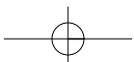
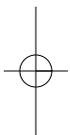


PART VII
Two Successes in the SALT
and START Disarmament Talks



CHAPTER 20

Should SALT II Be Ratified, and
What Form Should SALT III Take?

Defenders of SALT II become alarmed that the author's published criticisms of it might actually lead to its defeat. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, in a great success, the president is persuaded to propose "Shrink SALT II" at the Vienna summit as a proposal for SALT III. A few months later, in another success, the entire Senate Foreign Relations Committee supports the idea. But the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan makes SALT debates irrelevant.

The struggle over ratification of the SALT II Treaty occupied the arms control community from October 1978 to November 1979. During this period, my penchant for committing truth—in this case about SALT II's inadequacies—alarmed the administration. To my amazement at the time—though I understand it better now—they actually thought that this butterfly's views might imperil the ratification of the SALT Treaty.

Over this same period, I was trying to persuade both the administration and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to adopt a proposal for the later disarmament talks, optimistically entitled SALT III, which would take the form of "shrinking SALT II"—that is, simply reducing the levels and sublevels of SALT II by a fixed percentage, say, 5 percent per year. Both struggles came together in the fall of 1979 when the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had to decide, perhaps under administration pressure, whether or not to hold a hearing to air my (dangerous) views on SALT II.

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Meanwhile, the administration had already proposed my views on SALT III to the Russians at the June 1979 Vienna summit. But this was a state secret that few knew. In the end, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee also approved these views on SALT III. Much of what happened here is not yet known, and perhaps this memoir will contribute to an understanding of it. Whatever our state of knowledge, there are clearly some morals to these intertwined campaigns to influence two branches of government.

The General Advisory Committee (GAC) was an advisory board of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), with distinguished citizens at large serving as an advisory group. The friendly and dignified Thomas Watson Jr., the head of IBM, was the chairman of the group. Its executive director, William Jackson, had worked for me at an earlier stage, and he decided to invite me to address the group on the subject "After SALT, What?" On receiving this invitation, I began to think of what might be right to propose for such a group. It often seems true that hearings can elicit from experts ideas that they would not otherwise advance. And this was such a case.

On November 9, 1978, at 9:00 A.M. I repaired to the meeting room the group was using—the State Department Crisis Center—with eight pages of testimony and some large cardboard charts. I proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union agree to dismantle annually a small agreed-upon percentage (e.g., 2, 5, or 10 percent) of their strategic delivery vehicles (such as long-range bombers and missiles), with each side having the "freedom to choose" what to destroy in any given year.³⁴² I called this plan "Percentage Annual Reductions," or PAR. A chart showed that weapons would approach zero only asymptotically—like compound interest in reverse, they would never hit zero but only approach it, which is what one wanted. Long-run, dramatic, and flexible, the plan would seemingly preclude the kind of tedious negotiation that had characterized SALT II. The leaders would simply have to agree on the single (percentage) number that would define the subsequent reductions—or so I maintained.

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My paper argued that this approach “seems the only alternative” after SALT, and, indeed, derived this conclusion from a series of points of view: International Political Requirements; Military Realities; Negotiating; History and Consideration of the Ultimate Goal. I speculated about side issues: modernization, third powers, grey area systems, and Minuteman vulnerability.³⁴³ I called it running the arms race in reverse.³⁴⁴

The reactions seemed good. In fact, Paul Doty, a member of GAC, pulled out a copy of *Daedalus* and stuck an article under my nose, his eyes examining my face closely. It turned out that he had proposed the same idea in an article, “Strategic Arms Limitation After SALT I,” and he seemed to be trying to figure out, from my reaction, if I had swiped the idea without attribution.

In fact, I rarely had time to read the academic literature and had missed it. And Doty’s article was, on examination, very pessimistic about reductions of any kind because it related to SALT I rather than SALT II.^[345] But I staked no claim to originality anyway. Indeed, I had included a prominent front-page footnote saying I had been encouraged by learning that FAS’s chairman, George W. Rathjens, “had once proposed something like this to a committee of the House of Representatives.”

A strange aspect of the morning was the fact that the air-conditioning was so loud in the Crisis Center that one had to use microphones to talk around a conference table. *The Washington Post* published my letter complaining that the “ultimate absurdity” was a State Department crisis center in which one could not hear another person talk.

Tom Watson enjoyed both the talk and the letter and he wrote me:

Your presentation to the GAC was great, and the best that we’ve had in our ten-month history. It was forceful, but you delivered it so modestly that you didn’t scare off the questions. Thanks very much for the new ideas you gave us.

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I noted the column about your comments on the State Department's Crisis Room where we meet. You are dead right, but it seems to be an insuperable technical problem. Maybe now someone will find a cure.³⁴⁶

This seemed a terrific opening and I wrote Watson that his letter had "emboldened me" to ask if he were "both willing and able to ensure that Mr. Carter" had a chance to review the idea before I offered it to some senator. He called and left word that he would be delighted.

GAC later talked him out of it and he wrote that he had concluded it would be "inappropriate for the GAC to carry other organizations' letters to the White House." He urged me to use my own methods.³⁴⁷

I sent the president a letter on December 13, 1978, spelling out how the proposal might reconcile the views of "hawks," "doves," "strategists," "Russians," and Senator Jackson and his supporters, and how it would relate to SALT II ratification.³⁴⁸ To make sure it was read, I was able to have it published in *The Washington Post* on Sunday, December 31.³⁴⁹ (How could he fail to read it?) It concluded with these words: "If the two sides are not willing to accept PAR as their underlying approach, one wonders if anything will ever work to achieve the disarmament that all participants declare is their goal."

I then began to sharpen the idea by observing that the freedom to choose might be limited somewhat. Specifically, one would apply the percentage reduction not only to the overall limit (e.g., 2,250 strategic delivery vehicles) but also to the limit on numbers of MIRVed launchers (1,250), thus ensuring that neither side simply dismantled only the unMIRVed weapons first.³⁵⁰ As the shape of the SALT II Treaty became more apparent—it turned out to have five limits and sublimits—I became more expert on what this shrinkage would, in fact, produce.

The two sides, obviously, had different numbers of weapons, both overall and of the different kinds that SALT was limiting. For reasons of national pride—and because a 1972 provision authored by

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Senator Jackson required it—the limits being negotiated were, however, equal. As a result, any reduction in those limits was not, ipso facto, a reduction in numbers of weapons deployed. The limit might decline for some time before it “bit” a specific party and forced a weapons reduction. It all depended upon how close the party was to that limit in the first place. And because the Soviets were closer to the most important limits, the PAR approach, applied to the SALT II limits, had quite desirable features for U.S. planners, posing no threat to their plans for quite some time. (The United States was, in any case, concerned with modernization rather than increases in numbers at this point.)

On May 1, I briefed General Jasper Welch in the Pentagon. He understood immediately that this would sell in the Pentagon, and he promised to undertake a classified study on the subject.^[351] I asked if I could have a “sanitized,” unclassified version when he was done. He agreed and I was delighted. Later, I briefed Colonel Frank Jenkins, who was working for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and got ready understanding and sympathy. In both cases, using blackboard and chalk, I felt like a real scientist explaining how a calculation could change the world. (In fact, of course, the calculations could have been done by a high school sophomore.) I spent the next few months lobbying the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

President Carter Reveals His Summit Proposal

On May 6, 1982, a Swedish TV program interviewed ex-president Jimmy Carter and reported that at the June 1979 Vienna summit he had tried to give SALT more punch with some reductions of precisely my type. On the plane going to Vienna, according to Carter’s memoirs, the president got General Jones to agree to 5 percent annual reductions.³⁵² He summed up his proposal this way: “I wanted immediate implementation of SALT II with its strict limits, an additional 5 percent annual reduction in these limits for the five

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years of its duration, a commitment to lower SALT III limits by at least 50 percent below those of SALT II, and the application of similar restraints on limited-range nuclear weapons in Europe.”³⁵³

Had this been accepted by Brezhnev, SALT could certainly have been ratified because the charge that it had “no disarmament” would have been avoided and, indeed, because the reductions, in this form, would have had real strategic advantages for the United States. According to Dobrynin’s memoirs, Carter handed his proposals to Brezhnev in an elevator in the American embassy at lunchtime on a yellow pad on which he had jotted them down.

That night Brezhnev convened a meeting to discuss “Carter’s paper.” Defense Minister Ustinov “was dead against the proposals as too far-reaching” and was seconded, at once, by Chernenko. Gromyko said there was time to consult the comrades at the Politburo and no need to respond immediately. Thus, Dobrynin recalled that “the semiofficial proposals made by Carter were mothballed.”³⁵⁴

The FAS Flap over SALT II Ratification

While this was going on, Washington was consumed with debate over SALT II itself: Should it be ratified or not? On the whole, the hawks were saying that the treaty did not do much to limit the arms race while the doves were emphasizing what it did do. The normal polarity of debate had been reversed. It seems fair to say that the doves would have been more ready to denounce the SALT II Treaty as ineffective and flawed, had it been negotiated by a Republican administration, and the hawks less ready to denounce it.

For example, in November 1970 I was widely quoted as saying that the Nixon administration’s approach to SALT I “is a sham because it’s not stopping anything that either side really cares about doing.”³⁵⁵ The arms control community took the same approach to the inadequacies of the Nixon administration negotiation of a threshold test-ban treaty that included too high a threshold: 150,000 tons of

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TNT. FAS officials applauded both of these stances. But critical comments about SALT II generated real unease among some of them.

A Russian observer once commented to me that the Pentagon gets what the Pentagon wants. He was right. And in the SALT negotiations, it was child's play for the Defense Department to insist that the negotiations not limit any of its existing forces or desired programs. As a consequence, the SALT II limits were arranged like scaffolding around a building—delimiting a structure without impeding it. No doubt the Russians had the same approach. My view was: "Like two alcoholics who find it easy to agree that another drink will not hurt, the superpowers have designed an agreement that will keep them 'bellying up to the bar' through its 1985 termination date."³⁵⁶

The February *PIR* was entitled "SALT: Pros and Cons for Doves." Besides three statements for SALT II, I included an analysis of the dovish case *against* the treaty, entitled "Thinking the Unthinkable: Need SALT Be at Issue in the SALT Debate?" Later I wrote a piece for *The New York Times* that set off the greatest flap within FAS in decades. I stopped short of opposing the treaty but ended the piece with a trial balloon:

Could a coalition of those Senate hawks interested in protecting Minuteman ICBM's and those Senate doves interested in avoiding the replacement ICBM—the MX missile—and starting disarmament force the superpowers to work out suitable additional provisions? Maybe not. But one thing is certain. Overstrain is not the only danger confronting the SALT process. When, by 1985, it becomes painfully evident how modest this treaty was, SALT—as a comprehensive agreement on offensive weapons—could die of ridicule.³⁵⁷

In fact, when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979, thereby rendering SALT II ratification impossible, the terms of the treaty were tacitly agreed to and maintained much as I had

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predicted they would be in this article if it were blocked with a view to improvement.^[358]

Herbert (Pete) Scoville, a mainstay of the arms control community, honestly felt that my activities were imperiling the ratification of SALT II, and I see this possibility more clearly now. A person's newsworthiness in Washington is enormously increased if he is deemed to be changing sides in some sense—this being, for journalists, on a par with “man bites dog.” Hence, a dove critical of SALT II (like a hawk supporting it) was of interest. And the vote totals on SALT, almost from the beginning, seemed to require almost all of the undecided to vote yes to get the two-thirds vote in the Senate required for treaty ratification. If, then, Jeremy Stone did not like SALT II, others could, perhaps, be excused for voting against it. Or, what is more likely, an expert's reservation might embolden a few normally supportive senators to adopt an equivocal position—as some of them did. And the seductive idea of sending it back for improvements was, for SALT II supporters, “dangerous.”

I had not expected such a response since I did not consider my views so different from everyone else's. In particular, at about that time, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, from our cousin organization, had editorialized that SALT II was “being metamorphosed into a monster.” And President Carter had already told *The Atlantic Monthly* that he would try for interim compliance if the votes were not available. (Of course, this lack of votes was not yet entirely clear.)

Anyway, Pete, determined to redress my views publicly, drafted a letter for *The New York Times* and began to find supporters. He rounded up many of my most important senior advisers: Ruth Adams, Hans Bethe, Marvin Goldberger, George Kistiakowsky, Richard Garwin, and Jerome B. Wiesner. Also listed were sponsors or members such as Abram Chayes, Paul Doty, Sidney Drell, Gerard Piel, and Charles Townes. The letter had an unfortunate ad hominem tone and implied some uncertainty about whether I was really for arms control—it featured phrases such as “Stone apparently believes . . .”; “If Stone is really interested in arms control and

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in the SALT process . . .”; “By poor-mouthing its accomplishments and naively implying . . . he is probably increasing the likelihood that it will not be ratified.”³⁵⁹

This was no minor event. After the letter’s publication, State Department officials bruted it about that “Stone had been repudiated by his organization.” The high level of concern, and the conscious political maneuver, were brought home to me when a reporter told me that the president’s science adviser, Frank Press, had advised a concerned FAS sponsor and a major newspaper that “Stone is being isolated inside his organization.”³⁶⁰

I inspired a second letter to *The New York Times*—this one supporting me—which was prepared by one of the world’s greatest drafters of statements, John P. Holdren (then of Berkeley and now at Harvard University), and endorsed by Frank von Hippel. It read, “We do not agree that the SALT II agreement deserves the unqualified support provided in the letter, and doubt that its signers do either!”³⁶¹

I prepared a three-thousand-word defense of my position, which I printed in our newsletter.³⁶² As the March newsletter was coming out, and ten days before my above-quoted *New York Times* op-ed essay appeared, three senators wrote to President Carter saying the proposed SALT II treaty was “very difficult, if not impossible” for them to support. On March 5 Senator McGovern gave another warning speech, saying his “ultimate decision” on the treaty depended on President Carter’s approach to pressures that were sacrificing long-term hopes for comprehensive arms control just to “win a few hardliners’ votes for a very modest interim step which has significant merit only if a comprehensive agreement comes next.”³⁶³ Meanwhile, hawks were having a field day linking, or trying to link, preferred items to SALT ratification: MX missile procurement, major increases in NATO spending on theater weapons, linkage of SALT continuation to the world political situation, and so on.

From my point of view, if the hawks and doves were calling for the same thing—real cuts—it might occur. And Senator McGov-

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ern championed the approach.³⁶⁴ On June 15 McGovern wrote the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee asking for a specific hearing on "realistic hopes for SALT III." And he told the committee staff that he wanted to know what Jeremy Stone thought and that Stone should testify.

Though invited orally by the committee staff, I got the impression that somehow the invitation was not firm and that the committee (staff or chairman), perhaps under the influence of White House lobbyists, was waiting to see whether my testimony would just be critical of SALT II or entirely opposed to it. Although "critical" would have been what the chairman (and the administration) preferred—and that was indeed my position—I felt it would be wrong to be required, no matter how politely and tacitly, to show my hand before the invitation was formally extended. It was silly, but I rebelled. With the fifty copies of my testimony visible in my hot little hands, I told the chief of staff, William Bader, that I would turn over the documents when I got a written invitation to do so—which he said was just delayed for clerical reasons.

At this stage a journalist to whom I had confided this problem called the Foreign Relations Committee staff. The committee's prestige was at a low ebb, and the staff got the impression that if the hearings were canceled, there might be an inquiry into the reason. My invitation promptly appeared; I handed over the testimony.^[365] The testimony revealed that I was *not* opposing the treaty but trying to tack onto it a condition related to SALT III—namely that SALT II should be shrunk.

The chairman, Senator Church, opened the hearings by saying something that he should by then have known was not true—that the witnesses were opposing SALT II. The two witnesses, I and Richard Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies, were both supporting the treaty with dismay, not opposing it. And the committee staff, who usually prepare and at least review the chairman's opening remarks, had received the testimony and knew this critical fact.

I brought charts and a pointer, and I commended Senator

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McGovern's notion "mentioned this morning" in earlier hearings of shrinking the overall limits as a "very good idea." But I put forward the sophisticated version of PAR, which was "Shrink SALT II" in all its levels.

During these SALT II hearings it was not uncommon for others to urge reductions in the limits and sublimits of SALT II or even to use my phrase "shrink SALT II." But they were less supportive than I would have liked of my exact notion—and President Carter's secret proposal—of using the very *same* percentage on each limit and sublimit.

Paul Warnke, when pressed by Senator McGovern, said shrinking all SALT II limits in proportion "could be a useful approach." But Wolfgang K. H. (Pefe) Panofsky said he was still uncomfortable with "too specific a prescription to have exact proportionality in the various subcategories" because one might want a larger reduction for MIRVed ICBMs for reasons of stability.³⁶⁶

In the end, Senator McGovern lined up an overwhelming majority of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for my general approach. The remaining problem was how to deal with this question of whether one percentage would apply to all categories or whether there might be different percentages applied to different SALT II limits. I was working closely with his office, and a memo sent to McGovern on September 24 about working out a deal with Senator Moynihan shows that the language we were considering then was as follows: "The Senate understands by the statement of principles that the two sides do intend, as a priority item in SALT III negotiations, to seek to reduce the ceilings and subceilings of



The author testifying to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on how to shrink SALT II as a proposal for SALT III. From left to right: Senators Charles Percy, Jacob Javits, Chairman Frank Church, George McGovern, Joseph R. Biden. Hidden are Senators S. I. Hayakawa and Paul S. Sarbanes

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SALT II on an *equitable and proportionate* basis and, on this understanding, consent to the Treaty's ratification [emphasis added]." On November 1 Senator McGovern secured the unanimous consent of the Foreign Relations Committee to a "McGovern-Chafee" SALT III declaration that incorporated this approach.

But guess what? At the last minute, the White House sent word that it would support the paragraph on shrinking SALT II only if the "equitable and proportionate" basis was weakened further. I was told this in a hallway by McGovern's aide, Alex A. Knopp, and can still remember the scene. Horrified, I said, "Are you going to accept this?" and he said, "Yes."^[367]

At this point Senator John Chafee walked down the hall, and I broke off to raise this with him. But he was not the main author of this resolution—just the Republican anchor of it—and he said something like "What's the difference?" More sober heads than mine said, "Jeremy, everybody knows what it means!"^[368] But I was somewhere between disappointed and devastated. Of course, gaining the support of a committee meant accepting a very watered-down approach. But I still cannot understand why the White House insisted on diluting a formula for dealing with the Russians that it had already proposed to the Soviets in secret. Apparently, the staff did not know what had been proposed at the Vienna summit three months earlier.^[369]

One thing sticks in my mind. At an early stage of my campaign, I had called on the State Department's director for political-military affairs, Leslie Gelb, now the president of the Council on Foreign Relations. He had taken one look at my idea—a single percentage that the two leaders of the United States and the USSR could agree upon—and said, "Jeremy, this is the kind of idea which will appeal to you and to President Carter and to no one in between in the bureaucracy."

He was almost right. It had appealed enough to the Defense Department—once they saw how much it favored our side—but, for the expert observers and the bureaucrats, the political advan-

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tages of the “single” number were downplayed. They wanted to go back to haggling. They implicitly assumed that our side could adjust these categories and subcategories as it wanted. Or they saw subtle adjustments in the category totals as more important than a simple and lasting agreement. The ultimate irony, in any case, was my inability to get through the U.S. Congress a precise formulation that—although I did not know it at the time—the administration had already proposed to the Soviets.

The Death of SALT: Afghanistan

Senator McGovern said his vote for SALT II's ratification depended upon the adoption of his resolution. And at that time, according to a friendly Senate pro-SALT office, ratification needed all of the eighteen undecided, including McGovern.³⁷⁰ However, Frank Church had been told in confidence by the administration that American intelligence reported the existence of a brigade of Soviet troops in Cuba. (It seems to have been there since the Cuban missile crisis.) As Carter remembered it, Church “saw an opportunity to meet some of the conservative political attacks on his liberal voting record,” which included visits to Cuba and complimentary statements about Castro. He called a press conference, tried to “escalate the report into an earthshaking event,” and said that SALT II would not pass unless the troops were removed. Carter considered this “absolutely irresponsible.”³⁷¹

Church delayed SALT hearings and on November 2 appended a Foreign Relations Committee understanding to the SALT II Treaty requiring the president to assure the country that the Soviet brigade in Cuba was not a threat. According to the experienced observer Raymond L. Garthoff, the “margin of support” for SALT II was so thin by the fall of 1979 that even the “modest negative effects” of the brigade report were “possibly enough to kill it.”

The shaky situation of SALT II was much in the minds of Soviet

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embassy officials, who more than once called FAS and others to try to figure out whether SALT II was likely to pass. Some observers felt that SALT’s precarious situation in September and October could have figured in the Soviet decision to abandon détente in favor of the Christmas 1979 invasion of Afghanistan.^[372] But by October the Politburo had already dispatched military specialists to see how Afghanistan would react if forces were sent in. Their report, filed in December, that such actions would mean war was ignored by Andropov.³⁷³ There is little doubt, then, that the Soviet Union would have intervened in Afghanistan even if SALT II had not been in trouble—indeed, even if it had been ratified. (Garthoff supported this contention in a 1996 telephone interview with the author.)

In the end, SALT ratification turned out to be a secondary issue on the global scale. All of this churning around in America, of which my struggle to “Shrink SALT II” was itself a minor piece, was no more than a minor fluctuation sitting on top of much larger forces and pressures unleashed by instability in Afghanistan.

To the extent that SALT II needed to become a preliminary to real disarmament, McGovern and I may have been correct to encourage criticism of it as lacking disarmament. When the Republicans took office, the Strategic Arms *Limitation* Talks (SALT) were promptly recast as the Strategic Arms *Reduction* Talks (START) and the new president proposed reductions, no matter how ill-considered, that eventually did turn into disarmament.