

Reagan gives orders to U.S. Geneva team

At a White House sendoff meeting on March 8 for the U.S. negotiating team at the upcoming U.S.-Soviet arms talks in Geneva, President Reagan stressed that the United States would seek verifiable reductions in the two superpowers' arsenals as a primary goal in the talks.

The President said: "The challenge of statesmanship is to have the vision to dream of a better, safer world and the courage, persistence and patience to turn that dream into reality.

"Since the dawn of the nuclear era, all God's children have lived with the fear of nuclear war and the danger of nuclear devastation. Our moral imperative is to work with all our power for that day when the children of the world can grow up without the fear of nuclear war. So, today, we reaffirm that vision—a world dedicated to the elimination of nuclear weapons, a world in which technology provides ever greater safety rather than greater fear. Today, we set out on a new path toward agreements which radically reduce the size and destructive power of existing nuclear missiles.

"Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko said last month, 'Our ultimate objective here is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons everywhere on this planet, the complete removal of the threat of nuclear war.' Well, I welcome that statement and assure Mr. Chernenko that the elimination of nuclear weapons is also the ultimate objective of the American government and the American people.

"It's now our task and responsibility to take practical steps to turn this vision into reality. We should have no illusions that this will be easy since any venture of this magnitude will take time. And since the most vital security interests of both sides are at stake, this will clearly be long and difficult. We're realistic because we know that our differences with the Soviet Union are great. Patience, strength and unity—Western unity—will, therefore, be required if we're to have a successful outcome.

"Next week, the United States and the Soviet Union meet in Geneva to begin a new dialogue on these issues. And above all, we seek agreement as soon as possible on real and verifiable reductions in American and Soviet offensive nuclear arms. For our part, the United States is ready with firmness, patience and understanding to negotiate fair and equitable

agreements reducing the dangers of nuclear war and enhancing strategic stability.

"I've just concluded a very good meeting with our three negotiators, Ambassadors Max Kampelman, John Tower, and Mike Glitman, which culminates an extensive round of preparation.

"In the meeting, I gave my instructions for the first round of talks. These instructions enabled our negotiators to explore every promising avenue for progress. And they have my personal support.

"Like Americans everywhere, I want these negotiations to succeed and will do everything I can to ensure that this happens. And I pray that the Soviet leadership is prepared to make the same commitment. . . .

"Ambassadors Kampelman, Tower, and Glitman, and all the members of our negotiating team—I know that all of our fellow Americans wish you every success. And I know from my conversations with the bipartisan leadership of the Congress that the Congress of the United States joins in supporting you. . . ."

In a followup briefing, National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane elaborated on the "three baskets" of negotiations—strategic forces, Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF), and Ballistic Missile Defense—for which separate and to a large extent specific instructions were given. On Strategic Forces, the U.S. objective is twofold: to reduce the overall size of intercontinental missile forces on both sides and to reduce the existing Soviet superiority in advanced, hard-target kill weapons; on the INF negotiations which involve nuclear forces in Europe, the U.S. proposal would be the old "zero-zero" option, i.e., zero Soviet SS-20 and related weapons and zero American "Euromissiles," and no inclusion of French and British deterrent forces.

On strategic defense and space defense talks, here is how the White House described the U.S. approach:

"The third basket of negotiations deal with defense and space arms. The President has stressed in his instructions of more than a dozen pages that we should begin in this session to establish the United States view on the relationship between offense and defense, to present the United States' concerns on the erosion of the ABM Treaty, to provide the Soviet Union with a comprehensive rationale for the United States Strategic Defense Program, and to take up some dozen different issues with the Soviet Union—including our view of the current strategic situation imbalance; our strategic concept which was laid out at Geneva as to how we view the evolution in strategic forces in the next 10 years and the transition over time away from offense and toward defensive forces; a treatment of why we're concerned about the erosion of the ABM Treaty; a treatment, *in extenso*, of our concerns over compliance with it; a discussion in depth of our concern about air defenses and the potential for upgrade and their use as antiballistic missile systems; a discussion of emerging technologies, and how and why we believe that they can lead to a more stable framework for deterrence."