



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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August 6, 1996

Mr. Lee Willett
Chiswick Towers
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U.K.

Dear Mr. Willett:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 15. You are a man of your word, and I appreciate that. I must confess, however, that the details of our interview in October 1994 have now escaped me. In reading the transcript, therefore, some of it was no longer recognizable. I did make a few changes it and am returning the transcript to you. I do hope that the interview proved helpful in connection with your doctoral dissertation.

It was not my recollection that you intended to distribute the transcript itself or to incorporate the transcript as any part of published materials. It doesn't read well enough for that. It does reflect our oral exchange, but I frequently find that an oral exchange which might be fruitful and helpful, does not necessarily read wekk. I, therefore, did not believe that the text of the transcript would be published and assume that it will not be.

Sincerely,



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15 July 1996

Dear Mr Kampelman

As a follow-on to the interview you granted me for my PH.D thesis on *Tomahawk* SLCMs and START in October 1994, I have here, as requested, enclosed a transcript of the interview for your perusal. I apologize for the time delay, but after trying to complete my work, this was almost the first opportunity to check, print and mail this and many other transcripts. Should you find that I have misquoted, misinterpreted or misrepresented your views in any way, please do not hesitate to let me know and I shall make the necessary adjustments to my final draft.

May I take this opportunity to thank you again for the help you gave me.

Yours sincerely



Lee Willett (Dept of War Studies, King's College, London)

MAX KAMPELMAN
14 October 1994

Q Can I start by asking you what positions, if you can tell me the exact title of positions you held in relation to the arms control negotiating team and for what period?

A Beginning with 1985 when the United States and the Soviet Union decided to go back to the negotiating table, (you will recall the Soviets walked out and we went back to the negotiating table in March) actually the very week Gorbachev took over ~~the~~ ^{his new} office, the desk of his predecessor. Those negotiations were divided into three parts: the intermediate, the INF part; ~~the~~ START, the strategic weapon part; and the space and defence part which was represented by the SDI programme. My personal responsibility was to handle the space and defence aspect of those three negotiations and then to be head of the total delegation, but I did not personally on a day-to-day basis negotiate either the strategic or the intermediate parts. I was concerned with defence weapons, with defence technology. That lasted for me until January 1989 when I resigned from government. By then we had an INF Treaty, signed and ratified, and we also had between 450 and 500 pages of a strategic agreement, ^{virtually} completed, in the main completed, subject to further negotiation, primarily in the verification area. ~~And we~~ ^{And we} had shifted the defence debate away from its being what the Soviets originally said it would be, a barrier towards the other agreements, and they agreed with us that this was a subject that ought to be continued to be talked about but independently standing on its own feet. ~~So that is what my role was.~~

Q It seems that during the period while you were dealing with these negotiations, there were two key arguments that the Americans put forward as explanations for their refusal to include the sea-launched Cruise missile in Start. One was the lack of adequate verification; two was the fact that the Tomahawk was not really a strategic weapon. Do you yourself think that it was a non-strategic weapon? Do you yourself think that verification was so unworkable. The third question I have on that: I have a view that maybe these two issues were used as excuses to cover other reasons why the Tomahawk was kept out, like the fact that it was an area of American advantage and it was a system about which the Soviets had genuine strategic fears and therefore Washington would use it as a way of getting American concessions out of Moscow.

A Well, I would guess that all of these were contributing factors. The verification problem was a very serious problem and our continual challenge to the Soviets to present to us a method of adequate verification was never really satisfactorily answered. The reason we wanted that was because we thought this would also be helpful within the American society as we kept discussing the whole issue of arms control. ~~and~~ ^{and} They never did properly address how they could verify this, so that it was not a false issue; it was a real issue. Had we injected the Cruise missile into the negotiations, in my opinion the Senate would not have ratified the Treaty and we would not have ended up with an agreement. My position with the Soviets, therefore, in addition to the arguments you have heard, my position with the Soviets was

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✓ always "We are not now at the end of our negotiations; we are
✓ the beginning of our negotiations". ^{0.255} We get this Treaty buttoned
up, this Treaty will be very helpful to both of us, but we will
✓ continue talking, continue talking on Start 2, which did happen,
✓ and I said "There might be a Start 5". This is a process, I
explained, you don't have to solve every problem all at once;
you have to grow in this, and as we experience good things and
comfortable things both sides will feel more secure on the next
✓ round. ~~So this was my idea.~~

On this issue of "Is this strategic or is it tactical?", we
still don't have that resolved with the Russians now. We are
talking with the Russians about it. We are now involved in talks
✓ in Geneva on this. How do you make a distinction between the
✓ two? There was obviously nothing in writing that guided ~~you~~ in
this business. I am not intimately involved with the SEC ^{SCS}
negotiations now taking place in Geneva, but I have talked to
✓ some of the people who are involved in them and they're
attempting now to try and have some kind of arbitrary criteria ^{ESTABLISHMENT}.
✓ ~~Maybe that is the way they will go.~~ I am sceptical about an
arbitrary criterion myself because we want to be very careful
✓ that we don't -- well this is relevant with respect to the ADM ^{ASH}
Treaty, and I don't think we ought to be in a position where we
✓ arbitrarily put a ceiling on technological developments. But ~~it~~ ^{IT'S} ~~is~~ ^{THE TAU}
✓ ~~is~~ still under way so if somebody wants to claim ^{it's} tactical
or somebody else wants to claim it's strategic both have
arguments to support their position, you have to have both to
agree before you can have an agreement. And I can see both
arguments.

Q Do you go along with the -- there was the US position at one
point that people in Washington were arguing that the Soviets
were just using the SLCM issue just to be political difficult on
Start. Do you agree with that or do you think they actually had
genuine fears about the weapon?

✓ A No, I think they had genuine fears about the weapon. ~~You~~
✓ ~~know, it's a combination.~~ I found in my negotiations that you
didn't have, when you really dug down into it, you didn't have
unanimity on the Russian position. Generals were different. I
would talk with one person and then another person would come in
✓ from Moscow. I had one such experience. One general ~~was~~ actually
left on a Friday, a senior diplomat came in on the Saturday and
we had dinner together, ~~and~~ ~~The~~ the first thing he said to me is
"Look, we'll just have to withdraw all the things that were
talked about up until now; we don't have agreement on this in
Moscow." But I do think there were probably some legitimate
concerns, yes, I do.

Q Why did the Soviet emphasis on including SLCMs increase
around 1987? In the early eighties there was not much mention
of it.

A Of what?

Q Of the Tomahawk. There wasn't much mention of the Tomahawk
in the early eighties in arms control. The Soviets seemed to
pick it up as a big question around 1987 time. Why do you think
this was?

A Well, that supports the argument of those who believe that it was introduced as a political measure. ~~I believe that, yes, that is why I say it's both.~~ It was introduced as a political measure but the fact of the matter is -- and I don't have any doubt in my mind -- that there were some who had concerns about it. I talked to some about it and I felt they did have concerns about it. So, you know, you've gotta recognise that. Now, no one agreement is going to eliminate all concerns. We are thinking of a process, and one thing we have to get the Soviets to understand was the concept of a process that the talks had to be based on the development of confidence. That is why verification is so important. I repeat what I said, I do think some were concerned about it.

Q What do you think, if any, were the implications of the Reykjavik meeting for Tomahawk, because the Soviets raised the subject at Reykjavik but nothing was agreed to. Do you think this sanctioned the deployment of the Tomahawk? Did it remove the Tomahawk from the agenda? Perhaps the Soviets didn't understand necessarily what had been agreed to and that is why maybe the issue came up again and again after Reykjavik.

A What we concluded in Reykjavik was that that issue would not be a barrier to a final agreement. They might continue to raise it but we concluded in our own minds that they had sent us a signal that it was still a concern and ^{they} would express the concern, ^{but} they would hope down the road this could be taken care of. ~~that~~ They ^{ultimately} agreed with us that what we could agree on on INF, what we could agree on ~~on~~ the strategic, was important enough to do independently even if we could not come to terms on (inaudible) ~~I think from that point on that was what was in our head and I think they knew that. On that, I think they knew because we told them that because we tried always to act to let them know what we were thinking.~~ DEFENSE

Q How significant had the Soviet succession crisis been in slowing down the arms control process and how did the arrival of Gorbachev change the situation?

A Well, ~~that~~ changed it dramatically. A fundamental change took place at the first Summit, not in Reykjavik, but in Geneva, which was November of 1985 if I remember correctly. ~~And~~ This Summit had an effect on both principles. I know when I came back to Washington and when the President came back to Washington when we met about the Summit, and we became involved in the arms talks, the President said that in his private meeting with Gorbachev he had sensed that there would be a fundamental change in the whole leadership structure; that ^{it} was a younger man, that the old ideology would be trashed, and that we could deal with him - probably. This meeting was in November. In January we started the negotiations again in Geneva and Mr Karpov who was the head of the Soviet delegation, took me aside to say that he had received instructions not to criticise Reagan any more and he wanted me to know that, ~~and~~ I passed that on to Washington of course. So obviously Gorbachev concluded that he could deal with Reagan and that Reagan wanted a harmonious relationship just as Reagan concluded, as Margaret Thatcher concluded, that they could deal with Gorbachev.

So I would say that put a completely different coloration on the talks. For the first time we began to conclude that an agreement was therefore within reach. We had lots of problems but if you are convinced in your own mind that both sides would like to find an agreement in their interests if they can, it makes the task take on a different dimension than if you really think you're going through a charade, because if you think you are going through a charade -- which is what our earlier negotiators thought -- they were convinced they were going through a charade -- if you think you're going through a charade then you're really sticking to the rhetoric instead of attempting to negotiate. It made a great difference.

Q How important was arms control itself in the broader context of this better over-all relationship?

A In my opinion, and I have always had this view, the tensions in the world do not result from an arms race. In my opinion the arms race takes place because there are tensions in the world.

I was among those who ~~my persuaded~~ President Reagan, when was it, I guess it was the 1985 United Nations session, when Gorbachev made ~~this~~ offer ^{that} by the year 2000 to get rid of all nuclear weapons, or something like that ~~at the United Nations~~, and the question was: what should Reagan say in ~~his story~~ ¹⁹⁸⁵? I was among those who were urging the President, and he accepted this recommendation, that instead of getting into that kind of a competition he should emphasise that arms are the result of tensions and that what we have got to do is deal with the tensions, i.e. Afghanistan, human rights, bilateral relations, and then deal with the confidence resulting from those changes having an effect on the arms talks.

Q Specifically relating to arms control, was the Tomahawk being lined up by the administration as a possible hedge against any reductions that may be made in other weapons? Was its prominence increased not only because of the possible implications of ballistic missile cuts but also because of the problems that such weapons as MX and Midgetman were having in Congress?

A ~~I have a feeling that~~ I don't know because I was not involved in that decision; the decision was for the Defense Department and the Administration to pursue. ~~Cruise Missiles and Tomahawks was not something I was involved in in any way.~~ My guess is that the decision to proceed with the Tomahawk preceded the decision to re-open the arms negotiations. That I know. ~~That decision was made before that, so that~~ that decision I believe was made in response to a conclusion by the military that it was a highly desirable weapon to have in the arsenal. As the MX ran into difficulties it only added to that argument because the MX was indeed a danger. I don't believe that it was developed in any way in response to or in anticipation of an arms control agreement; I don't think so but it may have been. ~~It's not involved with it.~~

Q You can find people who will argue, you can find sources that will argue, that the Reagan Administration was perhaps not very serious about doing an arms control deal and that is why

maybe questions such as the Tomahawk were never properly addressed because -- People have said the same about the Bush Administration as well, that they were never really serious about doing an arms control deal. Maybe this is one of the reasons why the Soviets made all the concessions because the Soviets were serious and maybe the Americans weren't.

✓ A I don't think so. This is the kind of thing you hear from people who politically disagreed with Reagan or Bush. They were shocked when we came up with an INF agreement. I had these people say to me, the only reason Reagan came up with a zero option for INF is because he expected the Soviets would never accept it. Well, that's nonsense, as it was proven; it got to zero. You had people coming up with, he wasn't serious and wouldn't have a strategic agreement. Well, we got a Start agreement. ~~Now I don't accept that.~~ You know, this is a large world. You will find people ready to say anything, and they may believe it, but I don't see it. I myself consider that ^{it} to be a political expression and not an expression of reality.¹

Q So in that case how come Start was never pulled off under the Reagan administration? I mean, sources that I have read already state that maybe in around 1988 the Administration just didn't have the political will to make a breakthrough on the difficult issues.

A It's not true.

✓ Q So why then was Start not pulled off under Reagan?

A The most complicated issue was ~~the issue of~~ the Start Agreement. We had never had one before. It seems to me that a tremendous amount of progress was made under Reagan. Under the Reagan Administration was had close to 500 pages of agreement.

✓ So to say it wasn't pulled off is irrelevant. You don't pull these things off because you happen to have an election coming up in November. There is a process that takes place. We have never before, on either side, had verification along these lines. This took a lot of time. It is interesting to me how you frequently get criticism in which the fault is the Americans' fault. Maybe the Russians were hoping to get a better deal from Bush. I don't happen to believe this. But you can make a case to say that the Russians held it up. Because it wasn't completed, why blame the Americans for the fact that it wasn't completed? Maybe the Russians were the ones who were responsible for its not being completed. But if you accept, as I do, the bona fides of both parties -- and I do accept that because I witnessed that -- then you say it's not a question of ~~will~~ - These things have to take their course. We have a problem that the Russians never had which is we have to get treaties ratified, and these are not automatically done. Endless debate, lots of discussion, you've got to be sure, particularly on verification, and we need two-thirds vote. Very difficult. So if I were going to have any critical observation, my critical observation would be with the fact that the Bush Administration took a year to study what had happened before they were seriously ready to prepare to continue. They studied the ~~process~~ ^{process} they concluded that everything that Reagan did was fine as far as they were concerned. They proceeded with the negotiations and we had a

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Start Treaty. I can tell you that the Start Treaty that was completed was practically the Start Treaty that we turned over to them at the end of 1988/early 1989.

Q You can say that maybe the Soviets were the better masters of propaganda, particularly playing on western European public opinion a lot of time the Americans did come out to seem like the bad guys. What in your opinion being the chief negotiator do you think the Soviets could have done differently that maybe would have helped the arms control process?

A I am not being critical of the Soviets, as I told you; I think there were bona fides on both sides.

Q But, I mean, people will say that the Americans maybe could have been more flexible on --

A The people who want to say that it was the fault of the Americans are going to say it, no matter what ~~you do~~ THE FACTS.

Q But do you think the Soviets could have been more flexible?

A No, I think they acted in accordance with their best interests and we acted in accordance with our best interests. Neither of us had reason to fully trust one another. We were getting into completely new ground on verification, totally new ground, and we had to, each of us had to test it. We would make a proposal to them and they would have to send it back to Moscow. The engineers in Moscow would have to look at it, test it out. We did the same. We would send these proposals to independent laboratories here. We would say to the independent laboratories, "This is what's being talked about. Break the verification. Put yourself in the Soviets' eyes and you break it." We paid them to try to break it because if they could not break it, maybe the Soviets could not break it. This was the careful thing, ^{AT THE TIME} national interest and survival of the thing. What I want to go on to say, I never sensed -- and I was in Europe a lot -- I never sensed any anti-American attitude there. I sensed it in the press, I sensed it among leftists, but so what? I mean, this is it. The leftists in the United States also, and when the right is in control the left is criticised; when the left is in control the right is criticised. Ok, that's fine, this is the life. process

Q Paul Nietzky went on record on 1988 as saying something about banning nuclear Tomahawks would perhaps expedite the process. Do you think he was correct in thinking that putting the SLCM on the table would have made Moscow more forthcoming on other issues?

A I know this was Paul's view and he expressed it. As I say, the reason we kept urging the Russians to come up with answers on verification was because we were still debating this issue in the United States as well and it would have been useful to see what they say about it, and within the United States we were having discussions about this; we were meeting with the Navy, the Navy was studying this, and Paul's view was clear. If the question in effect is: the US does something which might not be in its interests, will that produce something else? It might, it might not, I doubt it. My experience is, my experience with

the Soviets was, the extent to which we were tough and serious they took us seriously. The extent you communicated to them a softness was bad negotiating strategy because they would then wonder whether they could get more on the next, and on the next and on the next.

END OF TAPE B

TAPE 9B

Q (no tape)

A but I was persuaded that this might be so.

Q How much was the NATO, the question of NATO modernisation, and the like, a factor in American thinking about the strategic weapons cuts at this time?

A We never took a step without prior consultation with NATO. I explained to the Soviets why this sometimes could cause difficulty. ~~because~~ When we would arrive at a negotiating position this was a position arrived at after serious debate and discussion in the Defense Department, the State Department, the Department of Energy, the CIA, the National Security Council, ~~and~~ we had to come up then with something that could get a consensus and if not the President would make a decision. We had to come up with something that the Congress wouldn't criticise us for on both sides, either because it is too tough or too soft. Once we came through that whole rigmarole we then had to go to NATO and explain to NATO what it was we were attempting to do and get their input. So, yes, we consulted with NATO on this and the NATO welfare injection was always present.

Q Why did the idea of a unilateral declaration -- I will change that actually. Did the US ever really have any intention of altering its position on the SLCM?

A Not during the negotiations.

Q Why not?

A For the reasons I've stated. We didn't think it was to be talked about. We didn't know it could be verified; we didn't know whether it was in our strategic interest to do this. There was just no way we were prepared to deal with the SLCM in those negotiations.

Q Did you not see a possibility --

A In my opinion, had we done so we would not have had the Treaty ratified. I've gone into that.

Q Yes. Did you not perhaps see a possibility in doing a straight trade for the weapon, for say maybe -- the Tomahawk seemed to be the biggest Soviet fear and the biggest American fear was their heavy ICBMs. So maybe having gone to zero on the heavy ICBMs and zero on the nuclear Tomahawks, I think it was Brent Scowcroft who maybe put forward the argument later on that a straight swap could have been done or suggested that it could have been a possibility that could have been considered. Do you think this was a viable or a workable --

A I don't think it would have been workable and it was not seriously discussed between us and the Soviets. I do know that

✓ Brent wrote something about it later, as maybe his view as to what might be done, but it was not seriously discussed by either of the parties. We were en route towards doing something much broader and we think much more significant, and since we both thought we could achieve that we didn't go off into ~~pageants~~ *TALKS*.

Q Some critics have argued -- you know, political critics of the administration -- have argued that maybe the Administration really didn't know what its goal were for Start. Did the Administration really know where its over-all strategic policy was going in its arms control policy?

A The results were pretty good. For a group that didn't know where it was going it did pretty well as far as the results were concerned.

Q So you think you got what you wanted although you didn't get an agreement -

A I think so. We all felt we had more strategic weapons than we needed, nuclear weapons, and we got significant reductions in that. Most important is we began to develop a relationship of growing confidence between us, all of which was highly desirable. I haven't seen that criticism. It doesn't strike me as being a realistic criticism but it might be.

Q You would disagree that Reagan was a political lame duck by 1988. How significant do you think the looming Presidential election was in slowing down the Start process? Did other things at home become more important than getting an arms control deal with the Soviets.

A I did not recognise a slow down of the arms talks at all. If anything, there would have been a stimulus to rush it through and we resisted that. The stimulus to rushing it through was that we all knew that Reagan would have liked to have a Start Treaty while he was President, but he was never prepared to say "I want to have a Start Treaty" and then make concessions that were not in our interests to do so. But the whole motivation was for speed, not for slowness.

Q How correct do you think the Soviet claim was that the deployment of Tomahawk would be a circumvention of any limits that were drawn up at Start?

A They haven't said that. Do you mean the agreement we entered into is violated by virtue of the Tomahawk?

Q Yes.

A I haven't heard them say that.

Q Would you agree that given --

A What was agreed upon was that it wasn't coming up. They understood after Reykjavik that it wasn't going to come up, so basically there wasn't going to be an issue; it was not going to be included. If they thought that they should not have signed the Start Treaty until they could get satisfaction there, but that was not the position they took.

Q How was their position over -- Was it not more in their

interests to sign a Start Agreement with what it had while they still could, given their worsening economic and domestic situation at home? Sort of "Take what you can get"?

A I feel we had the same view, take what we can get. What we could get, both of us felt, was very important. We both felt that and that is why we had the agreement without the Tomahawk. So after that, when you have agreed to exclude a subject, I have not heard any responsible official say "But we did cover it". We all knew we weren't covering it.

Q I just have a couple more questions. So you don't think -- It seemed to me that Tomahawk was quite a big issue by this time, towards the end of the eighties, but you don't think ----

A Less of an issue in our talks because they understood that.

Q You think they understood that?

A Oh I am sure they did. I told them we were acting on that assumption, based on Reykjavik. They knew what our assumption was; they knew it wasn't coming in. When you are dealing with and negotiating treaties, sentence by sentence, and you're at page 450 or 470, and you haven't come up with it and you know by then what the differences are, and frankly by the time the Reagan Administration finished the primary differences were verification issues that had to be tested out, the substance was agreed to, the substance did not include Tomahawk.

Q How much was that the result of the fact that they understood your position and wouldn't raise it or the fact that you just wouldn't talk about it?

A It doesn't matter. Whatever the reason is it is understood it is not part of the Treaty. That's all I'm trying to communicate to you.

Q Sure.

A That we have an agreement, that it is not part of that agreement. Should it have been? If you ask the Russians they'll say "yes". Ask us, we'll say it wasn't. Now will it come up in a future talk? It might.

Q So you wouldn't go along with the argument then that the SLCM was one of the reasons why Start remained unsigned under Reagan?

A Oh no. We had ⁴⁰⁰460-and-some-odd pages. No argument about that. He would have liked to sign it. But they never said -- we weren't ready to sign it. We hadn't completed the verification questions yet, and it took more than a year for the verification questions to be engineered out. It wasn't the substance, ~~at no point was the substance the issue~~.

Q Finally, I would just like to ask you, Reagan was obviously under a lot of pressure at home from people across the river not to give away Tomahawk --

A The Navy was very strong on that.

Q How significant was this in affecting the American arms control stance?

A It was very significant. This was certainly very much one of the root issues facing our position but, as I said, the other issues were also there. We couldn't get this Treaty ratified if we put it in; we didn't think it could be verified. They never told us how it could be verified, and it was from the Navy's point of view vital to their being able to defend our national interests. We said so strongly and continually, and for most people just recently, and they persuaded the President. This was made very clear during the meetings.

Q Just to conclude, do you think that the American policy to leave Tomahawk out of Start was the correct one?

A I do; it was certainly the correct one. There's no question about it. As I say, I've been out of it now since 1989. My guess is that the Russians still have not been able to come up with a verification machine that will make it work because they were so far behind. We both of us were looking for those things, and couldn't find it. You could say alright every one of these boats should be subject to be boarded on the high seas. You know, it is impractical. Now maybe the technology will evolve in a way that will make it practical. Okay. Then I am sure the parties will sit down, the Russians may say "Let's open up this question, let's now talk about this" .

Q Thank you.