



Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney  
General Colin Powell, Chairman, JCS  
Pete Williams, ASD (Public Affairs)  
Saturday, September 28, 1991 - 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Williams: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you all for coming in on Saturday.

Secretary Cheney will have an opening statement for you. He'll be followed by General Powell, and then we'll be happy to answer your questions.

Secretary Cheney: Thank you very much, Pete.

Last night the President spoke to the American people and outlined his initiative for changing the size and the shape of the nuclear arsenals that belong to both the United States and the Soviets.

This morning I have signed the executive order taking our strategic bomber force and our Minuteman II missile force off alert status, thereby implementing the first part of the President's decision announced last night.

Today, General Powell and I want to fill you in on the details of the President's initiative, and then we'll be happy to respond to some of your questions.

Before I get into specifics, I'd like to make a few points that I think need to be emphasized about the President's initiative. First of all, it is, in my opinion, the single biggest change in the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons since they were first integrated into our forces in 1954. It will make the world a safer place. It will allow us to rely more on defenses in the future with respect to our relationship with the Soviet Union.

These moves also challenge the Soviets -- both the central government and the republics -- to do what we're doing by responding with initiatives of their own. If they follow through as the President called upon them to do, they will not only shrink the world's nuclear arsenal, they will also free themselves of the expensive drag on their economy which they do not need and cannot afford.

The President's initiative has two main goals. First of all, it makes the world's arsenal of nuclear weapons significantly smaller, and the world safer. Secondly, it gives the Soviets the incentive they need to shift their country away from the business of cranking out nuclear weapons, and toward the work of building democracy.

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There is good reason to take these steps now. The world's in a new era of promise that started nearly two years ago with the collapse of the Berlin Wall. The Warsaw Pact is history. Soviet forces are pulling out of Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union has reduced its military forces and made those that remain more defensive. And of course, we have recently signed landmark agreements affecting both conventional and strategic systems.

The defeat of the coup last August by the people of the Soviet Union led to a new form of government in the union, one in which the republics are gaining increased influence over weapons and deployments. This gives us an opportunity to move toward a safer, more stable relationship with a new Soviet Union.

The leaders of the Soviet Union have expressed profound skepticism themselves about the massive strategic nuclear arsenal and the resources that they have continued to invest in maintaining that force. Both Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin have talked about their desire to reduce the nuclear arsenal. We want to give them an opportunity to do this -- to match their words with their deeds.

The President's program includes initiatives that fall into two broad categories. First, changes in our own force posture and our modernization program; changes which we are calling on the Soviet Union to match. Second, a set of initiatives which we hope to undertake with the Soviet Union to improve the stability and safety of the nuclear arsenals on both sides.

The President's proposals were developed in close consultation with General Powell, with the Joint Chiefs, and myself. These initiatives have our full and unqualified support. They are, in fact, built on the new defense strategy the President announced in August of 1990 -- a course the Department is already pursuing in its force budget and planning process.

Now on the specifics. Let me briefly remind you of the key elements of the President's initiative. They're on this first chart. The elimination of ground-launched tactical nuclear weapons; the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from our ships at sea; standing down strategic bombers from alert, which we've accomplished this morning; standing down the ICBM's slated for deactivation under START; cancelling the Peacekeeper rail garrison program, and the small ICBM mobility program; cancelling SRAM II; simplifying our strategic command and control system under a new strategic command; proposing with the Soviets the joint elimination of multiple warhead or MIRV'd ICBM's; cooperating with them to permit the deployment of non-nuclear missile defenses; and finally, cooperating on efforts to enhance the safety, security, and command and control of nuclear systems.

With respect to land-based tactical nuclear weapons, we will be destroying some 1300 artillery projectiles, three different types -- two types of eight-inch shells and one of the 155 millimeter shells. Also, 850 Lance warheads, short-range ballistic missiles. All of these are not currently deployed overseas. About 1700 of the total are currently deployed overseas, and the rest are currently in inventories here at home.

Again, the President called upon the Soviets to do the same in this area. That means taking all of their tactical nuclear weapons off alert, and destroying them as we are proposing here, their land-based systems.

With respect to sea-based systems, the proposal is to bring home and deploy here at home in storage, our currently deployed tactical nuclear systems at sea -- those on submarines and on surface ships. In addition to that, a certain portion of these systems will be destroyed or dismantled as well. Approximately 50 percent of those that are being brought home will, in fact, ultimately be destroyed. These are older systems that we believe can safely be eliminated. So in the area of sea-based systems, everything gets withdrawn and stored at home. Some of it will be destroyed.

With respect to strategic nuclear weapons, as I mentioned before, the bombers will come off alert. This includes B-1 and B-52 bombers, at some 12 SAC bases throughout the continental United States. This will affect about 40 planes that are on a day-to-day alert status. Specifically, what is involved in that is taking the bombers that currently sit loaded, fueled, and equipped, ready to go with their crews nearby, standing down from that alert posture, turning the aircraft back over to maintenance crews, taking the weapons off the aircraft, putting them back in storage, and taking the planes and putting them back in a normal state. Obviously, this process can be reversed if need be. If ordered to put the force back on alert, we estimate it would take something less than 24 hours to restore the bombers to their former alert status.

Also, as I indicated earlier, I have signed the execute order taking our Minuteman II systems off alert. These are older Minuteman missiles, single warhead systems, some 450 of them. It was agreed in the START agreement that these systems would come out of the force, but instead of waiting seven years for the full implementation of the reduction, we will immediately take them off alert status, and once the START treaty is ratified, we would then deactivate and dismantle the systems.

Some idea of the costs that are involved in the cancellation of programs announced by the President last night is given here. I noticed in some of the commentary after the President's speech, a lot of talk about how much would be saved. It's important to make a distinction between savings that can be achieved in the short term, which are, as you can see here not that large, but over the long term, over the lifetime of these programs, we obviously save significant money. If we cancel the rail garrison mode for Peacekeeper, over the life cycle of that program we save \$6.8 billion. So far, we've obligated about \$2 billion. The '92 budget request calls for us to spend \$260 million on that program.

If we cancel the mobile part of the small ICBM, again over the life cycle of the program we don't have to build the mobile launchers for that system, we save over \$11 billion. The savings in '92, \$115 million.

If we cancel the short-range attack missile, the SRAM II, total life cycle costs if we were to build and deploy 700 missiles would have been \$2.2 billion. Savings in '92, \$177 million.

Again, I cannot say today that we will save precisely that amount of money in FY92. We still have a lot of work to do in figuring out what program termination costs are involved, etcetera. But there are, over the long-term, clearly savings, funds that will not be spent as a result of having cancelled these programs.

We will also move to create the new U.S. Strategic Command. I think viewed from the perspective of the Defense Department, this is one of the more significant items in the package. It

emphasizes our desire to pursue as much jointness as we can within the Department. I'll ask General Powell to comment in greater detail on this. This is a proposal that was pulled together by the Chiefs, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, based on his responsibilities to review our unified and specified command structure on a regular basis.

With respect to our efforts to pursue additional agreements with the Soviets, clearly foremost among those has to do with the agreement, or the proposal to eliminate MIRV'd ICBM's, multiple land-based ICBM's. We would propose doing this within the context of the protocols established in the START Treaty already. What would be required here is to agree upon a time table, if agreement can be reached with the Soviets. We'd be happy to respond to question on that, as well, later on.

The second of the proposals that will require negotiations clearly deals with defenses. We continue to believe that the recent experience in the Gulf and the Middle East is a reminder of the importance of being able to deploy defenses against ballistic missiles in future. While a Patriot system was effective against the limited Iraqi threat, we think it's absolutely essential in the years ahead to develop and to deploy advanced theater missile defenses against the more sophisticated threats we foresee, and to be able to defend the United States and our friends and allies and troops deployed overseas against this threat. So the President has called upon the Soviet leadership to join with us in finding ways to allow the deployment of non-nuclear defenses against limited ballistic missile strikes. We think this is in the Soviet interest as well as in our own, and we're hopeful that we will be able to accomplish a significant increase in mutual security if we can, in fact, consummate this proposal.

The last of the initiatives, of course, has to do with cooperative work on measures to enhance the security of existing nuclear inventory, specifically focusing upon the safe and environmentally sound destruction of those systems, upon command and control, and upon the safety and security of those systems to ensure that they don't fall into the wrong hands, or that there are no unauthorized launches.

I want to emphasize that as we have put forward a sweeping package here and moved to dramatically change our overall nuclear posture, that here in the Department we have carefully considered the consequences of these reductions from the standpoint of being able to maintain the nation's security. I am absolutely confident, based upon the work that we've done, that we can have confidence that our security and that of our allies is protected, even with these initiatives. That we will retain sufficient nuclear forces, and that we are committed to keeping them up to date and effective. The world has changed, but insurance is still a good idea. Under this plan, we believe we will have enough.

The President's initiatives have set the stage for the Soviets and for the United States to seize an historic opportunity, and to assist the Soviet and republic leaders to make some dramatic decisions. We can correct the nuclear risk they face from their own weapons and improve the nuclear relationship we have with the Soviets. We must not wait. We must act now. We are eager and hopeful that we will receive a positive and reciprocal response from the Soviet Union.

Before I turn the podium over to General Powell, let me make certain that credit is given where credit is due for the preparation of this package. The President, as has been indicated previously, gave us instructions shortly after his return from Kennebunkport in August, to take a

look at what we might be able to do by way of preparing this initiative. That work was done here in the Department, and involved major contributions from General Powell as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the other Chiefs -- Dave Jeremiah, Tony McPeak, Frank Kelso, Gordon Sullivan, Carl Mundy, and the members of the Joint Staff. They have played an intimate role in the preparation of these proposals.

I also want to express my appreciation to Paul Wolfowitz, the Under Secretary for Policy and his shop, who were also intimately involved in the preparation of the package. Specifically, Steve Hadley, Scooter Libby, J. D. Crouch, and Frank Miller.

Now I'd be happy to turn the podium over to General Powell. Once he's finished his presentation, we'll both be happy to respond to questions.

General Powell: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Let me reinforce a couple of points that the Secretary made, and then I'd like to go into some detail on the individual programs. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and also the commanders-in-chiefs of those unified and specified commands of the armed forces who have nuclear responsibilities, are fully supportive of this package, and as the Secretary has mentioned, have been part of the architects of this package. It is the work of the Joint Staff under General Ed Leland, the Director of Strategy, Plans and Policies in the Joint Staff, and working with Secretary Wolfowitz and all the other individuals mentioned by the Secretary that really deserve the credit for the intense work that has taken place over the last three weeks. Policy and the Joint Staff working together as a team has brought forth this package, and it is fully supported by all officials within the Department.

I want to also make the point that from a military perspective we believe this is a very sound package that enhances the security of the United States, and as the Secretary noted, if the Soviets respond fully and in kind, I think we'll go a very, very long way to allowing both nations to finally begin to step down the thermonuclear ladder after some 40 years. It is a historic turning point, and I think it will be seen as such when it is studied and when we get responses from the Soviet Union.

Let me now turn to some charts to go into a little bit of detail. As the Secretary noted, the initiatives are broken into two categories -- tactical and strategic. With respect to the tactical, as he has noted, there are some 1,000 artillery rounds and some 700 Lance missiles, and I'll show you in a little bit exactly what they look like and what we're going to do with them. But this total of 1,700 will be withdrawn from overseas locations into the United States, and destroyed along with some roughly 400 other such systems which are already within the United States.

As the Secretary noted, we'll remove nuclear weapons from sea. This will amount to some 500 nuclear weapons that are usually at sea, aboard surface ships and attack submarines. Then there is another category of nuclear weapons associated with land-based naval air. They will also be destroyed.

On the strategic side, bombers are being removed from alert as well as the START-constrained ICBM's, the Minuteman II, some 450 of those. Orders have gone out to the Strategic Air Command to accomplish this, as the Secretary noted, and we expect that all of these systems -- bombers and Minutemen II -- will be off alert by the end of the day.

You know the cancellations the Secretary mentioned, and with respect to activation of the strategic command, it will be located at Offutt Air Force Base, and it will be founded on the staff of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff. We will have more to say about that as the days unfold in the weeks ahead.

The Army and Air Force tactical nuclear weapon systems that we're talking about: Eight-inch howitzers, 155 howitzers. All of the weapons associated with them, some 500 of the M-33 weapons that go with the eight-inch howitzers, and some 500 of the Mark 48 weapons that go with the 155 howitzers will be withdrawn to the United States. The X indicates total destruction of those weapon systems.

As was indicated also, the Lance missiles that are deployed overseas will be withdrawn and destroyed. There are some W-79 enhanced radiation weapon systems for artillery that is located in the United States. It will be destroyed, and there are some additional Lance missiles located in the United States of a slightly different type. They also will be destroyed.

What will remain in our tactical nuclear force structure will be dual-capable aircraft that will remain an essential part of our base force structure. These dual-capable aircraft are equipped with, as you see, two types of bombs -- Mark 61's on the top, and Mark 57's on the bottom.

Moving to the Navy tactical systems that the Secretary mentioned, the nuclear Tomahawk missile is a variation of the Tomahawks you saw used during Operation Desert Storm. There are routinely about 100 such missiles deployed at sea. They will all be removed, brought back to the United States, put in storage, but retained should a need ever arise for them to be put back at sea. The capability to use this kind of weaponry for all of the weapon systems that are being put in storage will be retained in the force structure, so should it be necessary to reverse this process we will have trained men, women, and crews together who could put these systems into operation.

With respect to nuclear bombs, the Navy has aboard its aircraft carriers Mark-57's and Mark-61's. For those of you who are watching carefully, we reversed the order of the bombs from the previous chart, putting the Mark-57 on top this time. It was a test for the Chairman, which I failed earlier this morning. (Laughter)

Also, as was noted, the nuclear depth bombs that are located on shore and are associated with land-based naval P-3's, will go out of the structure. There are also a number of nuclear depth bombs that are on S-3s located on aircraft carriers that will also come back to shore and, in effect, those nuclear depth bombs, the older ones, will eventually be eliminated.

This is what we're talking about with respect to the alert status. There are 280 bombers operating in the fleet -- a combination of B-52G's, B-52H's, and B-1B's. Aboard those bombers, would be a combination of SRAM missiles, ALCM's, or gravity bombs. At any one time out of that fleet of 280 bombers, about 40 are kept on an alert status of the type that the Secretary described a moment ago. All 40 of those are now coming off alert in the course of today, and by the end of today none of them will be on alert. This will involve some several hundred weapons -- I don't want to give a specific number associated with how many weapons are coming off alert. And as the

Secretary noted, should we decide to reverse that, they could go back on alert in a period of roughly 24 hours.

With respect to our ICBM's, the START-constrained ICBM, the Minutemen II, there are 450 Minutemen II, and as you know, there are 500 Minutemen III, and 50 Peacekeepers, for a total of 1,000 missiles. Aboard those 1,000 missiles are some 2,450 warheads. When you remove the 450 single warheaded Minutemen II, you take out 450 warheads. So you go from 1,000 total missiles down to 550 missiles. Of the 2,450 warheads, you are taking out 450 warheads, which results in a 45 percent reduction in the number of missiles, and roughly a 15 percent reduction in the number of warheads.

With respect to our submarine fleet, there is no change. Roughly two-thirds of our submarine fleet is in a condition of alert. One-third actually on alert, another third moving in transit to alert status. So we consider them alert because they are at sea and survivable and could be assigned targets. So the most survivable part of our fleet remains on alert with roughly two-thirds of our assets on alert at any one time.

The programs actually being destroyed, terminated: The rail garrison MX. We continue to keep the MX system, 50 missiles in silos, 10 warheads each, 500 warheads. The mobile hardened part of the small ICBM missile program terminated. The program remains in development, but only for silo basing, should that be needed. It is our one modernization program out there to eventually replace the Minuteman III.

Finally, as the Secretary noted, both the SRAM-II and its companion system, the SRAM-T, being designed for bomber delivery as a replacement for the SRAM-A, and the SRAM-T being a theater tactical derivative, both will be cancelled as a result of the President's decisions.

That concludes my presentation, and I'm ready to turn it back over to the Secretary for questions.

Q: Mr. Chairman, one for you before the Secretary comes back. Should the American people feel any safer after this announcement than they felt before this announcement about the threat of nuclear war?

Powell: In my judgment, yes.

Q: Why?

~~Powell: I don't see why not.~~ You can be absolutely sure that we are in as strong a deterrent posture today as we were yesterday, and it will improve in the future. We are doing nothing that would put the nation at risk. Further, I expect that the Soviets will respond in a very positive way and will take actions that will show the wisdom of the President's decision, and over time the American people can feel even more secure. Even though we are taking a bold step in a unilateral way, I think it is a very prudent step, it is a very wise step, and I expect the Soviets to respond in a way so that both nations will feel more secure than they are now.

Q: Mr. Secretary, President Gorbachev's spokesman said today that the Soviet Union will reciprocate. He didn't give any details. We're talking about 2600 tactical nuclear weapons on the

U.S. side -- land-based and sea-based. How many tactical nuclear weapons has the Soviet Union in Europe, and how many do we estimate it has on ships?

Cheney: We can get that number for you, Charlie. The number I have in my mind is that the Soviets have approximately 27,000 nuclear weapons altogether.

Powell: Ten thousand strategic and 17,000 tactical.

Q: So if they reciprocated, they would have to take down 17,000 nuclear tactical...

Cheney: No, remember what comes out altogether and gets dismantled are the ground-based systems. What gets stored is everything that's currently on board ship, except some of those systems we will destroy as well. But it's important to keep in mind we're asking for the destruction of ground-based systems, for the removal from shipboard of sea-based systems.

Q: How many comparable weapons have they to these 2600 we're talking about? The 2100 ground-based and the approximately 500 sea-based? Comparably speaking, approximately how many?

Powell: Let me not guess at it because we can get it precisely for you. They have many more ground-based than we have, but I really don't want to guess at the difference, Charlie. We can get the number quickly.

Q: Is it correct that the proposal on the MIRV'd ICBM's does not include the sea-based MIRV'd ICBM's? And would the Administration be willing to enter into negotiations on that?

Cheney: It is correct that the proposal does not include sea-based ballistic missiles. We believe, have consistently argued and continue to argue, that those sea-based systems are different than land-based systems. That a land-based missile with multiple warheads on it is a very ripe target for the other side, and that there would be a temptation in a crisis to launch rather than lose that capability. Sea-based systems are radically different. They're survivable, they're hidden, no one knows where they are. It's a different quality system.

If you were to de-MIRV the sea-based leg, you'd also then be in a position to spend a lot of money buying one submarine that would have 16 missiles on it, each with one warhead. It gets to be a very expensive way to deploy the force.

So the proposal is aimed specifically at encouraging the Soviets to reach an agreement with us which would eliminate what we believe is the remaining most destabilizing part of the forces on both sides, that's the multiple warhead system. They'd have to give up things like the SS-18. We'd give up things like Peacekeeper, and we'd have to download our Minuteman III's.

Q: From their point of view, it would seem the United States would have an advantage, at least numerically, in the sea-based systems. Why wouldn't they want to engage you in negotiations on that?

Cheney: Again, we've just completed a lengthy negotiation through START where the Soviets have, in fact, signed up for asymmetrical reductions. They have certain capabilities we don't have. They've got land-based mobiles. They've got the SS-25 which they would be able to keep under that proposal, wouldn't be affected by the proposal at all. They've had more of their systems over the years based on land, and we've had more of ours based at sea.

We think within the overall framework of the limitations that are provided for in the START agreement, that it would be fair and equitable to move in this direction, and it would eliminate one of the major sources of instability, which are those multiple warhead land-based systems.

Q: Mr. Secretary, as you know, Gorbachev is going to be making a speech reasonably soon. What is it that you hope to come out of the speech? How will the U.S. know that it's more than just lip service? Are you hoping that the Soviets particularly will accept the idea for further work on the Strategic Defense Initiative?

Cheney: We, obviously, hope that they will embrace the President's package. I would hope that there will be an enthusiastic response on their part. I would anticipate that they're going to want to explore some of the details, those places where we suggest negotiations. They won't immediately agree to our position, but I would hope they would agree to negotiate on defenses, on the question of maintaining the security of nuclear weapons on the issue of de-MIRVing systems. So hopefully, they'll come back and indicate they're prepared to take reciprocal steps unilaterally, and they're prepared to engage us on those items where the President wants to undertake negotiations.

Q: Do you see any one item more important than the other, for instance, the Strategic Defense Initiative?

Cheney: I think they're all important. I wouldn't want to single any one particular one out.

Q: Mr. Secretary, programmatic costs for all of these, if you total all of them up, are about \$20 billion, if you don't have to build these systems. What impact does this have on America's defense contractors in general? What will happen to a lot of these major defense contractors if some of these systems are not built, and future systems are not built?

Cheney: Not all of the money, of course, would have been spent with contractors. Some of it would go to personnel costs, O&M expense, and so forth. The numbers we gave you is the total life cycle cost of those programs.

Clearly, if we stop procurement programs we're going to have some impact upon contractors. I don't know how to avoid that in an era where we're cutting defense budgets. During my tenure as Secretary we have terminated or brought to a close I believe some 81 programs that we are no longer producing military hardware with. That's a significant impact on the defense industrial base in the country. But if I have to cut the defense budget, there are only certain ways to do that, and one of them is to reduce spending in that sector of the economy.

Q: Mr. Secretary, there has been concern in the Soviet Union since the coup, and also concern in the United States since the coup, about the control of such weapons in the Soviet Union -- the fact that they're scattered throughout all the republics. How much of this initiative was based on concern by the United States, by the Administration, of just who has control of Soviet weapons?

Cheney: I think it would be fair to say that we were confident through the coup, we're confident today, that the Soviets retain centralized control over their systems, that the possibility of an unauthorized launch or unauthorized individuals getting control of a nuclear weapon is relatively small today. What we can't be precise about is what kind of arrangements will exist in the future, two or three years from now.

Are we concerned about a Soviet Union that is beset by significant difficulties, an area where there may be increased instability, and where there are some 27,000 nuclear weapons? Certainly. But

I don't think there's any sense of panic involved with that. It is an issue we want to address. We believe that we were given an opportunity as a result of the collapse of the coup, because the forces in the Soviet Union that would have resisted this kind of package in the past have been discredited, are no longer in positions of authority.

So we've got a problem, we've got an opportunity, and we think one way to address that is to provide the incentives that we are providing by virtue of our own unilateral actions to encourage the Soviets to do what they have indicated they want to do anyway, which is reduce the size of their stockpile. General Shaposhnikov, my counterpart, has spoken to the issue, said he's prepared to pursue the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons. This builds on those kinds of sentiments.

Q: Mr. Secretary, on the issue of strategic defense, is the statement that the United States calls on the Soviet Union to take concrete steps to permit the limited deployment of non-nuclear defenses. Two questions. You've offered a lot of specifics, programmatic specifics. But when you conceive of limited defense, I presume you're talking about amending the ABM Treaty to allow some more ground-based sites and then some limited space-based sites. What exactly are you talking about in terms of additional ground-based sites? Can you explain that to us?

The second question, if the Soviet Union wants to do many of these other initiatives but does not want to expand their ground-based defense, and doesn't want to join us on this, do you propose to go about doing it anyway, or do you effectively give the Soviet Union a veto over your plans for a limited defense?

Cheney: First of all, with respect to defenses, we have had the position in the past which we pursued through the Defense in Space talks that called for a negotiated modification, basically an end to the ABM Treaty and the negotiation of a new regime that would allow us to move forward with the deployment of defenses against ballistic missiles. That same sort of initiative, I think, at least the principle, is embodied in the Defense Authorization Bill approved by the Senate this year. Senator Warner, Senator Wallop, and ultimately the Senate Armed Services Committee on a bipartisan basis with Sam Nunn on board, put together a package which is incorporated in the bill that moves the Congress in the direction of endorsing the notion of deploying limited systems, and calls on the President to engage the Soviets in these kinds of negotiations.

So to the extent that deploying limited defenses would require us to go beyond the ABM Treaty, which it clearly would, this would be a set of negotiations designed to make that possible.

We have never been in a position where we would, I think, acquiesce in a decision that we felt threatened the United States, or made it necessary for us to forego something that was important from the standpoint of what we believed was necessary for U.S. security. The option's always there to abrogate the ABM Treaty. That is not what the President's proposed. What he has proposed is that we get the Soviets to engage with us on this question of taking immediate steps to allow the limited deployment of ballistic missile defenses.

What was the second part of your question?

Q: With all due respect, I'm not sure I understand the answer. If the Russians don't want to amend the ABM Treaty, build additional sites, do you propose to do it anyway?

Cheney: I have not stated that this morning. The President didn't announce that last night. He said we want to engage the Soviets in discussions, making it possible for us to go forward, deploy limited defenses against ballistic missiles. I think it's a very clear statement.

Q: Do you still remain wedded then, to the GPALs concept of five or six launching sites here in the States, and the limited orbiting defense?

Cheney: Yes, I'm a strong believer in the GPALs system. I think it offers the best prospects of developing capability based both on land-based interceptors and space-based systems. The interaction of the two systems gives you a significantly higher degree of confidence that you can intercept an incoming ballistic missile. It also, at least according to one study I've seen, is cheaper than a system that relies only on land-based systems.

Q: Mr. Secretary, as you've just noted, the Senate has moved rather decisively to restructure the SDI program. They've also moved this past week to kill the rail garrison MX. They recently, I think, voted to kill the SRAM program, and the Europeans have made very clear that they want those tactical nuclear weapons out. I wonder, is there a sense in which the Pentagon here is just catching up with the pace of events?

Cheney: I don't think so, Melissa. I would argue, first of all, that we don't know what the Congress is going to produce yet. Conference is just beginning on the authorization bill and the appropriations bills. We don't know what will finally emerge from the Congress this year.

Clearly, some of these programs have been controversial in the past. Peacekeeper rail garrison has always been a subject of some debate. A lot of these ideas have been kicked around before -- the notion of moving in the direction of de-MIRVing systems is a subject that's been discussed previously. Sam Nunn has done work on risk reduction. There are, as I mentioned before, the work of John Warner and the Senate Republicans on the SDI program. There are a number of places where people have been actively involved in these initiatives.

What's new here, I think, is that the President has made it official U.S. policy. That he has packaged it in a bold and dramatic way that fundamentally changes the nuclear landscape in the world. That he has gone beyond that to suggest such things as accelerating the implementation of the START agreement, and the complete removal of tactical nuclear weapons at sea.

So I think it is a package that moves out boldly and more aggressively than I've seen anyone else propose on a parallel basis.

Q: What does the tactical nuclear aspect of this package mean for a doctrine of flexible response in Europe?

Cheney: Let me ask General Powell to take that.

Powell: I don't think it necessarily means anything with respect to a change in doctrine. There is nuclear linkage remaining in Europe with dual-capable aircraft, so the linkage that one always associates back to U.S. strategic systems. In NATO we're moving to a more agile force structure with multinational corps and multinational divisions. I would also point out that the increased capability associated with conventional weaponry in recent years has, to some extent, inclined us in the direction of getting rid of tactical nuclear weapons. We can now do conventionally much more efficiently things we thought we could only do with tactical nuclear weapons.

I would also point out that the reason for many of those tactical nuclear weapons being where they were and their role in the force structure, was to do something about a massive Red Army assault coming west through the Fulda Gap. There is no Fulda Gap, except to tourist traffic. It was once an armed camp. And the Red Army has gone hundreds of kilometers to the east and is in the process of doing that. So that general battlefield situation has changed fundamentally.

So we are changing our strategy, but it's not a fundamental change. It's just a change in the selection of means available to the ground commanders and the air commanders in the theater.

Q: How long will it take to destroy or remove the nuclear weapons in question? And do you have an estimate of how much it will cost to do that?

Powell: I don't have a cost estimate, and I really would have to consult with experts in the Department as well as over in the Department of Energy.

Q: Will it eat up this \$20 billion in savings?

Powell: No, I don't think so. But I, once again, would let experts answer that question.

We'll begin the process immediately, but moving nuclear weapons is an intricate business. We will make sure that we move them in the safest possible way so that there is no risk of an accident and no risk of any environmental problems. We have the storage capacity here in the United States to handle everything that will be coming back, and we have quite a bit of experience in moving these weapons around. It won't all happen in a matter of weeks or months, but we will do it as quickly as safety, security, environmental considerations permit.

Q: Could you address the issue of what it means for the Navy to be denuclearized in terms of its role and its mission? And a question for Secretary Cheney, is the way this was put together and presented, namely as a package of ideas presented as a unilateral initiative by the United States with a challenge to the Soviet Union to match it in a reciprocal way, is that a model for other, for future arms agreements or limitations in your judgment?

Powell: I think it gives the Navy a lot more flexibility, for one thing. It removes quite a management and control problem from the commanders of ships at sea. It provides space to carry additional conventional munitions which are much more effective than they had been in the past. Frankly, the utility of nuclear weapons delivered from sea-based platforms has quite deteriorated in recent years as a result of the changes we have seen in the Soviet Union and our own warfighting concept. So frankly, I think it will give the Navy greater flexibility to respond to the kinds of missions that we see arising in the future, and for which our new strategy is designed.

Cheney: On the question of whether or not this is a new departure, Jeff, on arms control. Clearly, it's a different way to approach it than we have undertaken in the past. If you look at the START agreement just completed, that's a process that extended for some nine years. It was an extremely complex and difficult undertaking that ultimately produced, I think, a good treaty.

What the President has done with the latest initiative is to build on that. The START agreement is sort of the foundation upon which we're building. The verification procedures, on-site inspection procedures and so forth that are provided for in the START Treaty give us confidence that we can undertake these efforts and know that the Soviets are, in fact, responding. The

protocols with respect to how we take down systems that are provided for in START will stand us in good stead here as well.

But we clearly, in terms of moving unilaterally, have taken a different approach than I would have advocated even a few months ago. That involves specifically unilateral acts that we hope the Soviets will reciprocate. We clearly can reverse many of those, as the Chairman pointed out in his briefing, with respect to the alert bomber force. But I think the prospects now for the Soviets replying are far brighter than they've ever been before, and we think we can avoid the kind of long drawn out negotiations that have so often in the past resulted in delays actually, in taking down systems while both sides waited to see what they could get for taking down those systems during the course of negotiations. So this should speed up the process, but again, building off the arms control foundation that START-I provides.

Q: ...you think this is an approach worth trying again at some future time?

Cheney: I certainly wouldn't reject it by any means. I can't think of any immediate step that we might want to apply it to, but certainly if this is successful, if the Soviets reciprocate, if we get the kinds of agreements that we hope to achieve here, we may well want to extend it into other areas. But I don't have anything immediately in mind.

Q: Mr. Secretary, given the uncertainties in the Soviet Union now with this new arms control approach, what are your concerns about verification over the long run? Is that no longer a fundamental U.S. arms control policy?

Cheney: We are always concerned about verification, but I think a number of factors now give us greater confidence than we've ever had before that we can, in fact, assess what the Soviets are doing, what their capabilities are, what kinds of forces they have. The reason for that, of course, is as I said, the START agreement has now been negotiated, and once ratified on both sides, provides for a far more intrusive regime verification than has existed heretofore. For example, there are some 12 different types of on-site inspection provided for in that treaty.

Second, I would cite the changes that have occurred in the Soviet Union. They're far more open today with the beginnings of a free press, with the beginnings of public debate about the size of their armed forces, with the creation of legislative bodies that have oversight responsibility over those forces. So you're beginning to see the kind of debate and discussion about national security matters inside the Soviet Union that never occurred before.

I think, frankly, we also benefit from the fact that you've got republics engaged now, and that we're able to watch as they deal with these kinds of issues and discuss them between the republics and between the republics and the center.

The final point I'd make, I think, is that clearly the Soviet Union is in desperate straits economically. It's my belief, and I think General Powell's belief, that given their collapsing economy, they really have no choice but to significantly cut back on their military capabilities, and that they simply cannot sustain the level of modernization and the level of force they've had in the past, given the fact that their economy is imploding.

Q: Could you explain also, then, why we now need to pursue the B-2 bomber? Is it simply going to become a conventional platform, and isn't there a cheaper way of accomplishing that?

Cheney: We think, as the President mentioned in his speech last night, that even as we reduce the overall size of our nuclear deployments, that it's important to maintain modern, up-to-date forces. We think the triad is important, the strategic triad, land-based and sea-based missiles and the bomber leg. The B-2 is the basic fundamental program for modernizing that force. Our B-52's have been around a long time. We need to replace them if we're going to maintain the role of the manned penetrating bomber. The B-2 is important not only in terms of our strategic capabilities and our deterrent, maintaining the deterrent, but it clearly would have significant conventional applications as well. The capacity to base an intercontinental bomber in the United States that can go virtually any place in the world on short notice and haul a large payload, and do it stealthily, be able to penetrate enemy air defenses, is very significant capability. It's a strategic asset, and we think we ought to continue the program.

Q: If the Soviets respond with unilateral cuts of their own the way that you hope they will, would you advocate negotiations to lock in those changes on each side, so to speak, after the fact?

Cheney: I'm not sure... If, for example, they respond to the President's challenge that they withdraw all of their ground-based nuclear tactical systems and destroy them, there's really nothing to negotiate. I think we might exchange information on inventories, how much there actually is on both sides. We might exchange information on time tables. As we go through this process of consulting on the safe and environmentally sound destruction of nuclear weapons and safeguarding systems, I would expect that would provide a forum in which we could have those kinds of discussions. But I think it would probably be more a sharing of information than it would be a treaty. It's possible you might negotiate some kind of memorandum of understanding. We haven't gotten to that level yet.

Again, what we're asking them to do is take the same kind of unilateral steps we have.

Q: If you succeed in selling the de-MIRVing proposal, how many nuclear warheads would that draw down in the United States? And if the Russians are in the economic straits that you describe and want to reduce their military, and come to you with a proposal for deeper cuts than your de-MIRVing would bring about, what would your reaction likely be?

Cheney: First of all, on the de-MIRVing process, keeping in mind the numbers General Powell gave you earlier, that as we take out of the force the Minuteman II's, we get rid of 450 single warhead systems. We're left then with...

Q: That's under START, isn't it?

Cheney: That's under START. Then under the de-MIRVing process we still would retain 2,000 warheads on a total of 550 launchers. Fifty of those are Peacekeeper launchers, 10 warheads each. Those would come out of the force if we de-MIRV, so there would no longer be any Peacekeeper deployed. What's left then are 500 Minuteman III's and those each have three warheads for the most part. You'd download those systems in accordance with the provisions already negotiated in START, the single warhead systems, so you'd end up with approximately 500 single warhead Minuteman III missiles...

Q: You wouldn't download the MX's because they're a more modern missile?

Cheney: The MX or Peacekeeper, because it's a ten warhead system, the number of warheads you'd have to take off would exceed what's allowed in START.

Q: What would your reactions to the Soviets be if they say this is not deep enough?

Cheney: Clearly, we'll listen to any proposal they want to make. I think this is a pretty bold proposal. I think it goes a long way. I think if, in fact, everybody signs up to it, it's going to take us a considerable period of time to implement. This is not something in its entirety that you can do overnight. While we can take the bomber force and the Minuteman II force down in a matter of hours, off alert status, the process of relocating weapons and bringing them home, of destroying those systems, is obviously work that we're going to have plenty to do over the course of the next few years simply carrying out this program. Clearly, if the Soviets were to make a proposal, I'm sure the President would be happy to listen.

Q: To follow on the de-MIRVing, is it the United States' intention to replace in the long haul the Minuteman III one-for-one with Midgetman? And if so, at what cost?

Cheney: The Midgetman program will continue as a development program. It's our only modernization for our ICBM force. The expectation, since we're cancelling the mobile basing mode in this initiative, would be that it would be silo-based, that it would be deployed in existing Minuteman silos which presumably would have to be modified in some fashion. Minuteman III's would come out of the force, and the small single warhead ICBM would go in in its place. I don't have the cost figures, we can get them for you.

Q: You've mentioned many times that START is the foundation for all that we're doing here. But the President still has not submitted START to the Senate for ratification. Do you know when that's going to be done? And the second question is, you've referred that we are still going to maintain the triad. Since the bomber force cannot get off the ground in the time it would take the Soviet missiles to hit their bases, can we really say we have a triad?

Cheney: We clearly do have a triad if we retain the bomber leg of the force. In a crisis, run up to a crisis, we would put the bombers back on alert and I think the expectation clearly is that we do not anticipate a bolt out of the blue attack, the kind that would threaten those bombers while they still remain on the ground. I think the level of tension on both sides is sufficiently reduced so that we can do this safely without putting at risk our deterrent capability.

With respect to submitting a START treaty for ratification, it's simply a matter of finalizing the details, completing the analysis and the reports that are required in order to have a complete package to submit to the Senate, but I would expect that that will go forward in the very near future, within a matter of weeks at most.

Q: I wonder whether you can pin down for us exactly how many warheads will be destroyed? I haven't heard a precise figure for the number of Navy warheads that will actually be destroyed. And secondly, will the plans proceed for the construction starting on the first of October, the next fiscal year, for new D-5 warheads, for more of those?

Cheney: We will continue the D-5 program. That's an important part of our Trident deployment. With respect to the destruction of warheads, it sort of depends upon what all everybody signs up to here.

Q: What you've announced...

Cheney: What we've announced, clearly with respect to ground-based systems, I think we gave you the numbers, 2150. With the Navy...

Powell: We really don't know yet. As they are withdrawn from the fleet and put back into storage, the Navy will make a determination of which ones no longer have any potential future requirement and will be dismantled and phased out of the structure, but we don't have the specific numbers yet. Principally, it relates to the depth bombs.

Q: What exactly do you mean by destruction? Does that mean destruction of weapon systems? Does it mean destruction of a systems package? Does it mean destruction of the fissile material? Does it mean rendering all of the components, including the nuclear weapons material, unable to be used in other weapons, for example?

Cheney: It depends, again, on which system you're talking about. START requires us to destroy launchers. It does not require the destruction of warheads, per se. What we are proposing here, though, with respect, for example, to the tactical nuclear systems, is that they will be destroyed. I suppose the best way to convey that is to walk through the process. In effect, we'll bring home say a Lance missile or an artillery shell, take the warhead off. The warhead then would go to the Pantex facility down in Amarillo, Texas, where we assemble warheads, and in that facility you separate out the explosives from the special nuclear material. It then is no longer a nuclear weapon. It's not capable of detonation.

Subsequent to that, the highly enriched uranium which we use in some of our explosives would go into the stockpile and it would be available, for example, for Navy use in their reactors. The Navy uses enriched uranium in their nuclear reactors. The plutonium would probably go to be processed into a safer, more stable form. It will still be plutonium. It still has to be very carefully safeguarded, etcetera. But instead of being in the core form that exists inside a nuclear weapon, it in effect gets compacted and machined and refined into a smaller, more compact unit that can safely be stored. That's the process of actually dismantling nuclear weapons.

Q: Could any of the retrieved weapons or any parts of the weapons be used in new weapon systems?

Cheney: You could, conceivably, take plutonium out of the stockpile at any time and put it through the process, remanufacture into a core, put it together with the explosives in a design that would allow it to be part of a system and deploy it. Clearly you could do that. We've got a large inventory of plutonium now that is periodically worked. Oftentimes in the past, as we've taken old systems down, we've remanufactured that material into new systems and into new warheads.

Q: General Powell, since we're talking about numbers, if your program is fully implemented, how many American nuclear weapons will be left in Europe?

Powell: I wouldn't comment on that. I wouldn't give a precise number as...

Q: Hundreds?

Powell: I really don't have an answer for you, Michael. I think it would be a function of General Galvin's, a statement of his requirement as SACEUR, and the actions of the Nuclear Planning Group as they consider what they believe the alliance needs' were. But I wouldn't, in this forum, pre-judge what they may come to a conclusion on or give out the number.

Q: In view of the retirement of these warheads, what implications do you have on the need to modernize the nuclear production complex, so that there would be a change in Secretary Watkins' plan?

Cheney: Probably that question ought to be best directed to Secretary Watkins. But we clearly need those facilities. The facilities that in the past have been used to build nuclear weapons, are the same ones we use to dismantle them. Rocky Flats is important, the Pantex facility at Amarillo is important, perhaps Savannah River. But again, that really falls within the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy. Secretary Watkins was briefed on this program earlier as it was prepared, and I think they'd be the best ones to comment on that process.

Q: Mr. Secretary, some of your former colleagues on Capital Hill were so pleased with the proposal last night, and indeed they see the opportunity to go a good deal further and to in fact make some of the savings that they think will be greater by cutting conventional forces, etcetera, etcetera. Is this as far as you go, or what will happen if Congress goes further than what the President has proposed here?

Cheney: Why am I not surprised that my friends in Congress want to go farther? (Laughter)

I think the President made a strong statement last night, both with respect to pursuing what we believe to be an historic opportunity for peace, but at the same time, making it clear that the United States still exists in a difficult and dangerous world, and we therefore need to maintain the kind of military capability that we deployed so effectively in the Persian Gulf just a year ago.

The President's program that is pending before the Congress is a good one. It has embodied within it some fundamental changes in U.S. military strategy, and we've added even more to those last night as a result of this initiative.

I would hope what Congress would do is to support the overall package, work with us. Clearly, they have a major role to play in this process, but work with us through the legislative process to see to it that as we downsize the force, as we reduce the overall level of defense spending, as we take advantage of the changes that have occurred in the world, we do it in an intelligent fashion. We protect and preserve the quality of the force. We protect the essence of our military capability.

I like to remind people that we exist for only one purpose, and that is to be prepared to fight if necessary, and to make certain we can win. The decisions we make now about the size of our forces, about how much we're going to spend on modernization, about the kind of infrastructure we want to preserve, has a direct bearing on how good the force will be the next time they go into combat. Whether or not they're able to achieve their mission, and the cost in terms of American lives is directly related to the kinds of decisions we make now.

What we need from Congress is support for the direction we're going in. We need their advice and their wisdom. We need their active cooperation. What we don't need are precipitous cuts in the defense budget that will, in effect, break the force and destroy the kind of capability that we think will continue to be essential to make certain we can safeguard our freedom and security.

Press: Thank you.

Answers to questions arising from Cheney-Powell briefing, September 28, 1991

1) If the Soviets reciprocate and make adjustments similar to their nuclear force as we're going to make in ours, how many of their nuclear weapons will they destroy, withdraw, and stand down?

Answer: That's an answer we'd like to have from the Soviets.

The Soviets have about 17,000 tactical nuclear weapons and about 10,000 strategic ones. We would like them to tell us, and the Soviet people, what their actual numbers are.

If they match the US initiative, our best guess is that they could destroy as many as 10,000 tactical ground launched weapons -- artillery warheads, missile warheads, and nuclear mines -- and they could withdraw as many as 2,000 naval tactical weapons. But, we do not have precise numbers for the Soviet nuclear stockpile.

However, this initiative does not depend on our knowing how many weapons the Soviets have. We are eliminating weapons that the United States no longer needs. The Soviets know how many they have, and they know they have far more than they need.

This is not an old-style numbers game, in which negotiators try to determine whether changes are symmetrical or fair. Both sides need to act now, especially the Soviets, rather than to dicker about precise numbers. Besides, in the START treaty, the Soviets have already agreed to the concept of asymmetrical reductions in the numbers of strategic systems.

The Soviets, unlike the US, do not routinely maintain a portion of their strategic bomber force on day-to-day alert. They do, however, daily deploy mobile ICBM's out of their garrisons. The President has asked that they be secured in their garrisons.

Finally, the US has been making reductions in the number of its tactical weapons for decades.

2. Will the nuclear initiative, especially the tactical part, result in any changes in US military manpower requirements?

Answer: Yes, some personnel reductions will result, since the removal of tactical weapons from forward deployed positions will result in smaller manpower needs in such areas as weapon handling and security at those sites. However, we don't yet know exactly how big the associated personnel reductions will be.

3. Since the Lance is capable of carrying conventional warheads, with all Lance missiles be destroyed, or only their nuclear warheads? What will happen to Lance launchers? Will they be destroyed or stored?

Answer: The Army is in the process of replacing the Lance with the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACHMS) and the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), both non-nuclear systems.

The nuclear warheads for Lance will be destroyed under the President's initiative. The Lance missiles and their launchers in a conventional role will be out of the force by the mid-90's and eliminated thereafter.

4) How much will it cost to withdraw and destroy the weapons under the President's nuclear initiative?

Answer: We don't know yet.

END

5. With the cancellation of the mobile part of the Midgetman program, what are the cost figures for what remains? How much will it cost to convert the Minuteman III force to the single warhead Midgetman?

Answer: Replacing 500 Minuteman III missiles with single warhead Midgetman missiles in Minuteman III silos, and producing the associated Midgetman test missiles, will cost (in then-year dollars):

	\$ 3.80 billion to complete Midgetman development
	33.30 billion to produce 500 missiles
	<u>0.13</u> billion to convert Minuteman silos
Total	\$37.23 billion

Development costs are part of the current five-year budget plan. Production and delivery would begin after 1997.

U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS INVENTORY

ARMY						
Desig	System/Common Name	Service	Tac/Strat	Primary Uses:	How Affected:	
W33	*8 inch AFAP	A	Tactical	Surface-to-Surface	Eliminated	
W48	*155 mm AFAP	A	Tactical	Surface-to-surface	Eliminated	
W70	**LANCE	A	Tactical	Surface-to-surface	Eliminated	
W79	*8 inch AFAP	A	Tactical	Surface-to-surface	Eliminated	

NAVY						
Desig	System/Common Name	Service	Tac/Strat	Primary Uses:	How Affected:	
W68	****POSEIDON C3 SLBM	N	Strategic	Underwater-to-surface	Unaffected	
W76	TRIDENT I C4 SLBM	N	Strategic	Underwater-to-surface	Unaffected	
W88	TRIDENT II D5 SLBM	N	Strategic	Underwater-to-surface	Unaffected	
B90	Nuclear Depth Strike Bomb	N	Tactical	Air-to-surface/Subsurface	Unfunded Program	
W80-0	TOMAHAWK (TLAM-N)	N	Tactical	Underwater-to-surface/ Surface-to-surface	Withdrawn	

AIR FORCE						
Desig	System/Common Name	Service	Tac/Strat	Primary Uses:	How Affected:	
B53	Strategic Bomb	AF	Strategic	Air-to-Surface	Off Alert	
W56	MINUTEMAN II ICBM	AF	Strategic	Surface-to-surface	Off Alert/ Elimination accelerated	
W62	MINUTEMAN III ICBM	AF	Strategic	Surface-to-surface	Unaffected	
W69	***SRAM A	AF	Strategic	Air-to-surface	Remain Off Alert	
W78	MINUTEMAN III ICBM	AF	Strategic	Surface-to-surface	Unaffected	
W80-1	ALCM/ACM	AF	Strategic	Air-to-surface	Off Alert	
B83	Strategic Bomb	AF	Strategic	Air-to-surface	Off alert	
W84	GLCM	AF	Tactical	Surface-to-surface	System retired under treaty	
W87	PEACEKEEPER ICBM	AF	Strategic	Surface-to-surface	Unaffected	
W89	SRAM II	AF	Strategic	Air-to-surface	Cancelled by President	

JOINT SERVICE						
Desig	System/Common Name	Service	Tac/Strat	Primary Uses:	How Affected:	
B57	Bomb/Depth Bomb	N,AF,MC	Tactical	Air-to-surface/ subsurface	Navy: Withdrawn AF/MC: Unaffected	
B61	Bomb	N,AF,MC	Tac/Strat	Air-to surface	Navy: Withdrawn AF: Strategic Off Alert Tactical Unaffected MC: Unaffected	

\* Total of W 33, W 48, and W 79 weapons to be eliminated: approximately 1,300.

\*\* Total of 850 to be eliminated.

\*\*\* Taken off alert by the Secretary of Defense, June 1990.

\*\*\*\* Scheduled to go off alert October 1, 1991.