



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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The U.S. Response to Soviet Security and Political Challenges

Steadiness, care and balance are the hallmarks of the Administration's overall strategy towards the Soviet Union. Both our defense programs and arms control initiatives are interdependent efforts to bring stability to the military balance. Similarly, our diplomatic firmness with the Soviets over such issues as Poland and Afghanistan does not preclude and, indeed, is a necessary basis for any meaningful and realistic U.S.-Soviet dialogue.

When the Administration entered office, it faced both an ominous Soviet military buildup and increased Soviet intervention in various regions of the world. We have sought to counter this in a variety of ways.

Our defense modernization programs for both strategic theatre and conventional forces are designed to redress dangerously destabilizing trends of the last decade in the military balance. Our defense emphasis on "crisis stability," by denying the temptations of any pre-emptive Soviet military moves, is consistent with the Administration's efforts in the START and INF negotiations to achieve substantial reductions in the nuclear arsenals of both sides.

We place great importance on these START and INF talks. The process of reaching agreement in them will obviously be long and difficult, but we remain convinced the President's proposals for major verifiable reductions in his November 1982 and May 1982 speeches offer the best hope for success.

Diplomatically, we have sought to ease both the political and economic causes of regional instability which present openings for Soviet intervention. This is best evidenced by the President's Mideast peace proposal and his Caribbean Basin Initiative.

We have expressed to the Soviets our willingness to engage in constructive dialogue with them on specific bilateral and multi-lateral problems where progress is realistically possible. At the same time, however, we have made clear to them there will be political and economic costs for their further violations of such international agreements as the Helsinki Accords.

We do not seek confrontation. We do believe, however, that a consistent demonstration of our resolve and seriousness of purpose will provide the most realistic and eventually productive basis for our dealings with the Soviets.

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