

between the United States and the Soviet Union that is about to bring us the first ever agreement for stabilizing reductions in strategic offensive forces. Deployment of strategic defences would further enhance stability. We believe this argument is, and will remain, valid.

We also continue to believe that, in concert with reductions in strategic offensive arms, effective defences would greatly reduce any strategic benefits a side might obtain by cheating on international arms reductions agreements. Defences would help deter the proliferation of ballistic missile technology and devalue the potential political and military leverage of ballistic missiles - long thought to be the terror weapons of choice.

The proliferation of ballistic missile technology, underscored by the lessons learned from the Gulf War, confirms our conclusion that the regime established by the ABM Treaty must be changed. Positive changes in United States-Soviet relations, the need to address a truly mutual concern, and a United States ballistic missile defence programme which averts stated Soviet concerns may now provide a real opportunity for success in our negotiations. I stress that a negotiated cooperative transition is our goal. This is why we have been engaged in the Defense and Space Talks for six years and remain committed to their future.

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The United States continues to offer a mechanism, the United States Defense and Space Treaty, to permit deployment of defences beyond the ABM Treaty following three years' discussion of specific measures for implementing a cooperative transition. Such a process of negotiation and discussion of concrete measures is far preferable to withdrawal from the ABM Treaty under the supreme interests provision found in article XV of that Treaty. The United States approach is measured, reasonable and appropriate.

We also understand full well that the negotiated cooperative transition we seek cannot be built in a vacuum but requires a sound foundation of trust. Therefore, another United States approach in the Defense and Space Talks is ensuring predictability in the development of the United States-Soviet strategic relationship which has up to now been characterized by secrecy. In contrast, openness makes the strategic relationship predictable, averting miscalculation and technological surprise, and thus is stabilizing.

To encourage openness, the United States has proposed a number of predictability measures designed to create a better understanding of strategic ballistic missile defence activities as early as the research stage - years before the appearance of advanced defences in the field. These United States measures include annual exchanges of data, meetings of experts, briefings, visits to laboratories, observations of tests, and ABM test satellite notifications.

As a demonstration of the United States approach and commitment to openness, at the Wyoming Ministerial in September 1989, Secretary of State Baker invited a group of Soviet experts to visit two United States laboratories conducting SDI research. In December 1989, 10 Soviet experts