

The Fort Lauderdale Conference
The Third Conference of the "Carter-Brezhnev Project"

Global Competition
and the Deterioration of U.S.-Soviet Relations, 1977-80

The Harbor Beach Resort, Fort Lauderdale Florida, USA
23-26 March 1995

1. THE GOAL

The overall goal of the Carter-Brezhnev project is to discover how and why two countries and two leaderships, each of which seemed in early 1977 to desire better bilateral relations and a reduction of nuclear danger somehow arrived, by 1980, at a situation in which relations were terrible, detente had collapsed, a nuclear arms treaty lay unratified in the U.S., and the groundwork was laid for a revival of intense Cold War rhetoric and military confrontation the following year, after the election of Ronald Reagan. That is the big question this project is in the business of trying to answer.

The goal of the first conference, at Pocantico Hills, NY, 22-24 October 1992, was to determine if the "big question" could be productively addressed via "critical oral history"--involving an interaction of declassified documents, former U.S. and Russian officials, and scholars from both countries. A decision was made in Pocantico Hills to move toward a second conference, which was held at Musgrove Plantation, St. Simons Island, Georgia, 6-9 May 1994. The goal at Musgrove was to establish an empirical "baseline" for the issue of greatest mutual interest to both the U.S. and Soviet Union: nuclear arms control and the reduction of the nuclear threat. Participants found the resulting discussions interesting and illuminating on this central issue--the "point" of the exercise.

If nuclear arms control is the "point" of the exercise, the "counterpoint," which grew to a whole series of dissonances during the Carter-Brezhnev years, is the set of issues collectively known as the U.S.-Soviet "global competition": in Africa, the Middle East, the military balance in Europe, China, Poland and several issues related to Cuba. These issues incrementally raised suspicions about one another's interest in improving bilateral relations. Each of these issues will be addressed at the Fort Lauderdale conference. In addition, the state of the relationship will be assessed at two critical junctures: summer 1978, when many of the above issues seemed to converge; and late 1979, when relations seem to be on the brink of collapse.

A fourth and final conference is planned for 17-20 September 1995, in Oslo, Norway, on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the U.S. response, and a final assessment of what has been learned.

2. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday 23 March.

♦ Mid-afternoon: Arrival at Fort Lauderdale International Airport and transport (15 minutes) to the Harbor Beach (Marriott) Resort, on the Fort Lauderdale waterfront.

♦ 7:00 PM: Cocktail reception.

♦ 7:45 PM: Dinner.

♦ 8:30 PM: Welcoming remarks, introductions and logistical update.

♦ 8:45 PM: Remarks on the declassified documents in the conference briefing notebooks and supplemental materials, by Malcolm Byrne.

♦ 9:30 PM: Adjournment.

Friday 24 March.

♦ 7:45 AM. Breakfast.

♦ 9:00 AM: Session 1: "U.S.-Soviet Competition in Africa I: Angola and the Shaba Episodes (March 1977 and May 1978)." The immediate background regarding the end of Portuguese rule in southern Africa, the events of 1975, including the Angolan civil war, Cuban-Soviet support for the MPLA government and U.S. assistance to the MPLA's rivals. Special attention will be paid to the incursions into Shaba (Katanga) province of Zaire by Katangese rebels, U.S. suspicions and/or evidence of Cuban and Soviet backing for the incursions, and political repercussions for U.S.-Soviet relations.

♦ 10:45 AM: Coffee break.

♦ 11:15 AM: Session 2: "U.S.-Soviet Competition in Africa II: The Horn (Ethiopia/Somalia)." Mutual U.S.-Soviet perceptions of the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977-78; of U.S., Soviet and Cuban involvement in the conflict; of the decision-making in Moscow and Washington in response to developments in the Horn of Africa, including roles played by the Soviet and Cuban military, the International Department of the CC of the CPSU, and of the various agencies in the U.S. government.

♦ 1:00 PM: Lunch.

♦ 2:15 PM: Session 3: "The Middle East Peace Process." The evolution of U.S.-Soviet discussions on the Middle East through the late summer of 1977; the negotiations between teams led by Cyrus Vance and Andrei Gromyko culminating in a joint U.S.-Soviet communique of 1 October 1977; the quick withdrawal of the Carter Administration from the joint communique, and the reasons for it; the Soviet reaction and interpretation; and the long-term impact of the events of early October 1977.

♦ 4:00 PM: Adjournment for the day.

♦ 7:30 PM: Dinner.

Saturday 25 March.

♦ 7:45 AM: Breakfast.

♦ 9:00 AM: Session 4: "Mid-1978: A Critical Moment?" An attempt to assess the state of U.S.-Soviet relations at what, according to newly released documents from both Washington and Moscow, may have been a critical moment. The Soviets, in particular, seem by mid-1978 to have begun to suspect the overall intentions of the Carter Administration: over China, human rights, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, southern Africa and other issues. The U.S., likewise, seemed to find less and less common ground with the Soviets on which to improve the relationship, apart from incremental progress toward a SALT II treaty. Participants will be asked to "cut across" all these issues and to reflect on overall U.S.-Soviet relations by July 1978.

♦ 10:45 AM: Coffee break.

♦ 11:15 AM: Session 5: "The Military Balance on the Central Front." Mutual assessment of U.S.-Soviet capabilities and intentions in Europe; the U.S. perception of a large and growing Soviet conventional superiority; the Soviet perception of U.S. and NATO decisions to deploy intermediate range missiles in Europe as a counter to Soviet SS-20s; decision-making in Moscow and Washington regarding estimates of one another's responses to the various moves made during the Carter-Brezhnev years; and the connections between U.S. and Soviet decisions and their respective stakes in Europe.

♦ 1:00 PM: Lunch.

♦ 2:15 PM: Session 6: "The Polish Crisis: 1979-1981." U.S. and Soviet assessments of the impact of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland in 1979; initial reaction in Moscow and Washington to the rise of Solidarity and the widespread strikes in Poland in the

summer of 1980; Soviet decision-making and contingencies regarding a possible military intervention in Poland to stem the unrest; and U.S. decision-making to deter a possible Soviet intervention.

♦ 4:00 PM: Adjournment of formal meetings for the day.

♦ 7:00 PM: Dinner.

♦ 8:15 PM: Informal Session: "U.S.-Soviet Relations in the '70s and U.S.-Russian Relations in the '90s." An informal, off-the-record discussion of points of similarity and difference between the Carter-Brezhnev years and the current situation in U.S.-Russian relations. All conferees are invited to participate in this discussion. Particular attention will be paid to what has changed, and what has remained the same in the relationship, and what the lessons may be for avoiding another cold war and developing a meaningful U.S.-Russian partnership.

♦ 9:45 PM: Adjournment for the day.

Sunday 26 March.

♦ 7:45 AM: Breakfast.

♦ 9:00 AM: Session 7: "U.S.-Soviet Relations: From the Vienna Summit to the Eve of the Afghan Intervention." The downward spiral of U.S.-Soviet relations following the summit in June 1979, when the SALT II treaty was signed; the effect of the "brigade in Cuba" affair on the likelihood of SALT II ratification in the U.S. Senate, and on Soviet perceptions of U.S. intentions regarding the U.S.-Soviet relationship; and U.S.-Soviet communications between June and December 1979 regarding Afghanistan. The session will conclude with reflections from participants on the state of relations on the eve of the Soviet intervention in late December 1979.

♦ 11:15 AM: Adjournment of conference.

♦ 11:45 AM: Buffet lunch, followed by departure of most conferees from Fort Lauderdale International Airport.

3. PARTICIPATING VETERANS (& Positions Held, 1977-80)

From Russia:

Karen N. Brutents, third world specialist, International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU.
Anatoly F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the U.S.
Gen Anatoly I. Gribkov, Chief of Staff, Warsaw Treaty Organization.
Georgy M. Kornienko, First Deputy Foreign Minister.
Georgy K. Shakhnazarov, specialist on socialist countries, International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU.
Sergei P. Tarasenko, U.S. and Middle East specialist, Soviet Foreign Ministry.
Oleg Troyanovsky, Ambassador to the United Nations.

From the U.S.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser.
Leslie H. Gelb, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs.
Herbert S. Okun, Deputy Director, U.S. delegation to the SALT II negotiations.
Gen. William E. Odom, Director of Soviet Affairs, National Security Council.
Robert A. Pastor, Director of Latin American Affairs, National Security Council.
Thomas R. Pickering, Ambassador to Jordan (until 1978), and Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.
Marshall D. Shulman, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Soviet Affairs.
Adm. Stansfield Turner, Director, CIA.
Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State.

4. PARTICIPATING SCHOLARS (at the conference table)

From Russia:

Ilya Gaiduk
Institute of Universal History, Moscow; and Norwegian Nobel Institute, Oslo.

Sergei Komolov
Special Assistant to the Ambassador, Embassy of the Russian Federation, Washington, DC.

Vladislav Zubok
National Security Archive, Washington, DC.

From Norway:

Geir Lundestad
Norwegian Nobel Institute, Oslo.

Odd Arne Westad
Norwegian Nobel Institute, Oslo.

From the U.S.:

James G. Blight
Brown University, Providence, RI

Philip Brenner
The American University, Washington, DC

Malcolm Byrne
National Security Archive, Washington, DC

Mark Garrison
Brown University, Providence, RI

James G. Hershberg
Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC

Robert Legvold (session chairman)
Columbia University, New York, NY

5. CONFERENCE STAFF

Elizabeth Garrison
Brown University, Providence, RI

janet M. Lang
Brown University, Providence, RI and Boston University

Svetlana Savranskaya
Brown University, Providence, RI and Emory University, Atlanta, GA

6. SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING TEAM

Paul Y. Baron
NORAB, Inc., Annapolis, MD (engineer)

Irina Arm

RCL, Inc., Los Angeles, CA (interpreter)

Andrei Falaleyev

Russian House Translation Services, Monterey, CA (interpreter)

7. OBSERVERS

Alan Berger

Boston, Massachusetts

Thomas J. Biersteker

Brown University, Providence, RI

Mark Doctoroff

National Security Archive, Washington, DC

Oscar Garcia

Superior Institute of International Relations, Havana, Cuba

P. Terrence Hopmann

Brown University, Providence RI

Sherry Jones

Washington Media, Washington, DC

Hanno Kirk

West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia

Walter Russell Mead

Arca Foundation Board, Washington, DC

Patricia Moore Nicholas

Carnegie Corporation of New York

Olav Njolstad

Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, Oslo

Rodolfo Puente

Superior Institute of International Relations, Havana, Cuba

Frank Rothman

Brown University, Providence, RI

Janet Shenk

Arca Foundation, Washington, DC

Jonathan Sisk

Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., Lanham, MD

Kimberly Stanton

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, IL

John Tirman

Winston Foundation for World Peace, Washington, DC

Nike Zachmanoglou

Conference Photographer, Washington, DC

8. CARTER-BREZHNEV PROJECT INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATORS

Center for Foreign Policy Development (CFPD), of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, Brown University, Providence, RI, USA, project headquarters. P. Terrence Hopmann, CFPD director; James G. Blight, project director. Project associates Mark Garrison, Elizabeth Garrison and Janet M. Lang. Carter-Brezhnev project conference coordinator, Brenda Menard.

Carter Center of Emory University (CC), Atlanta, GA. Robert A. Pastor, director of Latin American studies; Svetlana Savranskaya, Carter-Brezhnev research assistant.

Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, Washington, DC. James G. Hershberg, Coordinator.

Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation (MID), Moscow, Russia, Igor Lebedev, director, Department of History and Records.

National Security Archive (Archive), Washington, DC. Thomas S. Blanton, executive director; Malcolm Byrne, director of analysis; Vladislav Zubok, senior visiting scholar; Mark Doctoroff, research associate.

Norwegian Nobel Institute (NNI), Oslo Norway. Geir Lundestad, director; Odd Arne Westad, research director; Ilya Gaiduk, research fellow.

State Archival Service of Russia (Rosarkhiv), Moscow, Russia. Rudolf Pikhov, director; Vladimir Kozlov, deputy director; Natalia Tomilina, director of the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation.