europeans for this new weapon system.³² Even Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld openly declared the CM unfit for conventional strategic strikes. A Vladivostok deferral approach was the only viable platform for success. Power realities left little room for maneuver. Thus the SALT process virtually died in summer of 1976. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger gave ‘up any idea of taking a further initiative before the elections’.³³ Ideas to revive SALT

25 US Mission NATO to Secretary of State, SALT: NATO Experts Meeting, 12 Sep 1975, State Department, Outgoing Cables (SALT TWO-7), Box 12, Folder 9, National Archive, Washington DC (NARA) RAC CIA-RDP80T00294A001200090019-3; Renwick-Wilberforce (FCO, Def Dep), SALT, 14 Apr 1976, TN, FCO 46/1409; Fuller-Thomson, SALT: No-Transfer/Non-Circumvention, 10 Sep 1976, TN, FCO 46/1409.

26 Cruise Missiles – A Preliminary Assessment of the Implications for the United Kingdom of Current Developments, Annex to DP 17/76 (Final) [undated], TN, DEFE 70/433; US Mission NATO-Secretary of State, USNATO 5070 Section 4, Sept 1975, NARA, RAC CIA-RDP80T00294A001200090019-3.

27 Note, PPAG, The Submarine Launched Cruise Missile (SLCM), And the UK Polaris Force (1980–1994), [undated, Mar 1976], TN, DEFE 19/176.

28 Wilberforce, SALT, 30 Sep 1976, TN, FCO 46/1410.

29 Strategic Cruise Missiles, 31 Mar 1976, TN, DEFE 19/176; Reeve-Fuller (FCO, Def Dep), SALT, 26 Mar 1976, Reeve-Thomson (FCO), SALT: Cruise Missiles, 8 Apr 1976, TN FCO 46/1409.

30 Stewart Menaul, Will Cruise Missiles Save the West?, Apr 1976, TN, DEFE 19/176.

31 Wilberforce (FCO, Def Dep), SALT, 30 Sep 1976, TN, FCO 46/1410.

32 Thomson-Sykes, SALT, 2 Jul 1976, TN, FCO 46/1409.

33 Reeve-Wilberforce (FCO Def Dep), 17 Sep 1976, TN, FCO 46/1410.

prior to the elections were utterly unpromising. The Democratic Party – led by ‘Scoop’ Jackson – would attack any SALT agreement irrespective of its content as a ‘sell-out’ to the Russians. The chances of a Ford’s re-election were minimal, so the chances of a ratification of SALT.³⁴ The Kremlin showed no interest to proceed. The SU feared the disinterest of a President-elect in the SALT II inheritance.³⁵ The US Chiefs of Staff feared the weakness of the President.³⁶ The Allies feared last minute initiatives. All parties thus blocked co-operation on SALT prior to the upcoming elections.³⁷

On 22 November 1976 – days after the election of Jimmy Carter as the new US President – Alexis Johnson, the Head of the SALT Delegation, briefed the NAC on SALT for the first time since July. The report was brief. There was nothing of importance to report.³⁸ The British NATO Ambassador asked Alexis Johnson to note in the transition papers the Ford Administration’s commitment to clear any non-transfer or non-circumvention formula with the NATO Allies.³⁹ The Europeans also hoped that the established consultation practice would be continued in order to forestall transatlantic tensions. The European expectations were instantly met. The President-elect Carter embraced Wilsonian diplomacy and explicitly rejected the idea of backchannel diplomacy and secrecy. The President-elect sought a clear break with the Watergate tainted Nixon-Ford Administration. Carter promised ‘open diplomacy’.⁴⁰ The latter should destroy the ‘condominium syndrome’ in Europe and educate the US public. Open diplomacy would destroy false allegations and rumors domestically and reassure Allies.

The initial reaction of NATO Europe to Carter’s election remained cautious. The Governor from Georgia was an unknown factor.⁴¹ Roger Molander the SALT expert on the NSC staff expected that President Carter would ‘move swiftly’ to make an agreement possible by the middle of the year.⁴² One uncertainty remained: It was unclear whether Carter would embrace a Vladivostok deferral approach or a more comprehensive SALT II agreement that addressed the weaknesses of Vladivostok. Already before his Inaugural Address as US President Governor Carter had indicated a keen interest in reductions and qualitative arms control. Governor Carter’s special emissary, Averell Harriman, had been instructed to alert General Secretary Brezhnev that a quick SALT II agreement and reductions of strategic weapons were of prime importance for a future Carter Admin-

34 Fuller-Wilberforce (FCO Def Dep), 6 Jul 1976, TN, FCO 46/1409.

35 Reeve-Wilberforce (FCO Def Dep), 17 Sep 1976, TN, FCO 46/1410.

36 Fuller-Reeve (UK Embassy Wash), 21 Sep 1976, TN, FCO 46/1410.

37 Reeve-Pellew (FCO, Def Dept), 5 Jan 1977, TN, FCO 46/1411.

38 Beaumont-Fuller (FCO, Def Dept), 22 Nov 1976, TN, FCO 46/1410.

39 Ibid

40 James G. Blight/Janet M. Lang, ‘Forum: When Empathy Failed: Using Critical Oral History to Reassess the Collapse of U.S.-Soviet Detente in the Carter Brezhnev Years’, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12,2 (2010), 29–74, *ibid* 47.

41 Vincent A. Auger, *The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Analysis. The Carter Administration and the Neutron Bomb*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield 1996, 56.

42 Reeve-Fuller (FCO, Def Dept), 7 Jan 1977, TN FCO 46/1546.

istration.⁴³ Harriman had indicated to Brezhnev that Governor Carter considered the ceilings of the Vladivostok Accord as too high. Carter – so Harriman – ‘felt that the earlier there was an agreement to limit arms, the earlier we could move to reduce arms.’⁴⁴ General-Secretary Brezhnev concurred with an agenda to not just ‘control but to reduce nuclear weapons.’⁴⁵ The Harriman mission might have created the impression in Moscow that Carter envisaged a clear staged approach – first a quick-fix SALT II thereafter a more comprehensive SALT III that tackled reductions. Brezhnev left no doubt in an interview with the Hearst Press on 29 December 1976 that the Soviet Union favored the ‘earliest possible completion’ of the SALT talks on the basis of the understanding reached at Vladivostok in 1974.⁴⁶ The same applied to the SU. The Soviet Union – so Brezhnev – would like to see the year 1977 to ‘become a real turning point in ending the arms race.’⁴⁷

The Ford Administration officials considered it best for Jimmy Carter to quickly complete the work of Henry Kissinger. Helmut Sonnenfeldt – Kissinger’s *alter ego* – had high confidence that it would be possible to settle the outstanding questions ‘expeditiously’ were the Backfire and CM questions decided – either by a selective agreement in the treaty text or by a deferral. The Joint Draft Text should enable President-elect Carter to fix SALT II prior to the expiration of the SALT I Interim Agreement in October 1977. The Soviet Union – so Sonnenfeldt – preferred a quick SALT II settlement.⁴⁸ Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was less supportive of the Vladivostok framework. The out-going Secretary of Defense drafted a memorandum that did not prioritize the Vladivostok framework but highlighted the need to close or counter Soviet development options under the Vladivostok Accord.⁴⁹ The Pentagon – so Rumsfeld in *Strategic Arms Limitation: Some Hopeful Pessimism* – has a vested interest that any option ‘to ease the task of maintaining’ security by way of ‘balanced, meaningful and enforceable arms control’ is exploited.⁵⁰ Thus it is necessary to integrate defense, planning and arms control. The SU is currently modernizing its delivery systems in line with the SALT I framework. The SU furthermore developed weapons systems that are outside the SALT framework – ‘gray area’ weapons such as the Backfire bomber

43 Memorandum for Record of WAH [W.A.Harriman] with Governor Carter, Tuesday Morning, 31 Aug 1976, Document IV 188–192, *Carter-Brezhnev Project*, George Washington University, Washington DC, www.nsarchive.gwu.edu/carterbrezhnev/ (last access: 8 Sep 2015); Dobrynin, 379.

44 Ibid, 208

45 Memorandum of Conversation Brezhnev-Averell Harriman, 20 Sep 1977, IV, 193–212, Ibid.

46 Averell Harriman-President Elect Carter, 10 Jan 1977, Document IV 297–303, 301.

47 Ibid, 302.

48 Helmut Sonnenfeldt, SALT: Memorandum for the Secretary, 5 Jan 1977, National Archive, Washington DC (NARA) Record Group (RG) 59, Records of Henry Kissinger 1973–1977, Box 20.

49 Donald Rumsfeld, *Strategic Arms Limitation: Some Hopeful Pessimism*, Library of Congress Manuscript Division (LC) *Paul Nitze Papers*, Subject File, Box 155, Folder 3 (A SALT General 1977); Garthoff, *Détente*, 872; Huisken, 29.

50 Ibid

and the SS-20. The latter were primarily for regional use but were easily adaptable to a strategic role. The Vladivostok configuration allowed the SU to obtain a superior nuclear capability 'within the next decade, unless the U.S. and its Allies respond vigorously.'⁵¹ The Carter Administration thus should not seek an agreement for the sake of an agreement. SALT II must be balanced, verifiable and enforceable. SALT II furthermore had to offer a sound platform for a SALT III process. 'Because we continue to cooperate and to compete with the SU',⁵² the US had first and foremost to preserve defense and technological development options. Thus it is of an extreme importance not to prohibit research and development on CMs or on a survivable land-based ICBM – such as the multiple-aim point (MAP) MX basing. The SALT process was an 'integral part of national security policy'. Thus an artificial isolation of arms control from the complex web of national security policies and geopolitical factors was impossible. The core criteria any SALT agreement had to meet are: (1) equivalence of capabilities; (2) preservation of a second strike capability; (3) preservation of a flexible response capability in order to offer adequate responses to any form and any level of aggression without causing a holocaust. Donald Rumsfeld added a final recommendation, namely to continue the modernization program of the strategic deterrent forces instituted by the Ford Administration – and the modernization of the European theatre nuclear defense posture, i.e. modernization of the Pershing I started in 1974, the allocation of more Poseidon RV to NATO started in 1975, the introduction of the Lance missile and the introduction of F-15, F-16 and F-111 bomber in the European theatre.⁵³ The latter measures were all instigated to counter the SS-20 and to preserve the Euro-strategic balance without a GLCM deployment.⁵⁴ Donald Rumsfeld, reminded Carter to deploy the MARK 12 A warhead for the Minuteman III and continue the development of ALCM and SLCM as decided upon just days prior to Carter's Inauguration

Rumsfeld's recommendations, Rumsfeld final report to Congress released on 17 January and the CIA National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on *Soviet Strategic Objectives* of 12 January 1977, prepared by CIA Director George Bush, highlighted the need to address long-term dangers for the US under the current Vladivostok framework.⁵⁵ The NIE stressed that the Soviet Union utilized SALT to improve her relative position in the international system. The Soviet Union thus should not be allowed to use SALT to limit weapons currently under development in the US.⁵⁶ The NIE reflected to a large extent the findings of 'Team B'. 'Team B', chaired by Harvard Professor Richard Pipes, was composed of members of the US strategic community such as Paul Nitze, William Van Clause, Daniel Graham, Paul Wolfowitz. The latter highlighted the shortcomings of arms control *per se*

51 Ibid

52 Ibid

53 Ibid; Haslam, 78.

54 Garthoff, *Détente*, 880.

55 Ibid, 866.

56 National Intelligence Estimate. Soviet Strategic Objectives, 12 Jan 1977, NARA, Carter Library, Atlanta/GA, RAC NLC-21-35-5-198-6.

and the dangers of the Vladivostok Agreement in particular. ‘Team B’ assumed that the Soviet Union was pursuing a war fighting strategy and thus sought to abuse arms control in general and the Vladivostok framework in particular.⁵⁷ The key member of ‘Team B’, Paul Nitze, had resigned from the Nixon Administration due to the latter’s apparent willingness to attain a SALT II agreement at any cost. Paul Nitze, Eugene Rostow and David Packard furthermore founded the ‘Committee on the Present Danger’ on 11 November 1976 to protect US national interest from Wilsonianism or reasoned altruism.⁵⁸ Nitze co-operated closely with Senator Jackson and his Assistant Richard Perle, the fathers of the Jackson Amendment to the SALT I treaty, to re-balance the SALT process and to forestall the adoption of a Vladivostok framework.⁵⁹ Paul Nitze loathed the Vladivostok framework. The latter framework allowed the SU to develop a war-winning capacity without breaking the rules.⁶⁰ The Vladivostok framework did not limit throw weight – the weight of the re-entry vehicle, the bus and decoys. The throw weight of the Soviet heavy missiles provided the SU with a first strike potential in case no effective fractionization or MIRV limits emerge. Soviet advantage, however, could be offset by a MAP basing mode that would absorb Soviet throw weight and assure the viability of the threatened US land-based deterrent force. The US thus had to preserve in SALT II the option for mobile land-based missile systems and the option to modernize the US land based deterrent. The DoD paper ‘The Triad and the Future of the ICBM Force’ of 17 January 1977⁶¹ was totally supportive of the expressed views and pleaded for the construction of the MX missiles. Critique of the Vladivostok Accord was as old as the accord. The US Congress in its Hearings on Vladivostok in the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the Committee of International Relations of the House of Representatives of June–July 1975 had already highlighted the dangers of the Vladivostok framework. The common numerical ceiling was insufficient. Numbers were the wrong measurement of equality, parity or superiority. Hard ‘kill capability’ mattered – ‘hard kill capability’ was based on numbers, throw weight, yield and accuracy. Maneuverable Re-Entry Vehicles (MARV) and Cruise Missiles, i.e. highly accurate weapon systems, might revolutionize strategic affairs and create first strike capabilities. The United States faced a difficult

57 Paul H. Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost. At The Center of the Decision. A Memoir*, New York: Weidenfeld 1989, 352; William Hyland, *Mortal Rivals. Superpower Relations From Nixon to Reagan*, New York: Random House 1987, 84; Hans-Günther Brauch, *Die Raketen kommen! Vom NATO Doppelbeschluß bis zur Stationierung*, Köln: Bund-Verlag 1983, 28; Alan Weisman, *Prince of Darkness. Richard Perle. The Kingdom, the Power and the End of Empire in America*, New York: Union Square Press 2007, 48f.

58 Ibid, 353.

59 Haslam, 80; Martin Kahl, *Abschreckung und Kriegsführung. Amerikanische Nuklearstrategie, Waffenentwicklung und nukleare Rüstungskontrolle von Kennedy bis Bush*, Bochum: Brockmeyer 1994, 389.

60 Haslam, 80.

61 The Triad and the Future of the ICBM Force, 14 Jan 1977, NSC, Box 20, Folder 12, Paper on the Triad and the Future of the ICBM Force, NARA National Archive, RAC CIA RDP80M00165A002000120029-9.

decision, namely to either altruistically volunteer to limit technological development or to face a Soviet Union that would fear to fall behind.⁶² In any case the US had to address qualitative aspects of arms control. Paul Nitze felt that throw weight was the key to strategic stability. Throw weight itself, however, does not matter – only highly accurate MIRVed or MARVed throw weight created a first strike capability. According to calculations presented by Representative Leggett of California the US would maintain in the 1980s a counterforce kill capability advantage of 8:1 due to its technological lead.⁶³ Only in the 1990s when the SU would be able to MARV its Vladivostok throw weight the Soviet Union would surpass the US in 'hard kill capability'. The Vladivostok framework thus would allow the Soviet Union to multiply their 'hard kill capability' and to change the present 'pitifully insufficient' deterrent force into a superior deterrent.⁶⁴ The US had not to be afraid of Soviet numbers or of Soviet throw weight – so Leggett – but the US had to take care of the destabilizing effect of qualitative improvements. The recommendations to be drawn from these presentations were in line with the recommendation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Both were not alarmist. The US had to integrate defense and arms control to assure viable and lasting security in the future. The preservation of technical superiority or serious qualitative arms control was indispensable to assure US national security in the long-run.

Noteworthy for a comprehension of President Carter's SALT approach, however, were voices from within the Democratic Party – the recommendations by Edward Kennedy in particular. 'Ted' Kennedy stressed the findings of the NPT Review Conference. The member-states had concluded that the superpowers had done far too little to stop the arms race. The Vladivostok Accord was not in line with the Art VI obligation, the Vladivostok ceilings were too high. Worse, Vladivostok did nothing to stop the qualitative arms race. 'Ted' Kennedy furthermore cherished the Vladivostok Resolution which called upon the President to 'get the Vladivostok numbers down' and to broaden the scope of the agreement to forestall strategic circumvention.⁶⁵ Senator Kennedy pleaded for a policy of mutual restraint. 'Ted' Kennedy demanded that a new comprehensive treaty had to emerge that coped with the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the arms race.⁶⁶ The new treaty had to cure the imprecision of the Vladivostok Agreement since Vladivostok knew no MIRV warhead limit, no throw weight limit and contained no modernization prohibitions. President Carter thus had a herculean task to tackle. He had to restructure the SALT process. He had to find a common denominator that appealed to Jackson Democrats and to liberal Democrats alike. The US

62 Statement of Jonathan Bingham, Rep, NY, *The Vladivostok Accord: Implications to US Security, Arms Control and World Peace*, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the Committee of International Relations, House of Representatives, Ninety-Fourth Congress, First Session, 24, 25 June and 8 July 1975, 1–8.

63 Statement of Robert Leggett, Rep/NY, *Ibid*, 12f.

64 *Ibid*, 15.

65 Statement of Edward Kennedy, Sen/MA, *Ibid*, 20ff.

66 *Ibid*, 60f.

approach furthermore had to appeal to the Allies and remain acceptable to the Soviet Union.

The Carter Administration instantly agreed on the defense parameters. National Security Decision Memorandum 348 of 20 Jan 1977 highlighted three core concepts: (1) the US had to manage a strategic balance that assured US equality or superiority; (2) the US had to contribute adequately to the defense of Europe and (3) the US had to develop a global capacity to meet all challenges outside the NATO area. The US had to preserve the triad of ICBM, SLBM and bomber forces. The triad had to be modernized. The US strategic nuclear forces, however, 'should not in fact or appearance' threaten the Soviet Union with a 'disarming first strike capability.'⁶⁷ The preservation of crisis stability mattered most. On the 24 January 1977 the President directed the Special Coordinating Committee (SCC) to review the SALT process.⁶⁸ The SALT Working Group allocated the preparatory work for the SALT Review. The Pentagon was tasked to lead on the CM. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and the State Department were to lead on mobile ICBMs. The Backfire bomber question was delegated to ACDA. Further papers were prepared on reductions, on non circumvention and on ICBM vulnerability. All studies were due on 28 January 1977.⁶⁹ The President reviewed the SCC studies at a meeting in the White House Situation Room on 3 February 1977. During the latter meeting Carter asked to be furnished with a history of the Vladivostok Accord and for a study on mutually balanced reductions in strategic capabilities. The second study should include an analysis of the option of a future participation of the other nuclear powers in strategic arms control negotiations. Since US decisions impacted on the NATO partners constant consultation had to be assured. The Europeans should know what we are doing in arms control 'but we shall not allow their nervousness to drive our negotiations.'⁷⁰ Carter decreed to proceed with four major studies, on (1) the scope of a SALT II agreement, on (2) a major reductions approach, on (3) the SALT process, i.e. the sequence and timing of SALT II and III and on (4) supportive agreements such as a CTBT, an ABM review and civil defense.⁷¹ The SCC decided to ask the SALT Working Group to prepare two key approaches (1) one based on the Vladivostok Accord as amended in January/February 1976, i.e. a Vladivostok deferral and (2)

67 National Security Memorandum 348, NARA Carter Library, RAC NLC-15-105-2-1-6 (declassified 2008/05/22) or NARA, US Defense Policy and Military Posture, NSSM 246, Box 16, Folder 9, RAC: CIA-RDP81B00080R001600090005-1 (approved for release 2005/07/20).

68 Presidential Review Memorandum/NSC 2, 24 Jan 1977, FRUS 1972–1980, XXXIII, No. 147.

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