Missile Talks Doomed from the Start

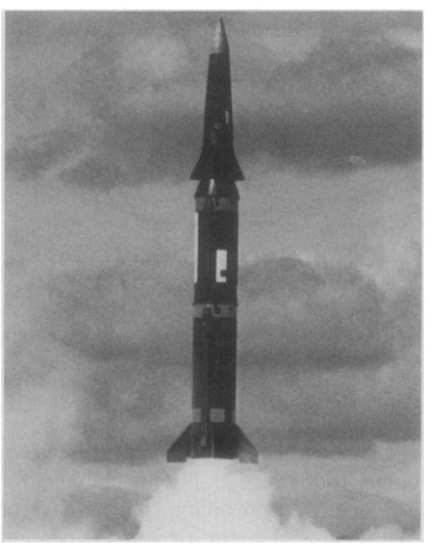
The U.S.-Soviet talks on European nuclear weapons had built-in flaws and both sides refused to compromise; a resumption is unlikely

Last year, when the Soviet Union first threatened to walk away from negotiations on the reduction of nuclear weapons based in Europe, the United States was officially nonchalant. "If they do walk out, and I certainly think there will be a recess, they will be back," said Richard Perle, the assistant secretary of defense. Even after the Soviets carried out their threat on 23 November, in response to the deployment of new Pershing II and cruise missiles in Germany and England, U.S. officials remained stubbornly optimistic. "I have to believe that they'll be back because it is to their advantage to come back," said President Reagan. Some of his subordinates predicted confidently that talks would resume by mid-January.

With each passing day, it appears that the Administration was seriously and sadly mistaken. Soviet officials have lately described the negotiations as "impossible" and "a dead letter," so long as the new U.S. missiles remain in Western Europe. After a meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in Stockholm on 11 January, Secretary of State George Shultz indicated that concessions were unlikely on either side. Several weeks ago, the Soviets began what they call a counterdeployment of new nuclear missiles in Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

The reason that the prospects for a settlement of this dispute are dim—indeed the reason that the negotiations were dissolved in the first place—is that neither side has shown any substantial flexibility. The mood was set in November 1981, when both the United States and the Soviet Union adopted essentially nonnegotiable opening positions. Months passed before either nation exhibited any interest in alternatives. Concessions were infrequent, because neither trusted the other to reciprocate. Each side tried harder to win support in Western Europe than they did at the bargaining table. In the end, the talks collapsed amid mutual allegations of cunning and deceit. And since then, positions have hardened on both sides.

The stimulus for the negotiations was a decision by the ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in October 1979 to deploy 572 Pershing and cruise missiles in five West European countries, as well as to try to negotiate reductions in the deployment of a similar Soviet missile, the SS20. Of these two conflicting objectives, it was clearly NATO's deployment, not arms control, that most interested the framers of the decision (*Science*, 27 January, p. 371). As one of the participants recalls, negotiations were merely "a means of reconciling a military need with political reality"—the reality of heightened public opposition to nuclear weapons in Europe that sprang from the ill-fated U.S. proposal for deployment of the neutron bomb. Spurgeon Keeny, who was then deputy director at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), remembers that "most people here looked on this as a political necessity to get NATO acceptance of the [Pershing and cruise] deployment, rather than something where the arms control process had a serious chance of success."



The Pershing II

Recently deployed in Europe.

From the outset, NATO's decision to focus the negotiations on U.S. and Soviet land-based long-range theater nuclear missile systems created several obstacles to an agreement. First, it forced the United States to demand reductions in the SS20, a weapon that the Soviets had already deployed, in exchange for two that the West had not yet fully developed. Second, because neither the Pershing nor the cruise would be ready before 1983, the Soviets in effect had 3 years to try to persuade the European public that the deployment should not go forward. As Henry Kissinger noted at a recent conference on European security, the Soviets thus had little incentive to negotiate seriously.

A different, but more fundamental problem caused by NATO's focus on long-range missiles was simply that they carry only a small fraction of the bombs capable of being trained on European targets. The United States, for example, has deployed roughly 6000 warheads throughout NATO in such forms as atomic demolition munitions, artillery shells, short-range missiles, long-range missiles, air-launched missiles, submarine-launched missiles, and antisubmarine weapons. Similarly, the Soviet Union is said to have deployed about 4000 nuclear warheads in Eastern Europe, as well as thousands more that are capable of reaching European targets. By seeking to exclude most of these forces, NATO limited not only its ability to strike bargains but also the potential usefulness of any bargain it finally struck.

From the start, the Reagan Administration seemed to have mixed feelings about conducting the negotiations at all. Eugene Rostow, Edward Rowny, Richard Perle, and a variety of other Administration officials all predicted that no agreement could be reached until the deployments had begun. It was largely in response to European pressure that President Reagan decided in the autumn of 1981 to open the talks. He appointed as his chief negotiator Paul Nitze, a wealthy investment banker with broad government experience who cofounded the Committee on the Present Danger, a group that toiled in the late 1970's to warn the public of an expanding Soviet menace. Nitze, 76, had previously participated in the SALT I negotiations as a representative of the Secretary of Defense. He is earnest and precise, a gentleman diplomat with a sharp intellect.

For roughly the first year of the talks, Nitze was charged with negotiating an agreement based on a formula that was patently unacceptable to the Soviets, a formula devised by Richard Perle that became known as the "zero-zero" option. It specified that the United States would forgo its deployment of the Pershing II and the cruise missile if the Soviets would completely scrap their deployments of the SS20, a missile first

deployed in 1977 as a replacement for SS4's and SS5's, which dated from the late 1950's and early 1960's. The "zero-zero" formula ignored a number of additional weapons of interest to the Soviets, such as medium-range bombers. As Keeny remarks, "It would have essentially eliminated a Soviet force that had been in existence for 20 years, in exchange for the elimination of a U.S. system not yet deployed. It was clearly a nonstarter. There was no prospect of that deal taking place."

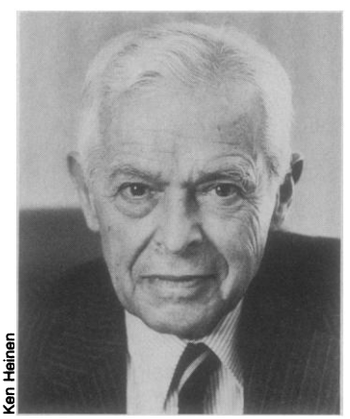
The Soviets responded with an equally fatuous opening proposal: Both countries would reduce the total number of medium-range nuclear systems to 600 by the end of 1985, with further reductions of 300 by 1990. Not only did this total include aircraft, a topic on which the two sides vehemently disagreed, but it also included, on the Western side, 162 ostensibly independent nuclear systems fielded by England and France. The Soviets argued that such weapons should be counted because, in the event of a conflict, they would probably fall under U.S. control.

As with the American "zero-zero" proposal, the likelihood that the opening Soviet formula would be accepted by the other side was nil. U.S. negotiators have always simply refused to incorporate the nuclear forces of its allies in bilateral superpower negotiations. Nevertheless, from the Soviet perspective, the proposal had many virtues. Foremost was the fact that it sounded equitable and proved popular in Europe; second, it tended to set British and French interests against those of the remainder of the alliance; and third, its acceptance would have kept Britain and France from fulfilling plans to expand their nuclear arsenals by hundreds of weapons in the next decade.

For roughly 7 months, the negotiations on these topics got nowhere, and European public opinion turned increasingly against the U.S. deployment. By the summer of 1982, Nitze had decided out of frustration and concern to propose a comprehensive solution that took into account U.S. desires for global limitations on the SS20 as well as Soviet concerns about the Pershing II. He discussed it with Russian negotiator Yuli Kvitsinsky during a stroll in the Jura Mountains north of Geneva, a circumstance that gave rise to its subsequent description as the "walk-in-the-woods" idea.

In formulating the proposal, Nitze hoped to overcome what he calls a structural problem of negotiations, namely, that "you can't make a concession, or at least it's dangerous to do so, because the other side may just pocket it and then say this was a silly point of yours anyway and at last you've seen the light." He explained, in interviews with *Science* in Geneva and Washington, that "it was really for the purpose of getting over this problem that I worked out this idea of a package that would include the full panoply of concessions on both sides on all the issues at one time."

Specifically, Nitze proposed that the Soviets would have to eliminate all but 75 SS20's (with 225 warheads) aimed at Europe and deploy no more than 90 aimed at the Far East. The United States, in return, would be limited to deployment of 75 cruise missile launchers, or 300 warheads, on European soil. Each side would have equal numbers of medium-range bombers, and both the number and quality of short-range nuclear systems would be frozen at existing levels. It was clearly a good deal for the West: in exchange for giving up the Pershing II, the United States would retain its right to modernize existing forces, gain a modest superiority in missile warheads, and cap the deployment of modern Soviet missiles outside Europe as well.



Ken Heinen

Negotiator Paul Nitze

Worked out comprehensive proposal.

Wary of agreeing to such concessions without official approval, Kvitsinsky and Nitze agreed to describe the plan as "a joint exploratory package for the consideration of both governments; it is not an offer or a proposal by either government." But all hell broke loose when they returned to their respective capitals. Kvitsinsky was apparently reprimanded for even considering such a formula and Nitze drew substantial criticism for deviating from the official U.S. "zero-zero" proposal. The Pentagon, in particular, objected to any ban on the Pershing II. After a formal National Security Council meeting, President Reagan authorized Nitze to continue negotiations on a package that lacked this key U.S. concession.

Nitze himself became increasingly doubtful about the plan when he failed to get a favorable reply from Kvitsinsky through a contact at the Soviet embassy in Washington, as they had agreed. Up until this point, he insists, "the initial Washington reaction was favorable. Only after Kvitsinsky failed to contact me did a real issue arise about the wisdom of transforming it into a one-sided proposal by the United States. At that point, I withdrew my own support, because it was no longer a sound negotiating strategy."

Some arms control experts in the United States think that Nitze could have forced the Soviets into an awkward position by announcing the plan openly. "This would have called their bluff and embarrassed them in world opinion," one says. But the White House, acting against the recommendations of both Nitze and Eugene Rostow, who then directed ACDA, asked them not to say anything about it. Only because Rostow ignored this request—a transgression that contributed to his subsequent dismissal—did Helmut Schmidt, the West German chancellor, learn about the existence, but not the substance, of the private discussions. "For the failure to inform and consult the European allies, there is no excuse," Schmidt said later. To him, the formula was "an absolutely acceptable compromise."

Eventually, Secretary of State George Shultz told Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko that the Administration approved of continued private discussions between Nitze and Kvitsinsky, but that the outcome of those conversations remained uncertain—an ambiguous assessment that the Soviets may have interpreted as a partial or total rejection of the walk-in-the-woods formula. On the following day in Geneva, the formula was formally and completely rejected by Kvitsinsky, who explained last month in an article released by *Novosti*, the Soviet press agency, that the formula was simply too imbalanced. "In reality, it was a blind alley from the start," he said.

The next move was made by Yuri Andropov, who promised in December 1982 that in exchange for cancellation of the U.S. modernization program, the Soviets would retain only 162 SS20's in the European theater, or enough to counterbalance the nuclear-armed missiles and aircraft deployed by Britain and France. President Reagan responded in the spring of 1983 that the United States would consider a formula in which U.S. and Soviet (but not British and French) warheads would be equally limited to a level between 50 and 450.

Subsequently, the two sides substantially narrowed their differences: The Soviets agreed, for example, to consider equal limits on warheads, not just missiles (each SS20 has three warheads, while the Pershing and the cruise each have one); they also agreed to limit the number of SS20's aimed at Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, in addition to those aimed at Europe. Under pressure from the Europeans, the United States agreed in late September 1983 to consider limits on aircraft; to reduce the number of Pershings as well as cruise missiles; and to offset some of the Soviet deployment with medium-range missiles in the United States, not Europe. By last fall, as Nitze says, "there was substantial movement towards an agreement on most issues."

As the initial Pershing and cruise missile deployment date drew near, Nitze and Kvitsinsky made a final attempt to settle a significant remaining dispute over the inclusion of British and French nuclear forces in any treaty limits. The effort is worth recounting in some detail, because it dissolved in a blaze of publicity, and led to a sharp dispute between the participants. Nitze's version is as follows: During a conversation over dinner in late October, Kvitsinsky implied that the Soviets would be receptive to a proposal for substantial, equal reductions in U.S. and Soviet missile warheads—a proposal that lacked any compensation for French and British forces. "Over the 2 years, I think the Soviets had come to fully understand that it was not a justifiable issue; it was in fact a cooked up rationalization," Nitze explains. "Not only was it unjustifiable, but it was politically impossible. It would split up the alliance."

Specifically, Kvitsinsky suggested that the United States propose a reduction of 572 warheads on each side. To Nitze, such an agreement was unacceptable because even though it would result in a 60 percent cut in the number of SS20's aimed at Western Europe, it would effectively prevent the European deployment of even a single Pershing II or cruise missile. But Nitze sensed an important policy shift. Several days later, he asked Kvitsinsky "which of these two things are you emphasizing, was it equal [but unspecified] reductions on both sides or was it equal reductions by 572? He said it was the latter. He said, 'Now, why do you ask the question?' I said well, I'm trying to figure out whether some formula such as equal reductions by 472, leaving us with 100, and you with 460, would be of interest; it's

(Continued on page 570)

Archeologist to Head Smithsonian

Robert McCormick Adams, provost of the University of Chicago, has been named the next secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to succeed S. Dillon Ripley, who will retire in September.

Adams, 57, is an archeologist and anthropologist who is an authority on agricultural and urban history in the Middle East. He was educated at the University of Chicago and has held various positions there, including directorship of the Oriental Institute, since 1955.

Robert McCormick Adams

Adams, who is said to be gifted at handling people and building consensus, was initially reluctant to consider the post because he feared that inertial forces of the bureaucracy might make the institution unresponsive to a new hand at the tiller. However, he has been impressed with recent scientific appointments there, and discussions with the Board of Regents persuaded him that they were in fundamental accord with his visions for the future. "I am coming in with some things I really want to do," he says.

One of Adams' principal goals for the Smithsonian is to see it become "a truly significant force . . . a real nerve center of activity and coordination" in the realm of international scientific activities, ranging from involvement with scientific refugees to the International Biological Program. He sees a "vacuum somewhere in the [international] system" that the Smithsonian could be uniquely qualified to fill.

Adams also notes that "there are a hell of a lot of smart people" in the Washington area, at the National Institutes of Health and elsewhere, who have "no clear institutional focus" for their intellectual energies. His ambition, as yet ill defined, is to see the Smithsonian become that focus, helping scientists and intellectuals relate to one another, individually and institutionally, in such a way as to form a "critical mass."

According to Princeton University president William Bowen, who headed the search committee, Adams was the unanimous choice of the committee, which has examined 300 candidates since last spring.

Adams' appointment follows the tradition of reserving the top position for a scientist. He will be presiding over the construction of a new $75 million project—an international center combined with a center for Near East, Asian, and African cultures. This is only the latest element of a vast expansion conducted by Ripley over the past 20 years, which has included opening up a wealth of learning opportunities for the public as well as construction of the Hirshhorn Museum and the National Air and Space Museum.

Adams' professional distinctions include membership on the governing board of the National Academy of Sciences. His wife, Ruth Adams, is editor of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.—**CONSTANCE HOLDEN**

Ban on Shooting Animals for Research Is Lifted

A military program to study gunshot wounds in live animals has been reinstated. The program was halted temporarily last summer when Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, yielding to protests that dogs might be among the targets used at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) in Bethesda, Maryland, ordered its review.

Congress has imposed a specific restriction not to use either dogs or cats in experiments to train military medical personnel to deal with gun wounds. The Pentagon, interpreting this restriction more broadly, has decided not to undertake any basic research in this area involving dogs and cats. Other animals, such as goats and pigs, may be used, however.

Military research programs on gunshot wounds are not new, nor are they

(Continued from page 568)

the same principle. He said no, that would not be acceptable."

Nitze says that was the end of it until Kvitsinsky phoned late in the evening on Saturday, 12 November, "and said he wanted to see me on instructions of his government." During a stroll the next day in the botanical garden across the street from ACDA's offices in Geneva, Kvitsinsky said that he would agree to a formal American proposal that called for reductions of 572 warheads on both sides. Nitze scoffed, and suggested that his superiors would be loath to convert a Soviet idea into a U.S. proposal, but he agreed, at Kvitsinsky's urging, to forward the idea to Washington.

With a debate in the German parliament on the missile deployment only a week away, Nitze says, "I had in mind that [the Soviets] might be up to some trick," and so he recommended that Washington promptly inform the Europeans of what seemed to be an important new development. Were the news leaked by the Soviets first, Nitze feared, and leaked so as to make it appear that he had actually accepted the idea, it would appear as if the United States were holding up a settlement and keeping its partners in the dark. Sure enough, on 17 November, a day after the idea had been formally rejected in Washington, the Soviets leaked this tale to several U.S. and German journalists, and then described it officially in letters distributed to European governments. Fortunately, the relevant officials had already been briefed by the United States, and a diplomatic crisis was successfully averted.

This is Nitze's version; the Soviets offered a startlingly different account in an official statement shortly before the talks concluded. They assert that the idea for equal reductions was conceived in Washington, not Moscow; that it was Nitze, not Kvitsinsky, who proposed to ignore British and French forces; that it was a "dishonest act" by the United States to attribute the idea to Moscow; and that it was all part of a crass attempt to make it appear as if the negotiators had made genuine progress, when in fact they had not. Moscow's letters were intended only to present the truth, not to sow dissension among the Western allies, the statement said.

Nitze says that "when I demanded of Kvitsinsky an explanation of what the hell had gone on, his line was that the whole idea had been mine, that I'd suggested this to him a year earlier, in a different walk-in-the-park." Nitze says that in a previous conversation, he had indeed sought Kvitsinsky's reaction to a proposal for equal reductions made by Paul Warnke, an ACDA director during the Carter Administration, but Kvitsinsky had responded negatively and it was never in any event an official U.S. position.

These two renditions are so greatly at odds with one another that they cannot easily be reconciled. Although it is possible that the discrepancy stems from misunderstanding, it seems more likely that one of the two principals is not telling the truth. Nitze offers several plausible explanations for apparent Soviet perfidy. According to one, he says, "there were differences of opinion between various segments of the decision-making process in Moscow, and in order to get a consensus, . . . they decided that it should be put to the other people in Moscow as a Nitze proposal."

A more likely explanation is that the Soviets were wary about giving up on the compensation issue without obtaining significant U.S. concessions in return, Nitze says. "The difficulty of it was that if they advanced this theory of equal reductions on both sides and it did not result in a deal, then they would have destroyed their negotiating position. . . . To avoid this, it seems to me reasonable that they might have had from the outset an escape hatch attributing all this to me rather than Kvitsinsky."

"These fellows are fascinating to deal with," Nitze says.

The significance of the incident lies not so much in the substance of the idea, which ultimately was disowned in both capitals, as in the possibility that the subsequent recriminations have poisoned relations between the top U.S. and Soviet negotiators beyond any repair. Nitze says simply that "I see it as something that happened, really a confirmation of the sort of behavior that I've become accustomed to. I find it entertaining because it's so dramatic. These fellows are fascinating to deal with. You find every kind of trick in the trade before you're through with them." Kvitsinsky has been even more blunt. In a recent article for *Novosti*, he called the Western version of events "dishonorable," and said that "Mr. Nitze was told what we thought of such practices." Many arms control experts in Washington are now predicting that if the INF talks resume, Nitze and Kvitsinsky are unlikely to be seated across the table from one another again—a prospect that bodes poorly for any resolution in the foreseeable future.

One option for restarting negotiations on nuclear forces based in Europe is obviously to fold them into the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, which were recessed in December and are expected to resume in the spring. Former ACDA director Paul Warnke says that the distinction is artificial anyway because a variety of so-called strategic nuclear weapons, such as long-range missiles deployed in silos or on submarines, can also be used to hit European targets. He also argues that concessions would be easier to obtain because both sides would have a larger pool of weapons with which to bargain.

Nitze believes that such a merger is worth considering, but only if British and French submarine-launched missiles were defined as strategic, not European theater, nuclear weapons. He worries, however, that the Soviets will define strategic systems as anything that can strike the territory of the other side, "ignoring, in other words, the issue of a European balance. We would have to work hard to keep that from happening."

Both countries have become prisoners of their public commitments to stand firm. The Reagan Administration, for example, is at present unwilling "to offer some sort of concessions for the sake of resuming the talks as such," as Secretary of State George Shultz said on 12 January. Nitze recently told reporters that "there are things that we could do to make it easier for them to return to the negotiations without making improper concessions," but these extend merely to consideration of alternative forums, not alternative positions. In interviews with *Science*, Nitze noted that "the Soviets will give up their insistence on no U.S. deployments only when it becomes clear that it is better to accept some deal than no deal at all." With continued unrest in Europe and new pressure for U.S. concessions from potential Democratic presidential nominees, the likelihood of movement by the Soviets in the near future is extremely small. As David Aaron, a former National Security Council staff member, said at a recent forum sponsored by the Arms Control Association, "Reagan now needs a success in arms control more than they do."

—R. JEFFREY SMITH

This is the second part in a series on missile deployment.