

NOT FOR THE SYSTEM

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

October 3, 1985

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: George P. Shultz
SUBJECT: Response to Soviet Arms Proposals

Your arms control policy has been successful in bringing the Soviets to the bargaining table, and now in eliciting the first Soviet proposal for real reductions. As expected, their proposal is one-sided and self-serving, and cannot be the basis for an equitable agreement. We must be prepared for difficult and protracted negotiations.

The Soviet proposal is obviously designed for public appeal. It gives the impression of being comprehensive and equitable. It appears to provide equal reductions in warheads by 50 percent, and to give the United States an advantage in the number of weapon systems, even though in fact it does not do either. It will take astute, forceful and carefully coordinated handling by all of us to highlight for our public and allied publics the unacceptability of the Soviet proposals.

I believe that in addition to a vigorous campaign to counter their propaganda, this is the time to advance a U.S. counter-counterproposal along the lines you and I and Bud have discussed. Such a U.S. proposal is described in my memorandum of September 19, and in the Support Group paper of September 24. The combination of strategically significant reductions and reversal of the erosion of the ABM Treaty would be a strong and defensible position. It would permit the SDI program to continue as planned, and preserve the option for a cooperative, or a non-cooperative, transition to greater reliance on defense.

It would be to our advantage to advance our counter-counterproposal in a prompt response to Gorbachev, and in parallel through our negotiators in Geneva, during the current round. The U.S. proposal could then serve as the basis for your discussions with Gorbachev. Otherwise, while you are trying to bring new life to U.S. proposals which have been on the table for over two years, the focus of those discussions would be on the Soviet proposals.

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BY CS, NARA, DATE 11/4/05

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