

by

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The part of my work in Congress that is least understood is my assignment on the Defense Appropriations subcommittee. Each morning I find myself reading highly classified overnight intelligence summaries of new weapons and operations; I attend hearings and take personal inspection tours of our most sensitive defense and intelligence installations. I've spent time in the war room deep inside Cheyenne Mountain and at the Strategic Air Command's underground headquarters bunker in the Midwest. I've been at intelligence installations where I've actually seen inside the Soviet Union through our satellite photography.

The experience consumes you with the idea of move and counter move, threat and counter threat -- but finally a strong suspicion that neither side really knows the other.

Tonight I want to draw on this experience to look at our relations with the Soviet Union, the world's other military superpower. It's fitting that we do this: your life, my life, and the very survival of Western civilization depend on a U.S.-Soviet relationship that's rational, restrained, and -- above all -- that's competently conducted.

We and the Soviets -- alone -- have built the power to annihilate human life in the Northern Hemisphere, and possibly in the entire world. This power carries with it a fearsome responsibility.

The overriding goal of U.S.-Soviet relations must be national survival. This means co-existence. The only alternative is nonexistence. We can learn to live together, or we can learn to die together. Sitting in the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, the more I learn about nuclear weapons and nuclear war plans, the more convinced I become of what I've believed all along: that Casper Weinberger is wrong when he believes that World War III is not an option. One of the most successful warriors of all time, General Douglas MacArthur, put it well. Speaking of nuclear arsenals, here's what he said:

"This very triumph of scientific annihilation...has destroyed the possibility of war's being a medium for the practical settlement of international differences. Time was when victory in war represented economic wealth, accelerated prosperity, a place in the international sun. But (these) conditions exist no longer and will come no more.

"Global war has become a Frankenstein to destroy both sides. No longer is it a weapon of adventure -- the shortcut to international power. If you lose, you are annihilated. If you win, you stand only to lose. No longer does it possess even the chance of the winner of a duel. It contains now only the germs of double suicide."

Some of my constituents tell me, "That's all very well. Of course we don't want nuclear war. But can we trust the Russians?"

It's a good question. But not a simple one.

If we mean, "Can we trust the Russians to be nice guys?" of course we can not. Nice guys don't shoot down civilian airliners.

And if the question is, "Can we trust the Russians to follow unvarifiable arms control treaties," of course we can not do that either. Between hostile superpowers, that kind of trust can't ever exist. But we don't need to trust them. Arms control must be verifiable, and it can be.

But now if the question is, "Can we trust the Russians to act in their own interest by working with us to prevent nuclear war?" of course we can. MacArthur told us why.

Everything we know about the effects of nuclear war is known to the other side as well. While MacArthur's words are emotional, their content is fact -- fact known to the other side. Mathematics knows no morality; the Soviets calculate nuclear effects just as we do. They don't like losing any better than we, and they have no doubt that in a nuclear war they would risk becoming the biggest losers of all time.

So we can work with them to survive. Tonight let's look at how we can do that. Let's ask ourselves four questions:

First, "Who are the Russians?"

Second, "How should we deal with them?"

Third, "What should we try to get out of them?"

And finally, "Can we succeed?"

When we finish examining these questions, I think we'll find ourselves driven to this conclusion:

After Geneva, before Geneva, the problems are the same. And the solutions are the same. The last Geneva summit didn't solve anything. The major solutions lie ahead of us, not behind us.

We can and we must set up arms control that shuts down the real arms race: the qualitative race for weapons that are ever quicker and more accurate, more able to start a nuclear war with a surprise first strike. These are the threats to your life and mine.

That's the bottom line. If you don't take anything else out of here tonight, I hope you'll leave with that thought: It's important to stop weapons from getting quicker and more accurate.

I'll also be talking about the one limited success we've had at this, and about what the next steps should be.

But first, let's ask, who are the Russians? In many ways they're people like you and me. We need to realize this more clearly and stop demonizing them. Russian mothers do cry over the loss of their sons in battle -- the same as American mothers. So they are similar in many ways. But not in all ways -- and we must be equally clear-eyed about our differences.

Let me describe one of the major societal differences. It was brought home to me during a trip Sue and I made to Moscow a year ago January. My first morning there, I woke up early, left my hotel room, and went outside for my morning run.

As I emerged from my hotel, I found myself in the midst of the Moscow morning rush hour. The sidewalks and the subway exits teemed with thousands of people walking to work, just as in New York or London or Portland, Oregon.

But something was very different from New York, London, Washington, or Portland, Oregon. At first, I couldn't decide what it was. Then it came to me.

There was no sound! None at all! Just the rustle of clothing as people trudged thru the snow. No laughing. No talking. No sound.

People were determined to avoid attracting attention, to be as inconspicuous as possible. This was so different from what a Westerner is used to, that I've never forgotten it. It symbolizes one of the fundamental ways a government can affect a people's attitude toward everyday life.

But let's not overdo it. There are differences between us, but there are similarities too. The Soviet people want to build better lives for themselves, raise their families free from the fear of war, just as we do.

I try to get my constituents and colleagues to rise above stereotypes, and try to see the real Soviets.

The first thing that leaps out at us is that they are not supermen. Indeed they are distinguished most by a tremendous inferiority complex. Russians have always felt that the West has looked down on them. And they've been right. Moreover, Russians have always looked down upon themselves.

In War and Peace, Tolstoy tells how the traditional Russian nobility's first language, the one they used among themselves in the early 1800s, was not Russian but French. And many of the Russian nobility used French exclusively and couldn't speak Russian at all! Think about that for a minute: What an incredible rejection of their own culture!

Well, the October Revolution changed that. Soviet leaders now, to an extreme degree, have their roots at home rather than abroad. But they still feel inferior. At one point in the SALT II negotiations, when we were pressing them particularly hard, all at once one of the Soviet negotiators exploded and shouted at Paul Warnke,

"You know, Mr. Warnke, we are not a banana republic!"

Of course, the U.S. negotiating team had never even thought of the mighty Soviet Union as a banana republic. But in the stunned silence that followed, our negotiators found the entire Soviet team glaring at them. The resentment, the feeling of inferiority, was as palpable as it was startling.

This feeling is still there, and will be there for lifetimes to come. At the summit just a few months ago, President Reagan got a taste of it when Mr. Gorbachev told him,

"You should bear in mind, Mr. President, that we are not naive. We are not simpletons."

Can you imagine a French negotiator, or a German, saying anything like that? This monumental Soviet inferiority complex is something we should always keep in mind.

So is their defense-obsessive mentality. Throughout its history, Russia has been like the big overgrown kid all the other kids pick on -- and every Russian knows it. Twenty million dead from the Hitler invasion is a matter of deepest personal sorrow reaching into every Soviet family. The Russian people have known war, and they've known foreign invasion, with an intimacy no American can share.

The Russian people are scared to death of being attacked again -- by us, by the Germans, by the Chinese. The Soviets really believe we'd first-strike them if we could. We may question the factual foundation of this belief. But there's no questioning the sincerity with which it is held by them, nor the depth of feeling behind it.

There's only one nation in the world surrounded by hostile Communist powers. That's the Soviet Union, and the Soviet leaders know it.

Of the five nuclear powers, only one is the assigned target of the weapons of the other four. That's the Soviet Union, and the Soviet leaders know it.

What about their military strength? Most of the comparisons of U.S. vs. Soviet military strength you hear are hogwash. Anyone who knows the business can select his measures to prove anything he wants.

In nuclear weapons, if I wanted to scare you I could tell you the Soviets lead us 6395 to 2117 -- 3 to 1 -- in ICBM warheads, which are the most reliable strategic weapons. Or if I wanted to make the other point, I could tell you that we lead by 2752 to 263 -- 10 to 1 -- in on-station submarine-launched warheads, which are the most survivable strategic weapons.

Which would be right? Both. Which would be complete and valid? Neither. The bottom line is that we both have many times what we need to annihilate the other -- provided the weapons can survive to be used. The only question is whether either side can do a disabling first strike that prevents the other from using his weapons. Today, neither side can do that. I'll have more to say about that in a minute.

Now what about the relationship between Communism and traditional Russian culture?

You probably know that two of the most outspoken opponents of the Kremlin regime are the novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn and the historian Richard Pipes. But it's less well known that these two men represent violently disagreeing schools of thought on how the Soviet Union got that way.

According to Solzhenitsyn, the Russian people are noble virtuous peasants, and the present brand of communism is an alien system they can't wait to get rid of. But according to Pipes, the opposite is true. Pipes says the Russian people are authoritarian and brutal to the bone, and their communist system is a logical outgrowth of their fundamental character.

Who's right? It's a fascinating question, with a bit of a case to be made on both sides. My own feeling is that the truth lies in between: Economically closer to Solzhenitsyn, but politically closer to Pipes.

Communism, in the original economic sense of "From each according to his ability; to each according to his need," is a unworkable way to run a country. It doesn't work, and never will.

But politically we delude ourselves if we think the Soviet people are all liberal intellectuals like Andrei Sakharov, yearning for freedom and democracy.

Long before Karl Marx was born, Russia was an oppressive, conspiratorial, authoritarian police state -- much like it is today. The October revolution changed the names on top, but not the basic authoritarianism. To Russians the democratic tradition we take for granted is unknown. As the Soviet scholar Adam Ulam points out, in Russian thought the word "democracy" has about the same connotation of intolerable disorder as the word "anarchy" has to the American mind.

Consider this: In modern Soviet history the darkest, most oppressive period was under Stalin in the 1930s; the brightest, most progressive period is probably today, under Gorbachev. In our own history, the corresponding darkest period was, in my mind, the McCarthy hysteria of the 1950s, while the brightest renaissance was probably under Kennedy just a few years later.

But think about what this says about the two systems. Think about how far to the right of us this places the Soviet Union. The fact is, we were more free at our worst than the Soviets at their best. Editorial writers around the country could, and did, denounce McCarthy in the most scathing terms even at the height of his power. But no Soviet news organ can do that to Gorbachev today. Nor is there evidence that the Russian people want it to.

What the Russian people want is material prosperity. They want it bad, and with good reason: they haven't got it.

The statistics are overwhelming. Here are a just a few of them:

Twenty percent of the Soviet work force works in agriculture, as opposed to 3% in the United States. But each American agricultural worker feeds ten to eleven times as many people as his Soviet counterpart.

The Soviet Union has 400 thousand kilometers of paved highway. The United States has 6 million kilometers: eight times as much.

Life expectancy in the Soviet Union has actually declined in the past few years. This is the only industrialized country on the face of the earth in which that has occurred.

But these are only the numbers. Equally important are the qualitative factors.

Soviet consumer goods aren't very good. Nobody wants them, including the Soviets. If they tripled production, they'd produce three times as much stuff nobody wants.

And the quality of Soviet life is becoming gray, senseless, without purpose and without heroes. Current Soviet literature and drama is largely about people who fail, not about people who take on life's challenges and triumph over them.

Now of course you can go too far the other way. If our own national heroes are to be defined by the likes of Rambo, our own country is going to be a ripe candidate for the Psychiatrist's Couch.

But while we may be a bit manic, the Soviets are getting more than a bit depressive. And they're making their sorrows worse by trying to drown them.

The Russians have always been heavy drinkers, but recently they've been lapping it up at an unprecedented rate. Vladimir Trembl of Duke University has come up with some fascinating statistics. He finds, for example, that annual per-adult hard liquor consumption in the Soviet Union is equivalent to 9 liters of pure alcohol; that's twice the American consumption.

And about 51,000 Soviets die each year of acute alcohol poisoning -- that is, drinking a fifth of hard liquor straight down in half an hour or less, and dying within a few hours. In the U.S., only about 400 people a year do that. So the ratio is more than 120 to 1.

Gorbachev is trying to change all this. But it's not clear how far he's going to get.

He's a reformer, in the sense of cracking down on corruption, campaigning against alcoholism, and so forth. It could be that a liberal reformer could do a great deal to improve the quality of Soviet life. But so far, Gorbachev seems to be a reformer without being a liberal. If he leaves in place the basic incentiveless economy, the basic elitist social structure, the basic reasons why people get drunk, it would seem his opportunities for real reform are limited.

So much for what the Soviets are. But what's that mean to us? How should we deal with them?

On this, I offer a "do"s and a "don't".

The "do" is this: Exploit our advantages. We have them. Here are some:

First, there's the fact that the Soviets are afraid of us. It's not just that they regard us as the Germans of the nuclear age, although they do. It's more than that.

In my contacts with the Soviets, even the most sophisticated and capable ones, I've found an almost superstitious awe of both the American economy and American technology.

They look at our World War II production record, they look at our Macintosh personal computers, our cruise missiles, our jet engines that are twenty years ahead of theirs, and they seem to conclude there's nothing America can't do. I honestly believe that if we announced we expected to be able to do time travel by the end of the century, the Kremlin would believe us.

Second, there's the fact that they want an arms control agreement more than we do, for a reason we don't share.

Remember a few minutes ago I talked about the Soviet inferiority complex? They've still got it, and they're trying to make themselves feel better by being intercontinental social climbers.

We're the #1 nation in the world, and everybody knows it. The Soviets are in our league in only one respect: military power. They'd like to use this to assert their equality before the world -- not so much for material gain, but mainly to improve their national self-image. Nuclear weapons being what they are, it's not practical to gain prestige by shooting them off. But it's very practical to gain prestige by controlling them.

The Soviet leadership wants to stand up before the world, alongside the United States, as one of the two superpowers concluding a major arms control treaty. They want this so badly they can taste it.

This doesn't mean they'll sign anything that decreases their military security; as badly as they desire prestige, they still value security more. But it does give us a solid advantage to exploit, provided we know exactly what we want, and provided what we want is fair to them. I'll have more to say about this in a minute.

So my "do" is to exploit our strengths. My "don't" is to don't overdo the "do".

We can use their fear of us to make them more accommodating. But fear can also provoke violence. We can overdo it, and lead them to give up hope of accommodation. If that ever happens, the world will get very scary very quickly.

Soviet nuclear doctrine is confusing and contradictory on many points. But on one thing it's crystal clear: They will attack us if they believe we are about to attack them.

For the past several years, we've been pushing them dangerously toward that conclusion. Probably my strongest single disagreement with the present Administration is over the signals we've been sending the Soviets. We've pressed forward new weapons programs -- MX, D5, ASAT, -- whose main advantage is in the ability to do a disarming first strike on the Soviet Union. At the same time, we've filled every major arms control position with a dedicated opponent of arms control. This is a posture more likely to provoke than to deter. It isn't the message we should be sending.

So we need to pressure the Soviets, but not in a way that causes them to lash out at us.

But to what end? What should we be trying to get out of them?

We need to prevent them from getting a first strike capability against us. That's the key to nuclear war prevention. It's so important, it overwhelms everything else.

First strike isn't determined by numbers of weapons alone. And it won't be lowered by reducing the numbers of weapons 10%, 20% or even 50%. It seems to me both Reagan and Gorbachev are barking up the wrong tree on this. With about 10,000 strategic nuclear warheads on each side, going down to 6,000 just won't make much difference.

What counts is whether those warheads, be they 10,000 or 6,000, are quick enough and accurate enough for a disabling first strike.

Today, they're not. Both sides have ICBMs that are reasonably accurate, but not quick enough to strike by surprise. And both sides have submarine-launched ballistic missiles that are quick enough for surprise, but not very accurate.

We need to focus hard on the fact that in ten years the story will be very different. If technology takes its course, both sides will then have weapons that are very quick and very accurate; we'll be a lot closer to the brink.

This is what arms control can prevent. If we can prohibit ballistic missile flight testing, these missiles can't be made quicker and more accurate. If you can't test a missile, you're not going to want to risk changing its components.

This flight test ban is the key to our future security. It's part of the nuclear freeze. We could do it that way, or as a separate free-standing treaty. But either way, we need to do it.

There are two steps we'll have to take between here and there.

First, we'll have to stop the posturing. During the 1970s we had serious arms control talks with serious objectives. But in this decade, both sides have put forward arms control plans designed mainly for public relations. Each side has sought desperately to appear more virtuous than the other, but neither side has sought an accommodation that would get at the specific dangers of nuclear war.

These holier-than-thou Madison Avenue games are shameful. We need to shut them down, and get on with the serious business of stopping weapons from getting quicker and more accurate.

The second step is to recognize that security is a two-way street. If we want to control Soviet first-strike capability, we have to be willing to give this up ourselves. This sounds obvious, but it's a step we've yet to take, under any Administration.

No discussion of U.S. Soviet relations would be complete without looking at intermediate range weapons and Star Wars. So let's do that briefly.

Intermediate range weapons, or INF, are a sideshow. They don't matter as much as you might think. It's the strategic intercontinental weapons that matter.

The addition of INF weapons on both sides has given neither side any ability it didn't have already, by using a small portion of the intercontinental arsenals at intermediate range. Removal of INF would leave nobody any safer.

It's true that the Pershing 2 can attack some targets in the western Soviet Union with a stronger combination of surprise and accuracy than was previously possible. But these missiles only carry 108 warheads. At such a low level numbers do matter, and 108 warheads just isn't enough for a disabling first strike. The danger is a few years down the road, when the Trident II D5 and its Soviet equivalent will carry thousands of quick, accurate warheads.

Controlling INF would have symbolic value, and I favor doing it. But we need to concentrate on the major threats. We shouldn't let the tail wag the dog.

Star Wars is another matter. This isn't a sideshow. It's terrifically important, and terrifically dangerous.

There are those who see space weapons as providing a "peace shield," replacing both nuclear weapons and the need to control them.

I do not. On the contrary, the weight of the evidence tells me that no matter how strongly we may intend space weapons to be defensive, they will work better on the offense. The laws of physics pay no heed to intentions. And if the Soviets get a Star Wars system and decide to use it offensively, we'll be in deep trouble.

Here's one way that could work:

Suppose the technical and financial problems of Star Wars can be solved. I'm dubious about both, but let's assume it can be done.

We'll put up a network of anti-missile satellites, and the Soviets will do the same.

Now it's a technological fact that any satellite that works against a missile will work even better against another satellite. A space-based anti-missile weapon works even better as an anti-satellite weapon, because satellites are easier targets than missiles. When I ran this proposition past the generals at Space Command last year, they all agreed on that point -- emphatically.

So what if the Soviets decide to do a first strike against us, and in the first instant of that first strike, they use their satellites to wipe out our satellites? They'll be left with both a defense and an offense, and we'll be left with neither.

Unless there is some practical way satellites can be made more survivable than missiles, and at this point there is none, Soviet possession of an effective Star Wars would be disastrous.

For my part, I'm deeply disturbed that President Reagan seems to be unaware of this entire problem. And while a massive U.S. Star Wars program strikes me as a bad idea, sharing it with the Soviets is many times worse. This is something we must not do.

The solution is arms control. We can stop both sides from getting space weapons by simply prohibiting tests that destroy objects in space. An untested weapon can never be deployed with confidence.

We've got a start on this. Two months ago the House passed my amendment, prohibiting testing of the currently developing American anti-satellite weapon against an object in space, provided the Soviets observe the same restraint.

This is, in effect, Congressional arms control. So far as I've been able to research, it's the first in history. And it's the only new arms control of any kind set up during the past six years. I'm deeply grateful to you, and to all the people of my district, for giving me the opportunity to do it.

This is a start. But it's only a start. We need to expand the prohibition to cover all space weapons. And we need to combine it with the ballistic missile test ban. If we can do that and only if we do that, the probability of nuclear war will stop growing, and will start to recede.

There's talk of our side accepting a space weapon ban if the other side would accept a large reduction in MIRVed ICBMs. This would be OK, but the good part is the space weapon ban; we could do that just by itself. There's no harm in a MIRV ICBM reduction, but it won't help much when sub-launched missiles gain accuracy over the next ten years. We really need to combine a space weapon ban with a ballistic missile flight test ban.

Can we do it? Can we succeed?

I think we can. The answer is workable, it's verifiable, it's clearly in the interest of both sides.

On almost a daily basis, the Soviets tell the world how much they want a space weapons ban. This is because they fear a first strike from us. We'd have no trouble negotiating this one.

The ballistic missile flight test ban might be harder to negotiate. The Soviets haven't taken an official position on it. Unofficially, they've indicated some concern that untested missiles would sit and "rust" and lose reliability. But recently they've seemd to be more able to understand that this would be good, because nobody's going to start a war with an unreliable missile.

So there is one element they like, and a second element they're ambivalent about. There's nothing they're adamantly opposed to. Add their desire for an agreement for the sake of prestige, and that could add up to a heck of a good starting position. Prospects for quick success would be very good.

But here's the clinker. Of these two lifesaving national security devices -- banning ballistic missile flight tests and all tests against objects in space -- the present Administration opposes both. It's negotiating for neither.

Don't ask me why. I can't tell you. I had Kenneth Adelman, the head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, in my office for an hour and a half to discuss the ballistic missile flight test ban, and he didn't offer a single cogent thought.

If we are going to get real arms control, we'll have to be uncompromising in our demands.

We have to let our government know that it's not good enough to negotiate for five years and come out with nothing more than an agreement to meet again.

We have to let our government know that it's not enough to have a summit and come away with a warm feeling. It's good that Reagan and Gorbachev had some time to get to know each other as men. I mean that sincerely. But it's not enough.

We have to let our government know that we will be satisfied with nothing less than arms control that, in a specific concrete way, shuts off the mad rush toward first strike capability.

We don't have unlimited time to do this. For now, Gorbachev seems to be receptive to any reasonable idea we might put forward. His offer of on-site inspection is most encouraging. For the first time in the history of U.S.-Soviet relations, we seem to be facing a leader willing and able to respond quickly to innovative arms control ideas.

But we don't know how long this opportunity will last. We don't know how long it will be before internal pressures begin to limit Gorbachev's options. And we do know that before too long, the march of technology, the numb slide toward ever quicker and more accurate first-strike weapons, will limit everyone's options for survival.