

[from Box 17 - CILS & MacArthur Foundation
Folder 10 - CILS Oct-Dec 1987

12/3/87

Joshua Lederberg -- remarks on the Commission draft report

I am well able to go along with what is in the present text. It concerns me that a number of important matters are left out. They have to do primarily with:

- 1) An articulation of US strategic goals -- in peace as well as war.
- 2) Emphasis on prevention of war (yes - best achieved by maintaining our firmness and strength).
- 3) Offer some olive branch. I have tried to articulate the dilemma of sustaining vigilance in a democratic society while retaining openness to change.

(The sections I have preceded with a + are reasonably satisfactory now.)

Evidence - Not sure

Needs a prior paragraph about US Peace Aims: we do not threaten other nations; we do not seek to expand our territory; we hope to encourage global improvements in health, culture, standard of living; we stand for human rights; we need to sustain an ongoing military capability (as we have since WW-2) to discourage aggression by others, and fend threats to world peace that arise from a failure to take responsibility. Long Range Strategy has many dimensions other than military; but we stress this here as the special province of our sponsors and membership.

Since WW-2, the principal threat to peaceful harmony has come from the Soviet Union, but its political and economic influence is declining. However, that may make its military force more likely to be used if it does not find a graceful path to structural (ideological!) and political reform. USSR faces severe economic challenges, and demographic challenges to Russian supremacy. We would welcome opportunities to build a more harmonious relationship with the Soviets; but we can hardly put our security at risk in favor of evanescent hopes of peaceful and evolutionary reform on the part of a regime that has a long history of disregard for elementary human rights.

We have put much treasure and energy into dealing with the Soviet threat, and must continue to do so, for the most part in continuity with the policy of the last four decades. The threat of mutual assured destruction has led all nations to look very cautiously at initiatives that might escalate into general war.

+ World far more multipolar and interconnected in economic, military cultural and social terms [re latter, n.b. US immigration]

+ Economic interconnectedness insists on vital Western interest in keeping commerce open globally; in collision with fanatical movements in 3d world. Military challenges there exacerbated by Soviet intervention, but will occur regardless. We need to reconfigure our forces to deal with a new mix of challenges.

Alliances need constant rebuilding. The Asian system should be given most careful attention a/c: 1) intense economic competition, 2) the anomaly of US "protection" of a peer superpower (— a relationship to be jostled only with grave deliberation) 3) the looming modernization of China. Europe will be target of intense Peace offensives, possibly with some substance of

reducing acute Soviet threat to W. Europe, primarily designed to weaken NATO. E. Europe will be continued and aggravated problem for WP.

+ Missile technologies becoming ever more widely available to 3d countries: pose very large threat to US power projection.

+ Revolution in information technologies: US, Japan, Europe are still in lead, and offer opportunity for Western advantage; but Soviets are adept at trailing (and stealing) for their advantage. Hence effective policies aimed at protecting military-critical technology ever more important: these also require cooperation and understanding of allies.

A strong case can be made for substantial balanced cuts in strategic forces, precisely because they would leave both sides about = status quo ante. They would save a modest amount of money. More important, if properly negotiated, they could result in qualitative changes in the force mix that would enhance crisis stability; they would be steps for improved atmosphere {in an era when the level of arms has become part of everyone's fears and concerns}; they would be steps to a reconfiguration of the international security regime where missile defense could become a greater source of confidence and stability. But the process has to be thought through, with more careful attention to the concerns of our allies; and the individual steps have to be realistic, achievable, and immunized against opportunities for breakout and concealment. Mobility and concealability of missiles greatly complicate verification of arms control, and will require radical departures of openness to retain credibility.

A defense-oriented strategy can only work in the long run if there is a tacit cooperative understanding that both the US' and USSR' security are enhanced -- exactly as Pres. Reagan has intuited. That would entail a substantial build-down of offensive weapons on both sides. Our report should stress that such an overall framework would be one of the happiest outcomes -- BUT there are grave difficulties in implementation for the well-known reasons of risks of cheating etc. Unfortunately, the character of Soviet society gives us little encouragement about more reliable approaches to verification; and we can hardly depend on this years straws in the wind of "Glasnost". Nevertheless, we would certainly be open to fresh opportunities if there is a realistic basis for them.

+ However, MAD is insufficient to deal with contingencies other than the apocalyptic strike; we need discriminating strategies to deal with troubles from others than the SU, and to deal with threats and attacks on allies, and at levels that would not justify "mutual suicide" as a reaction.

Arms control is not an end in itself; and such proposals need to be judged with a clear understanding of how they will benefit both parties, and how they will play on our relationships with our allies. Arms control proposals are a sham if not founded on a tangible benefit to both sides, and should not be pursued for purely emblematic goals, or we will suffer unilateral losses. They will not be agreed to by the other side merely to meet our security needs. Nevertheless, we can never lose sight of the unremitting tension and fear evoked by the existence of large arsenals of nuclear weapons, and we look forward to arms control as one segment of building a safer system of world security. All of our policies are dedicated to

the goal of minimizing the possibility that nuclear weapons will ever again be used. That goal cannot be achieved by unilateral disarmament that provides irresistible incentives for coercion by any party that retains them. For the same reason the "total abolition" of nuclear weapons is not feasible for the imaginable future.

Limitations on testing are likely to place hindrances on the U.S. technological advantage, and need to be examined carefully to be sure that enforceable, mutual restraints are indeed in our own best interest. {On past occasions, the Soviets' capability to mount massive production runs have given them military advantages in using new technologies, even though the innovations had originated on our side.} Tests of less destructive but more accurately targetted conventional weaponry can help us develop the arms that can reduce our need to rely on the nuclear deterrent.