

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 22, 1989

NATIONAL SECURITY DIRECTIVE 23

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT
THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
THE DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND
DISARMAMENT AGENCY
THE DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

SUBJECT: United States Relations with the Soviet Union (X)

For forty years the United States has committed its power and will to containing the military and ideological threat of Soviet communism. Containment was never an end in itself; it was a strategy born of the conditions of the postwar world. The United States recognized that, while Soviet military power was not the only threat to international stability, it was the most immediate and grave one. The U.S. challenge was to prevent the spread of Soviet communism while rebuilding the economic, political and social strength of the world's long-standing and new democracies. Those who crafted the strategy of containment also believed that the Soviet Union, denied the course of external expansion, would ultimately have to face and react to the internal contradictions of its own inefficient, repressive and inhumane system. (X)

This strategy provided an enduring pillar for the growth of Western democracy and free enterprise. While the most important goal of containment has been met -- the development of free and prosperous societies in Western Europe and in other parts of the world -- the Soviet military threat has not diminished. Rather, in the last two decades, the Soviet Union has increased its

Declassified/Released on 11/1/95
under provisions of E.O. 12958
by D. Van Tassel, National Security Council

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Declassify on: OADR

F89-191

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transfers, force projection, and proxy forces by continued U.S. political, economic and military support for friends and allies, and for freedom fighters. (S)

I direct the Secretary of State to:

Consider the most appropriate ways to engage the Soviets in discussions on resolving regional conflicts and eliminating threatening Soviet positions of influence around the world. (S)

Transnational

The United States and the Soviet Union share an interest in reversing the spread of drugs and narcotics. The United States must challenge the Soviet Union to refrain from directly or indirectly supporting or training terrorists and insist that its allies do the same. (S)

I direct the Secretary of State to:

Lead an interagency effort to develop a detailed plan for cooperating with the Soviet Union on these matters, including the boundaries of such cooperation given security and intelligence constraints. (S)

I also direct the Secretary of State to:

Examine ways in which the Soviet Union and the United States might cooperate on environmental issues. (S)

The Vice President should:

Explore through the National Space Council ways that the United States and the Soviet Union might jointly use space to advance our mutual interests. A particularly promising area might be research on the environment in support of multilateral efforts to protect our planet. (S)

Bilateral Issues

We will encourage an expansion of contacts between the Soviet and American peoples at all levels as a means of promoting Western ideas of democracy and free enterprise. We will insist on full reciprocity in all areas of bilateral cooperation with the Soviet Union and in the treatment of U.S. and Soviet official representatives. (S)

The United States supports the expansion of mutually beneficial non-strategic trade on strictly commercial terms. At the same time, our economic policy toward Moscow must be considered within the context of our overall approach to the Soviet Union. In the short run, we are prepared to streamline, in conjunction with our allies, the COCOM list. In the longer run, as the Soviet Union meets appropriate political and economic criteria, the United States will remove or reduce the legislative, administrative and other obstacles to non-

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