
Documentation

A chronology of the treason in Congress

May 22: Forty-six Senators, including nine Republicans, sign a letter initiated by Sen. Bennett Johnston (D-La.) urging that SDI funding increases for FY1987 be kept to a maximum of 3%, thus slashing the administration's request by almost 50%. The senators claim that SDI has received "excessive and inappropriate emphasis," and "is being rushed to a premature development decision. . . ."

May 23: The administration "disagrees strongly" with the SDI funding cuts recommended by the 46 senators, White House spokesman Larry Speakes declares. "We hope this is not a course Congress will take. . . . The SDI is extremely important to the future security of the U.S., our allies, and the rest of the world." Further cuts would mean that "we would have to narrow the focus and would not be able to explore all the technologies we want."

May 27: President Reagan announces that the United States will abandon SALT II. "I have determined that in the future, the U.S. must base decisions regarding its strategic force structure on the nature and magnitude of the threat posed by Soviet strategic forces and not on standards contained in the SALT structure which have been undermined by Soviet non-compliance, and especially in a flawed Salt II treaty which was never ratified, would have expired if it had been ratified, and has been violated by the Soviet Union."

May 29: The Soviets privately propose a "new" arms-control gambit at the Geneva talks. The proposal, which first surfaces in the June 1 *New York Times*, calls for "strengthening" the terms of the ABM treaty, extending it for 15-20 years, and reducing U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear arsenals.

May 29-30: NATO foreign ministers meet in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The gathering is characterized by violent opposition to Reagan's renunciation of SALT II. Secretary of State George Shultz tells the participants that the United States is "not throwing away the concept of mutual restraint, but is seeking to develop a truly effective form." NATO Secretary-General Lord Peter Carrington announces the formation of a "high-level task force" in anticipation of Soviet initiatives on troop reduction in Europe.

June 1: Asked to comment about the new Soviet arms pro-

posal during a television interview, Weinberger replies that he has not seen it, "but I would certainly oppose anything that blocked or in any way prevented our developing strategic defense. . . . I don't want ever to agree to anything that attempts . . . to prevent our doing the kinds of things [that would allow us to] deploy an effective defense against Soviet missiles."

June 2: Soviet President Andrei Gromyko charges that the U.S. decision to drop SALT is "a major American blunder."

June 3: Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) introduces a bill prohibiting the use of Pentagon funds for weapons that would exceed SALT II's limits. Over 120 members of Congress sign on as co-sponsors.

June 3: President Reagan sends message to Congress calling for full funding for the SDI, and stating that it "makes no sense for the U.S. to continue to support the SALT structure while the Soviet Union undermines the foundation of SALT by its continued, uncorrected non-compliance."

June 3: Key Republican senators meet with Reagan to state their opposition to the SALT decision. Sen. John Chafee (R-R.I.) tells the President of his "extreme distress" over the decision, warning him that if the United States scraps the treaty, the Soviets "are going to be way ahead." Other Republicans, including Senate Intelligence Committee chairman David Durenberger (R-Minn.) and Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.), also oppose the President.

June 4: Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, chief of staff of the Soviet Armed Forces, and Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, give a press conference in Moscow stating that the Soviet Union will have to increase its nuclear warhead arsenal so that his country could continue to deal with Washington "on an equal basis." "If the U.S. goes ahead with its plans to overstep the limits" of SALT, "we will have the legitimate right to undertake countermeasures."

June 4: Top House Democratic leaders and committee chairmen meet to discuss strategy for overturning the President's decision to drop SALT II. Jim Wright (D-Tex.) discloses that a letter is circulating among members—with at least 220 Democratic and Republican signatures—urging Reagan to comply with SALT II. House Democrats and "many Republicans" are prepared to push forward legislation to force Reagan to abide by the treaty, he says.

June 4: Secretary Weinberger, in a television interview, says that the Soviet proposal is "against the national interests of the United States," and "an attempt to kill the SDI by the side door." He adds: "The Soviets know you can't get funding for a program if you've said you're not going to use it for 10 years." Such an agreement, he added, would cause SDI re-

search "to lose a great deal of momentum" and cause a "loss of all public support or the possibility of ever deploying a strategic defense."

June 4: Chief U.S. arms-control negotiator Paul Nitze says the United States will continue to honor the 1972 ABM treaty despite Soviet non-compliance.

June 6: The latest Soviet arms-treaty initiative would "rule out effective testing for the SDI," Weinberger states. The Soviets are trying to achieve two things with their new proposal, he charges: 1) U.S. administration will assign less priority to the SDI," and 2) put testing of the SDI off so many years that Congress would be reluctant to fund even research for the SDI.

June 7: The White House and State Department denounce congressional legislation seeking to force continued U.S. compliance as "unwise and unhelpful."

June 9: "I am concerned at how frequently the threats to our freedom and world peace are ignored when considering the President's defense budget requests," Weinberger tells a Washington conference. "Unfortunately," he continues, "political expediencies seem to blind Congress to the very real threats faced by this nation."

June 9: SDIO head Lt.-Gen. James Abrahamson tells *Defense Daily* that proposed cuts in the SDI budget will have a "devastating" effect on the program. Work would have to be stopped in every one of the five major areas of SDI development, he says, emphasizing that he would "have to take chunks" out of priority areas. To make an early 1990s decision on whether to proceed to development, SDI must be funded at the requested level of \$4.8 billion.

June 11: Sens. Joe Biden (D-Del.) introduce a resolution into the Senate that would mandate U.S. compliance with SALT II. "We face the functional equivalent of a national emergency in the conduct of our strategic policy."

June 11: Paul Nitze tells the House Armed Services Committee that "the Soviets appear recently to have given some greater indications of potential movement in their position." He states that he expects Reagan to continue to comply with the SALT II limits, because of budget restraints.

June 12: The House Foreign Affairs Committee approves a resolution, sponsored by Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) chairman Dante Fascell (D-Fla.), to SALT II. The vote is 29-11. Fascell, who met with Mikhail Gorbachov earlier this year, motivates the measure on the grounds that U.S. abandonment of the treaty will "open the door" to a Soviet military buildup.

June 12: The European Parliament condemns Reagan's abandonment of SALT.

June 12: Armand Hammer meets with Reagan to discuss getting the summitry process back on track. He then flies to London to brief British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Soviet Ambassador Leonid Zamyatin, whom he assures that Reagan genuinely wants a summit.

June 13: Two more senators, Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) Hatch (R-Utah), SDI budget to be held to a 3% increase.

June 13: George Shultz declares, in a USIA interview, that the new Soviet proposal has "substance." Shultz also insists that Reagan had not declared SALT II "dead." "He didn't say that. He didn't use that word."

June 13: Sen. Lawton Chiles (D-Fla.) budget negotiators have agreed to cut Reagan's proposed FY1987 defense budget from \$320 billion to \$293 billion. The House is insisting on a \$35 billion reduction.

June 14: "There is still time for the United States to think again," says Deputy Soviet Ambassador to the U.N. Oleg Sokolov, at a press conference in Washington. Sokolov says that the Soviet Union would take "corresponding measures . . . if the United States actually exceeds the limits."

June 14: The London *Observer* reports that Reagan sent a letter the previous week to Gorbachov proposing a meeting between their foreign ministers to prepare a summit agenda. A White House official confirms such a letter was delivered to Gorbachov by U.S. Ambassador Arthur Hartman.

June 16: Gorbachov for the first time outlines the Soviet proposals put forth at Geneva. "The Soviet Union had suggested that the sides agree on non-withdrawal from the ABM treaty in the course of at least 15 years and limit the SDI-related research to the level of laboratory tests," he says.

June 16: House Armed Services Committee chairman Les Aspin announces that his committee will begin writing a military-spending bill this week that cuts 11%—\$35 billion—from Reagan's Pentagon request.

June 17: The Soviet news agency TASS reports that a meeting of the Pugwash Conference took place in Moscow the week before, at which participants urged continuation of SALT II and the ABM Treaty, and consolidation of "the arms control regime . . . through a ban on the testing and deployment of anti-satellite weapons and on nuclear explosions and through achieving a mutual reduction of conventional armaments in Europe."

June 18: Rep. Les Aspin predicts Congress will freeze SDI funding at this year's level of \$2.8 billion. The members of the House Armed Services Committee, he says, rank SDI as a low priority.

June 18: Thirteen senators send a letter to Reagan calling for the United States to continue to abide by the so-called strict interpretation of the ABM treaty.

June 18: Four senators introduce a resolution challenging President Reagan's decision to abandon SALT II. The four, Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), John Chafee (R-R.I.), Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.), and John Heinz (R-Pa.) are also preparing a bill preventing Reagan from spending money on programs that exceed the treaty's limits.

June 19: By a 256-145 vote, the House adopts a non-binding resolution directing Reagan to adhere to SALT II.

June 19: Sens. Bennett Johnston and Dan Evans (R-Wash.) hold a press conference to release a letter to Congress from 1,500 U.S. scientists, urging Congress to curb the growth of SDI funding."

June 19: President Reagan welcomes Moscow's latest arms proposals as the start of a serious effort to reduce nuclear weapons which could represent a "turning point" in negotiations.

June 20: Soviet parliamentarians propose to hold periodic discussions on arms-control questions with U.S. congressmen. The first meeting should take place shortly, they say, and should deal with "mutual concerns" over arms-control agreements, as well as a nuclear test ban.

June 20: The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Research and Development votes to cut \$1.4 billion from SDI research, and to eliminate all funds for the ASAT program.

June 20: Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, chief of the General Staff of the Soviet armed forces, speaking at a meeting of the foreign affairs commission of the two chambers of the Soviet parliament, says that the United States is violating SALT II and the ABM accord in numerous areas, and Reagan's "Star Wars" plans represent the gravest danger.

June 20: The Senate Armed Services Committee chops \$19.2 billion from the FY1987 defense budget, with the largest chunk coming out of the SDI. Acting on an amendment introduced by Bill Cohen and Sam Nunn, the Senate slashes \$1.45 billion from strategic defense. Even deeper cuts may be necessary if the program continues to lack a coherent "concept," says Cohen. The two senators disclose they will also try to redirect the SDI away from population defense to point defense.

June 20: The Senate Armed Services Committee approves a measure to delay administration plans to create a new, semi-private SDI institute. Several committee members, including Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Paul Simon (D-Ill.), and William Proxmire (D-Wis.) say they will fight to eliminate the institute altogether when the defense authorization bill comes to the floor.

June 21: House Democrats produce a new defense blueprint calling for banning ASAT weapons, sharply limiting SDI funds, banning the MX, adhering to SALT II, etc. "It's a fusion of the main elements of the party—the hawk Democrats and the non-hawks," said Rep. Tom Downey (D-N.Y.).

June 23: Weinberger charges that the congressional effort to chop the SDI budget is "an attempt to strangle the program in its cradle. . . . An excuse, really, for avoiding serious thought concerning the strategic problems of our time." Speaking at a U.S. Space Foundation conference, Weinberger scolds members of Congress for "seeking to denature" the vast project "through anemic funding levels." He also states that the SDI would not be used as a bargaining chip at Geneva. "I think that the President is too firmly committed to it. . . . He is not putting it forward as something to be given away."

June 24: White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan declares that he is confident that Gorbachov and Reagan will meet this year. Gorbachov, he said, sent Reagan a letter which "discussed issues which you can well imagine have to do with disarmament and the talks in Geneva."

June 25: Soviet Ambassador to Washington Yuri Dubinin delivers a proposal for regular meetings between U.S. and Soviet legislators on arms-control issues to a group of Senate Democratic leaders. Meeting with Dubinin were Sens. Byrd (W.Va.), Pell (R.I.), Cranston (Calif.), and Moynihan (N.Y.).

June 26: House and Senate budget negotiators approve a compromise 1987 budget that slashes the administration's military spending request from \$320 billion to \$292 billion.

June 26: The House Armed Services Committee approves a FY1987 defense budget \$35 billion below the President's request. The budget is 5% less than the FY1986 budget—itsself massively cut by Congress—and gives only \$3.7 billion to SDI. The panel also slices ASAT research funds in half, and eliminates all funds for production.

June 26: Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) proposes to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that it send the SALT II treaty to the Senate for a vote on ratification.