

PROPOSED TALKING POINTS
FOR ROBERT C. McFARLANE
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BY hct, NARA, DATE 2/22/08

- The main issues for discussion today are:
 - What are Soviet interests in START and INF in 1984? And
 - How should the political context in this election year affect US actions in these areas?

AGENDA ITEM 1: SOVIET INTERESTS

- The Intelligence Community has developed and circulated to all of us a short paper addressing its estimate of Soviet interest in arms control in 1984.
- The paper argues that the Soviets appear to have adopted a two-pronged strategy, taking an inflexible line on INF and START, while simultaneously expressing a willingness to move ahead on other security issues, and signaling that a breakthrough in US-Soviet relations is possible if Washington shows flexibility in these other areas.
- It notes that the Soviets presumably calculate that this strategy enables them to stand firm on the central issues of INF and START, without making themselves appear so intransigent so as to rally support for NATO's policies or demonstrate that they are responsible for poor US-Soviet relations.
- Finally, it concludes that the Soviets will continue to probe for US flexibility on a range of issues, with the aim of extracting the maximum price for any marked improvement in relations or arms control issues before US elections. They will be wary of any major steps unless convinced that significant gains for the USSR are at hand.
- Director Casey, would you like to expand upon this short summary and begin the discussion of the issue addressed by the paper.

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[After the DCI's remarks, ask for others views and reactions.]

[Ed Rowley's memorandum to the President argues that while the Soviets are adamant on not returning to INF, START is different. The memo asserts that the Soviets will find it in their interest to return to START by June. This does not track with the position taken in the CIA paper. You may wish to ask Ed his views on this if they do not come out in the discussion.]

AGENDA ITEM 2: POLITICAL CONTEXT

- With the previous discussion of Soviet interests as a background, could we now turn to the political context in this election year and how that context affect US actions in the areas of INF and START.
- Due to the obvious sensitivity of this subject, we have not asked the interagency community to develop a discussion paper on this issue.
 - A number of you have provided your thoughts directly to the President via individual memoranda prior to the meeting. [FYI: These were not circulated to the various agencies.]

- Could we start the discussion of this issue by asking Secretary Weinberger to summarize his views on this subject? Following Secretary Weinberger's remarks, could we have the views of others on Secretary Weinberger's arguments and on their own assessment of the situation? Cap?

[After SecDef's remarks, solicit the views of others. You may wish to use the following short summary of the key part of SecDef's argument to spur the discussion in the right direction.]

- Secretary Weinberger argues that we should assess whether there is now any likelihood of Chernenko being more accommodating in START and INF before the election.
- If the answer is no, given the US political context and Soviet understanding of that context, the Secretary feels that we should immediately implement a strategy that permits the President to set the terms for the arms control debate and establish the foundation for defending our last three years of activity in rearmament and arms control. He feels we should do this promptly before such actions could be seen as evidence of the Administration being on the defensive in a political campaign.
- Finally, he argues for a specific approach which stresses certain themes and which draws public attention on Soviet violations and on the Soviet walk-out of negotiations.
 - His view is that the urgent requirement before us is to settle on a working assumption about the likely Soviet arms control strategy and to fashion an appropriate response.
 - Given the risks of basing a US strategy on what some may call unfounded optimism, he argues the keystone of our public policy should be a defense the Administration's record and philosophy, while remaining poised to move if the Soviets desire.
- How do others feel about this?

[In addition to SecDef, memoranda have been submitted to the President by Ken Adelman, Ed Rowny and Paul Nitze. Try to control the argumentation of specific options.]