

# Peace Through Strength or Strength Through Peace? The Reagan Administration and the Nuclear Freeze Movement in 1982

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**Abstract:** *Ronald Reagan faced the most volatile domestic challenge to his foreign policy in the grassroots Nuclear Freeze movement. This international peace group came to prominence virtually overnight in early 1982. The President sympathized with their eventual goal of a nuclear free world, but not their immediate goal that both sides in the arms race freeze further nuclear weapons production. The White House, however, was preoccupied with the politics of the Nuclear Freeze rather than debating a potential freeze policy. Reagan's anti-communist ideology informed his administration's pragmatic conservative action to politically cripple the Nuclear Freeze movement. The administration turned to 'wedge issues' such as abortion in an attempt to fracture the broad anti-nuclear coalition supporting the Freeze. The peace activists held sway with many religious groups. The faithful tended to favor the notion of freezing the production of nuclear weapons rather than dramatic defense spending increases. The White House found its ever-increasing defense budget in political peril. Reagan muddled through his defense of administration policy. Only after losses in the 1982 midterm elections did the White House decide upon a frontal assault on the Freeze, which culminated in March 1983 with the Evil Empire speech and the announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative.*

Ronald Reagan returned to the United States from his first European trip on 11 June 1982. The next day, Ground Zero Week protests culminated in the largest political rally in United States history.<sup>1</sup> Organized by the Nuclear Freeze Movement, the Central Park, New York, demonstrators were protesting against the Reagan administration's 'peace through strength' foreign policy; a policy which promulgated the view that massive defense spending increases would help win the Cold War. As Reagan himself had put it in his ideological speech to the English House of



Parliament in London several days earlier, 'the march of freedom and democracy...will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ashheap of history'.<sup>2</sup>

This article addresses three main topics: the rise of the Nuclear Freeze Movement in 1982, Reagan's inability to neutralize the Nuclear Freeze Movement, and the difficulty the White House had finding an effective strategy to deal with the organization. Traditionally, scholarly discussion has centered on the effect of domestic politics on foreign policy; however, this article demonstrates how foreign policy affected domestic politics. Reagan faced the quandary of attempting to implement a massive arms buildup in a democratic society that broadly opposed such a policy. Given the broad grass-roots support for a nuclear freeze resolution, the most important topic is the administration's response to the movement. The White House discussed the need to stress Reagan's support for the concept of a nuclear freeze. Advisers even proposed forwarding the idea of Reagan as a peacemaker and proponent of arms control, but they did not consider supporting the Nuclear Freeze Movement itself as a means to ending the arms race.

Rather than seriously considering their proposal of a nuclear freeze, the White House attempted to drive apart the broad and diverse Nuclear Freeze coalition. By co-opting divisive social issues such as abortion and school prayer into their strategic planning, the White House hoped to separate conservative Christian Freeze-supporters from the liberal, secular peace activists that ran the Nuclear Freeze Movement. The use of cultural issues to divide this domestic movement emerged as the blueprint to defending the President's foreign policy.

Although thirty years have passed since the Reagan presidency, the Nuclear Freeze Movement remains a highly charged political topic. However, the arguments today are not between grass-roots activists and politicians, but rather between Reagan historians and former members of the Nuclear Freeze Movement. While Reagan historiography largely marginalizes the political threat the Nuclear Freeze Movement posed especially in 1982-1983,<sup>3</sup> Nuclear Freeze historiography is dominated by the memoirs of its former members.<sup>4</sup> My research addresses the resulting imbalances. For example, in his international history of the peace movement, Lawrence Wittner comprehensively examines the Nuclear Freeze Movement as transnational history, but in the process he gives the organization a degree of credit for ending the arms race that does not acknowledge the movement's failure to influence policy during Reagan's second term.<sup>5</sup> Although the Nuclear Freeze Movement was a problematic social movement during Reagan's first term this article reveals that it lost potency prior to his reelection campaign. Thus, the misconceptions relating to the historiography of the era, particularly relating to the reasons why Reagan fought the Nuclear Freeze Movement, are addressed by this article.

## **Background**

Established in 1979 by Randall Forsberg, a defense and disarmament researcher and peace activist, the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, or Nuclear Freeze Movement as it became known, reflected increasing levels of fear across the globe that nuclear war might occur. Nuclear protests had become popular in Europe during 1981 and widespread in the United States by 1982. Yet, despite witnessing the largest anti-nuclear protest in U.S. History, the President seemed unconcerned, settling in at Camp David to watch what Brinkley dubbed 'the world's

worst movie', *Health*.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, Reagan had a more nuanced view of nuclear proliferation than peace protestors acknowledged. As an actor in 1945, he belonged to a group that argued for international control over atomic energy and the abolition of atomic weapons. On becoming President, Reagan moved away from that position as the Cold War heated up; yet he maintained his earlier hope that he could work to eliminate nuclear weapons.<sup>7</sup> In his second term he discussed eliminating all nuclear weapons in a superpower summit, but his emphasis was on arms reduction rather than arms control. Reagan's strategy for arms reduction included a counterintuitive defense buildup that he believed could lead both the Soviet Union and the United States to negotiate deep cuts in their nuclear arsenals.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Reagan's long-held belief that the United States needed to 'do all we can to have a deterrent and to see there is never a nuclear war'<sup>9</sup> ultimately resulted in defense spending increases, not arms reduction. This, combined with the President's strong ideological stance against communism, spurred the exponential growth of the worldwide anti-nuclear movement. Both domestically and globally, the Reagan administration exacerbated the climate of nuclear fear by engaging in increasingly confrontational rhetoric toward the Soviet Union and by dramatic defense spending increases.<sup>10</sup>

### **Politics and the Nuclear Freeze Movement**

Reagan viewed the Nuclear Freeze Movement as a domestic political hurdle, not something that affected his foreign policy. It was important for Reagan to keep the peace between social conservatives and national security conservatives in order to keep his political coalition intact. At the time, evangelicals were a swing constituency

that had supported Carter in 1976 and Reagan in 1980.<sup>11</sup> Conservative Christians and conservative 'hawks' were not natural allies owing to their divergent emphases, but the President hoped to ally the constituencies against a broad leftist opposition that he characterized as supporting both abortion and unilateral disarmament as articles of faith.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, both the Kremlin and the White House were attempting to manipulate the peace movement for their own purposes. Moscow hoped the protestors would cause Western European governments to renege on their four-year-old plan to station intermediate-range nuclear weapons on their soil in 1983. Washington hoped to persuade socially conservative Nuclear Freeze supporters to endorse Reagan's version of arms control. But there the similarities end. While the Soviets attempted to manipulate the peace movement for their own purposes, Reagan worried little about the international protests.<sup>13</sup> Instead, he cared primarily about maintaining his electoral coalition. The domestic political challenges of his foreign policy threatened to sidetrack the arms buildup. Meanwhile, the Kremlin oligarchy vigorously pursued the arms race. Whereas the democratic USA confronted a powerful opposition, the totalitarian Soviet Union could buildup with impunity. Reagan faced domestic resistance in the renewed arms race that the Soviet system did not allow.

### **Renewed Arms Race and Anti-Nuclear Movement**

Despite the Nuclear Freeze Movement, the Reagan arms buildup continued unabated. Reagan was not the first President to call for significant defense spending increases for advancing nuclear weapons technology, nor was the Nuclear Freeze Movement the first significant anti-nuclear weapons movement. The Freeze was

influenced by its many fore-bearers including, for example, the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) in the United States, a popular movement in the 1960s during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Similarly, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the United Kingdom and the Pugwash movement of scientists on both sides of the Iron Curtain, who sought to limit nuclear weapons, also enjoyed a high political profile in the 1960s.<sup>14</sup> The Reagan administration's struggle with the Nuclear Freeze Movement was the latest attempt by nongovernmental actors to influence defense policy in the atomic age.

Furthermore, nuclear fear was on the rise before Reagan gained presidency. The defense buildup began, not with Reagan, but during the Carter administration. In 1977, President Carter had moved ahead with the development of an enhanced radiation warhead – the neutron bomb – thereby disillusioning peace groups. When he eventually abandoned the idea three years later, and the peace groups came back to support Carter's reelection bid in 1980, Reagan condemned Carter's equivocation over the arms race. Reagan supported any weapons system that would 'provide the deterrent we need to any Russian attack'.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, in 1979, Carter signed agreements to install Pershing II and cruise missiles – dubbed Euromissiles – in Western Europe. This plan incited anti-nuclear protests during the early 1980s, most notably by the European Nuclear Disarmament (END). In a manner that Reagan could appreciate, Carter favored a 'dual track' negotiation policy of linking deployments of long-range U.S. nuclear forces with eliminating intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe.<sup>16</sup> That aggressive negotiation policy both helped stir the dormant peace movement in Europe and later

laid the groundwork for the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty negotiations.

Despite Carter's support for the Euromissiles and endorsement of the technologically-advanced MX missile, it was Ronald Reagan, emerging during the 1980s, who was the candidate most responsible for stoking nuclear fear. Reagan's confrontational style was on display in his first press conference as he dispelled the possibility of another *détente* or relaxation in the strained relations between the United States and Soviet Union. *Détente* was no longer an option due to both the growing Soviet influence in the Third World during the late 1970s, and Reagan's determination to check communist influence around the world. Ronald Reagan's rhetoric hearkened back to the strident anti-communism of the early Cold War. For example, he decried the atheistic politics of the Soviet Union, which the President considered immoral because 'the only morality they recognize is what will further their cause, meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat'.<sup>17</sup> Reagan further dismissed the Soviet Union in his commencement address at the University of Notre Dame in May 1981 when he referred to communism as 'some bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are even now being written'.<sup>18</sup> By October 1981, the President was on record as having discussed the possibility of a limited nuclear war in Europe.<sup>19</sup> His confrontational rhetoric, the economic recession of 1981-1982, and the growing anti-nuclear movement in Western Europe combined to foster discontent in the United States with Reagan's foreign policy. That restless sense of unease fueled the Nuclear Freeze Movement.

Broad Christian backing for the Nuclear Freeze forced Reagan to fight for the moral

high ground on this issue. The Freeze – more than any other foreign policy issue during his first term – tested Reagan's mix of conservative and pragmatic solutions to problems. The Reagan administration promoted common ground with Freeze-supporting evangelical Christians on social issues such as school prayer and abortion in an attempt to turn them toward supporting peace through strength. The Reagan administration concurrently characterized Nuclear Freeze organizers as part of an international leftist movement that sought to undermine U.S. national security interests and traditional conservative values.

Reagan believed that the movement had seduced Americans with unrealistic peace rhetoric. He saw the Nuclear Freeze as an extension of détente, an idea with peaceful intent that would nevertheless undermine U.S. national security. Reagan had opposed the détente of Presidents Ford and Carter during the 1970s. Reagan argued that détente led to American weakness, which allowed Moscow to increase its global influence.<sup>20</sup> Regardless, the Reagan administration failed to produce a swift and effective response to the Nuclear Freeze Movement. Such inaction caused the administration's foreign policy to appear under siege, which forced the President to challenge the movement.

### **Guns Over Butter**

Reagan's continued defense spending increases caused political problems for him and political opportunity for the Nuclear Freeze Movement. The President refused to temper his planned hikes in the defense budget. As a result, Americans began wondering if his priority was the military 'guns' over the social spending 'butter' that would help citizens weather the recession. The Nuclear Freeze benefitted politically

as Americans began to tie defense spending increases to cuts in social programs in their minds. Reagan subsequently went on the attack against the Freeze in hopes of improving his political fortunes.

Reagan's projected defense spending increases in his 1981 budget only fueled the fire of Nuclear Freeze protests.<sup>21</sup> The President introduced the increases in a February 1981 address to a joint session of Congress that outlined his economic recovery program, which cut funding to eighty-three social programs and increased the defense budget 9.1 percent per year from fiscal year 1982 through fiscal year 1986. The President's proposal increased the amount spent on defense from \$162 billion in fiscal year 1981 to \$343 billion by fiscal year 1986. Moreover, military spending as a percentage of GNP would rise from 5.7 percent in fiscal year 1981 to 7.1 percent in fiscal year 1986.<sup>22</sup> Enormous defense spending increases combined with social spending cuts created ideal conditions for the Nuclear Freeze Movement to rise in popularity. While there was, of course, no explicitly stated link between the savings on social programs and a larger defense budget, the policy change was immediately apparent and the priorities of the administration did not sit well with many Americans. With the Nuclear Freeze gaining strength, the Reagan administration continued on a collision course with the Movement.

Faced with the growing popularity of the Nuclear Freeze Movement, and the unpopularity of Reagan's defense spending increases, the administration decided that they must defend their position to the American public. Problematically, however, White House responses to this movement were jumbled in the early months of 1982. In March, Reagan vacillated between two messages. The first

message portrayed Reagan as a nuclear abolitionist. In Oklahoma City on 16 March, he stated that a nuclear freeze did not go far enough.<sup>23</sup> The President instead favored arms reductions rather than the arms control favored by previous administrations. Reagan believed that people would support his brand of arms reduction over the repackaged détente-era version of arms control that was being pushed by the Nuclear Freeze Movement.

The second message, broadcast on 31 March in the President's first primetime news conference, warned that a freeze would cement the Soviet 'margin of superiority' and create 'a window of vulnerability' to a Soviet attack.<sup>24</sup> Asserting that the Kremlin possessed nuclear superiority contradicted the Nuclear Freeze Movement's position that parity existed between the superpowers.<sup>25</sup> This thrust moved Reagan toward confronting the organization by attempting to scare people into supporting peace through strength by describing the Soviets as a mortal enemy that could not be trusted to implement a freeze. Yet both the dual impulses toward anti-communist rhetoric and dramatic arms reductions both failed to gain traction.

In trying to explain this, it seems that the economic downturn during Reagan's first year in office was a likely contributor. Between November 1981 and November 1982, the U.S. economy suffered its worst decline since the Great Depression. By January 1983, unemployment reached the 11.5 million mark. The President's approval rating fell from 60 percent in the middle of 1981 to 35 percent by January 1983.<sup>26</sup> Just prior to taking office in December 1980, the unemployment rate was 7.2 percent. Two years later, the unemployment rate was 10.8 percent.<sup>27</sup> The dire economic situation of Reagan's first two years coupled with the President's falling approval numbers

meant that public backing for increased defense spending had been replaced by surging support for the Nuclear Freeze Movement.<sup>28</sup> Despite Reagan's proposed long-term arms reduction proposal, Americans registered their discontent with the Reagan administration's actual current defense spending increases by backing a movement that challenged the White House foreign policy agenda.

### **The Freeze Movement Grows**

As unrest over Reagan's policies grew so too did the Nuclear Freeze Movement. With increased interest in their message, it branched out. What began with a few organizers, quickly spread into a grass-roots movement through middle class social institutions such as churches. Leaders met in March 1981 to officially organize the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. They structured the movement as an informal network rather than a top-down organization. The National Committee, one of the major leadership forums, picked the Missouri city of St. Louis as the central office's 'clearinghouse'. The committee chose St. Louis, citing its symbolic status as the Gateway to the West in America's heartland. Moreover, the term 'clearinghouse' symbolized the loose confederation of credentialed supporters. This meeting established the Nuclear Freeze as a movement that appealed to the middle class by working within an organized political structure rather than rudderless protests.

The Nuclear Freeze Movement moved firmly into the mainstream of middle class American society. Organizers courted church groups, unions, and professional associations. By the end of 1981, the Nuclear Freeze Movement had cultivated support from tens of thousands of newly motivated activists in forty-three states.<sup>29</sup> Baby-boomers – the generation born between 1946 and 1964 – represented the

largest age group, but the Movement also included older leaders such as Helen Caldicott, founder of Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND); Admiral Gene LaRocque who joined the Center for Defense Information (CDI) to travel around the country promoting the Freeze; and Roger Molander, a former national security staffer during the Ford and Carter administrations and eventual organizer of the Ground Zero Week anti-nuclear demonstrations in June 1982.<sup>30</sup> The Nuclear Freeze started as a mere footnote in the arms control discussion in 1979, but adding arms control experts as supporters helped the movement gain legitimacy. By 1982, it had evolved into one of the largest mass protest movements in American history.

The Nuclear Freeze Movement, however, lacked the well-defined organizational hierarchy necessary to weather an attack by the Reagan administration. Rather than creating a clear chain of command, organizers preoccupied themselves with making the organization non-hierarchical and non-elitist. The Nuclear Freeze Movement cut across too many divergent demographic groups to be cohesive: rich and poor, rural and urban, black and white, religious and secular. The amorphous 'clearinghouse' of ideas in St. Louis neither strengthened nor centralized the group.

The Nuclear Freeze's growing popularity nevertheless caused Washington to take notice. The movement rode a wave of positive publicity toward the midterm elections. The Freeze gained the support of the Friends Service Committee and the New York based Clergy and Laity Concerned organization. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church even declared the Freeze 'its top non-church issue for the 1980's'.<sup>31</sup> More significant than the support of those groups, the Roman Catholic bishops overwhelmingly endorsed the Nuclear Freeze at the National Catholic Bishops Conference in 1981.<sup>32</sup> By 1982, the Freeze had become a large-scale social

and political movement with global appeal for which the Reagan administration had no answer.<sup>33</sup>

Political leaders could no longer ignore the Nuclear Freeze Movement's growing popular support. Freeze resolutions passed the state legislatures of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Vermont and Oregon. They were also approved in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Kansas, while California, New Jersey, Delaware and Michigan planned ballot initiatives supporting a nuclear freeze. A coalition of civic and religious leaders, worried about Reagan's massive military buildup promoted these legislative measures. In Congress, 150 members sponsored a resolution calling on Washington and Moscow to 'pursue a complete halt to the nuclear weapons race'.<sup>34</sup> The anti-nuclear sentiment had spread throughout the United States and continued to ascend in 1982.<sup>35</sup>

The administration responded to the Freeze's political momentum by attempting to position itself in the middle of the issue. A State Department spokesperson claimed that, while the administration supported 'the goals of arms control', it termed the bipartisan congressional Freeze proposal 'dangerous' and 'destabilizing'.<sup>36</sup> The administration groped toward a middle ground of supported arms control in general, but not a 'dangerous' nuclear freeze.

International peace groups believed the danger lay with NATO's aggressive rearmament policies. Western Europe's anti-nuclear movement had expanded in the early 1980s just prior to the growth of the Nuclear Freeze Movement in the United States. The Western European anti-nuclear movement opposed the NATO

deployment of Euromissiles. European religious organizations, labor federations, and Social Democrat parties quickly organized to protest this deployment. Citizens in most Western European nations opposed stationing intermediate range nuclear weapons on their soil. Public opinion polling demonstrated that fears of a nuclear war had increased markedly from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, in part as a result of the pending missile deployment, and in part as a result of Reagan's election.<sup>37</sup> The Kremlin looked to capitalize on this burgeoning fear in Western Europe.

Western European and American anti-nuclear activists worked to cohere their two movements. Americans promoted a bilateral freeze in production of nuclear weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union; Europeans protested the intermediate range nuclear weapons slated to be deployed on their continent. The two movements first joined forces in spring 1982, when European anti-nuclear activists came to the United States to rally against Reagan administration defense policies. Many of these groups' leaders consisted of clergy intent upon increasing communication and organization between the European and American anti-nuclear movements. These religious leaders received high-profile support in Atlanta from Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King, Jr. That March in Philadelphia, nearly twenty thousand protestors braved subfreezing temperatures to march for peace. American and Western European peace groups cultivated their growing alliance during the Europeans' tour of the United States. They agreed to cooperate in working against the deployment of Euromissiles. Moreover, the drumbeat of support grew louder as Freeze resolutions were passed in 23 cities across the country – from Maryland to California – and in over 150 New England town meetings.<sup>38</sup> These events showed the Nuclear Freeze's appeal as a transnational protest movement

and the movement's growing political potential throughout the United States.

In its early attempts to slow the Freeze Movement, the Reagan administration received an additional public relations blow. Soviet Premier, Leonid Brezhnev, announced a plan to suspend the deployment of new SS-20 nuclear missiles to European Russia. Brezhnev launched this public relations campaign seeking to undermine political support for Washington's plan to place intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe. He also revealed that the Red Army planned to dismantle some of its medium-range missiles in 1982. His rhetoric showed the Kremlin as responsive to the Nuclear Freeze Movement's demands. Such actions won the favor of anti-nuclear activists on both sides of the Atlantic. With his unremitting nuclear saber-rattling, Reagan in contrast was portrayed in a negative light. In this way, the Kremlin appeared to adhere to the spirit of a nuclear freeze, while Washington remained obstinate. Brezhnev fueled the alienation between the international freeze movement and the Reagan administration's arms buildup. Charges and counter-charges flew between the superpowers as to which side would benefit from a freeze, but by making the first move Brezhnev had seized the diplomatic initiative.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Zero Option**

The Reagan administration embraced an arms reduction plan, the Zero Option, which would cancel the NATO deployment of cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe if Moscow removed all SS-20 missiles from Europe and Asia. It was a simple plan for arms reductions in which the Soviets would give up their European missiles in exchange for the promise by NATO not to deploy intermediate

nuclear forces in Western Europe. It was a plan not taken seriously by the Soviets, Western Europe, or the Nuclear Freeze. This was, as Richard Perle, the driving force behind the Zero Option, had anticipated. He wanted the Soviets to reject the proposal so that Washington could win a propaganda battle against Moscow over which side was obstructing arms control. Perle was a neoconservative, a favorite of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and an advisor who opposed most arms control.<sup>40</sup>

While Perle was at best a third-echelon advisor, his keen intellect provided ammunition for administration conservatives, led by Weinberger, who ideologically opposed arms control and favored a military buildup. Perle argued that Soviet agreements to the proposal would not cost the United States anything since the Euromissiles were not scheduled to be deployed until late 1983. If Moscow refused, Washington would score a propaganda victory in Europe and NATO could increase nuclear deployments with impunity.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration's chief negotiator on the INF Treaty, Paul Nitze, a veteran of many arms control negotiations and a moderate compared to Perle, favored a more realistic approach that would reduce the rate of increase in nuclear weapons. In good faith, he sought an agreement with Moscow on the INF Treaty as leader of the Senior Arms Control Policy Group. On 16 July 1982, Nitze took 'a walk in the woods' near Geneva with his Soviet counterpart in the arms control talks, Yuli Kavinsky. The two arms control experts sought to forge a compromise that would allow some deployments to remain. The White House and State Department studied the compromise for the rest of the summer, but ultimately

rejected anything less than the Zero Option. Perle had won his bureaucratic battle against Nitze.<sup>42</sup>

Reagan favored the Zero Option's simplicity over a State Department plan of Zero Plus, which would allow both sides to retain up to 100 launchers. The State Department's plan was more realistic, but the Defense department fought Zero Plus because the Pentagon did not want an arms control agreement acceptable to the Soviets. Reagan, on the other hand, resisted for stylistic reasons; 'zero' was simply easier to sell to the public than the nuance of 'zero plus'. Moreover, the Zero Option appealed to Reagan's belief that negotiations should lead to arms reductions rather than controlling the rate of increase in nuclear weapons. Perle encouraged the President not to negotiate on the Zero Option. Yet all sides considered the Zero Option unserious; hence, the anti-nuclear protests continued unabated.

### **The White House Attempts to Coordinate a Response**

The archived exchanges between Reagan administration officials reveal an ongoing dialog discussing how to attack the Nuclear Freeze. The Freeze became central not to Reagan's foreign policy initiatives, but to his undeclared reelection campaign. The President had to discredit the Freeze Movement to regain lost popularity. He realized that the growing concern about nuclear war was to his political disadvantage. Beginning in 1982, Reagan and his cabinet worked to stall the Nuclear Freeze Movement's momentum in order to help secure a second term.

The gathering grass-roots support for the Nuclear Freeze Movement increased the pressure on the President to neutralize the Freeze. National Security Advisor William

Clark led the charge to counteract the Freeze Movement. He sent a memo on 22 April 1982 to the Troika who ran the White House: Chief of Staff James Baker, Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver, and Counselor to the President for Policy Edwin Meese, arguing for an aggressive public relations strategy. He worried that Ground Zero Week – scheduled for June – would leave the worried public ‘open for exploitation by others of all stripes’.<sup>43</sup> Clark wanted to convince Americans that ‘our policy solutions best meet their desire that the United States do something to lessen the prospect of a nuclear holocaust’.<sup>44</sup> He believed that the President needed to go on the offensive against the Freeze during the months leading up to the November midterm elections ‘rather than waiting and reacting – a situation likely to give the Soviets and anti-government forces in this country the upper hand’.<sup>45</sup> Clark believed the time had passed for the administration to leave the Freeze unchecked, as it continued to amass support.

Clark agreed with Communications Director David Gergen that the White House and NSC should work together to counter the Freeze. Clark said: ‘I want to involve all departments in a coordinated strategy, bringing their talents to bear on specific aspects of the problem’.<sup>46</sup> The national security advisor continued with a nod to peace through strength, stating ‘[w]e should emphasize the President’s role as a peacemaker, but we must not let the Russians off the hook’.<sup>47</sup> He proposed to hold meetings with Nuclear Freeze supporters to find common ground rather than ‘fostering a “we/they” syndrome, wherein we become antagonists with Roger Molander of Ground Zero, or Billy Graham, or 40 Catholic Bishops, or the Mayor of Pella, Iowa’.<sup>48</sup> He argued that engaging arms control critics would ‘at least show the public that we are paying attention to the national message of concern’.<sup>49</sup>

Initial White House plans to counter the Freeze movement were unsuccessful. The administration did not portray their arms control plans as an effective alternative to the Nuclear Freeze. Clark suggested demonstrating the administration's commitment to arms control by heavily promoting their plan, the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). By emphasizing activism by the administration on this issue, he hoped to counteract 'the media leap...to portray us as secretive and defensive'.<sup>50</sup> Clark believed that for the White House to neutralize the Nuclear Freeze as a political issue, the President needed to articulate his arms control policy, engage Freeze activists, and give a televised speech dealing with arms control.<sup>51</sup> Baker agreed that 'policy and public affairs strategies' needed better coordination.<sup>52</sup> He chose Gergen to head the public affairs side and Deputy National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane to lead the policy side of the effort, but Clark's plan was not successfully enacted in the months before the midterm elections.<sup>53</sup> Republicans lost effective control of the House of Representatives as 26 Republicans and conservative Southern Democrats who were inclined to support the President were defeated.

John Kwapisz, a lawyer with an expertise in field organizing, warned Meese that the movement could grow larger than the administration had previously imagined. In a letter to Meese he advised:

The Rules of the political game are now changing. Policy is no longer simply being determined in the halls and rooms of Congress. As a result of years of organizing activity by the left and the existence of emotional issues (e.g., Ground Zero), the focus is shifting to local communities, to the grass roots.<sup>54</sup>

Kwapisz advised the administration to develop its own defense policy at the grass-roots level to 'head off the groundswell potentially looming for the left's position'.<sup>55</sup> Kwapisz and Clark agreed that Reagan needed a major media blitz to counteract this potentially threatening grass-roots movement.

Kwapisz told the President that the administration needed 'a more effective approach for countering the activities and disinformation of this movement'.<sup>56</sup> He presented his case for a media counteroffensive as a battle over public opinion. Kwapisz persuaded the President by bringing up the Soviet threat. By painting the picture in this dichotomy, he played up the President's long held anti-communist convictions. Soviet attempts at media manipulation could give the Kremlin 'world domination "without a shot being fired"'.<sup>57</sup> He contended that the administration should illustrate the growing Soviet threat and sell Reagan's defense and foreign policy programs as an appropriate response. He suggested that the administration aim its propaganda efforts at clergy, religious organizations, and educational associations. Kwapisz even raised the specter of Vietnam. He argued that the 'anti-defense movement' contained 'seasoned organizers' of the 'anti-Vietnam movement'.<sup>58</sup> Appealing to Reagan's loathing of Soviet propaganda and Vietnam protestors ensured that the President would notice his words. Closing his arguments by stressing the need for grass-roots organizing and media savvy, the attorney predicted that 'the "peace movement" has not yet begun to "fight"'.<sup>59</sup>

An NBC News/Associated Press Poll released in April 1982 supported some of Kwapisz's assertions. Seventy-four percent of Americans favored a bilateral Freeze while fifty-six percent of people had not yet formed an opinion regarding Reagan's

disarmament policies.<sup>60</sup> The idea of a freeze had wide backing as an idea, but not necessarily deep political support. Americans broadly favored the Freeze, but administration arms control policies had not yet been publicly defined. Kwapisz argued that national security conservatives among the grass-roots should persuade this mass of undecided public opinion to support peace through strength. Conservative forces needed to frame the Soviet Union as having values too alien to adhere to a bilateral freeze.

Meanwhile in her analysis of the Freeze after the 1982 midterm election, conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly called for a White House coordinator of anti-Nuclear Freeze activities to counter its strength among women.<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Dole, the administration leader on the issue, heard from enough disparate voices to agree with Schlafly. The administration needed a central person or committee to deal with the Freeze 'because of the domestic political implications of the issue'.<sup>62</sup> Dole proposed that all White House liaison and policy offices coordinate to speak with one voice rather than continuing to send unclear messages.<sup>63</sup>

The administration focused on the Roman Catholic Church, and culture war issues like abortion to divide and neutralize the Freeze Movement. Forging consensus on social issues to weaken differences over the Nuclear Freeze issue was the preferred method of undercutting the Movement. The White House recognized that the nuclear weapons issue politically hurt the administration with regard to the Catholic vote. Therefore, the administration considered moving away from confrontation over the Freeze and toward agreement on the abortion issue. Factions within the administration suggested that they 'take the offensive away from them [the Catholic

Bishops] on the [nuclear] issue, with the abortion question'.<sup>64</sup> Administration insiders deemed abortion a 'public relations goldmine' that would divide the bishops over whether the Freeze or abortion was the most important issue for the church.<sup>65</sup>

Compared to 1980 voting figures, Republicans ended up losing seven percent of the Catholic vote in the 1982 midterm elections. As a result, many politicians worried that a continued focus on the Freeze could cost even more votes. Morton Blackwell, a special assistant in the White House's Office of Public Liaison, argued that the President could divert attention away from Catholic opposition to the Freeze by promoting their shared positions on 'right to life issues'.<sup>66</sup>

As administration officials attempted to undermine Catholic support for the Freeze, they enlisted Christian soldiers from the evangelical ranks to neutralize the Nuclear Freeze Movement's moral authority. Arguing that evangelicals had been underutilized by the administration, Red Cavaney, Deputy Director of the Office of Public Liaison, assumed that 'virtually all of this community of millions will be in support of our position'.<sup>67</sup> In reality, evangelical Christians supported the Nuclear Freeze Movement by the same three-to-one margin as other Americans.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, building upon this reasonable yet false premise, Cavaney suggested to Deputy National Security Advisor, Robert McFarlane, that the administration organize evangelical supporters of peace through strength to counterbalance Catholic Freeze proponents. Noting evangelicals' savvy with electronic media and direct mailings, Cavaney suggested the televangelist Pat Robertson to become a leader of the Christian opposition to the Freeze. He also deemed Campus Crusade for Christ a 'strong anti-nuclear Freeze' group that could preach the administration's

message on college campuses.<sup>69</sup> While it was logical to assume that the administration possessed power within the evangelical community, problematically, the White House still did not fully comprehend the deep nuclear fear within the evangelical rank and file.

Cavaney was more concerned that the ongoing recession in the United States would bolster the Nuclear Freeze Movement. Economic factors contributed to fostering large pro-Nuclear Freeze protests across all demographics. He viewed the 'economic dislocation', or job loss and economic struggles of the recession, as primary factors that would create massive demonstrations on any issue that might arise, stating:

the interaction of a large number of unemployed (particularly minority youth), students free of attendance responsibilities, hot weather, and the prospect of little immediate [economic] relief markedly increases the potential for public demonstrations.<sup>70</sup>

While he correctly predicted that the potential political damage of any pro-Freeze protests would be moderate, he failed to understand the substance of the demonstration. Rather than mere rabble-rousing, the movement's rank and file genuinely feared nuclear war.<sup>71</sup>

Although Cavaney thought that the administration could eventually triumph, he believed that the Nuclear Freeze's moral and emotional appeal revealed the dominance of the issue in the public mind. The immorality of a provocative defense

buildup in a time of recession cut across political and ideological lines. Reagan could not diffuse such fear and anger with a deft political ploy. Nevertheless, Cavaney still contended that the President could weather this political storm by comporting himself 'as an honest man wrestling with a very real dilemma'.<sup>72</sup> He believed that the Freeze would succeed or fail, not on its intellectual or moral merits, but by people's reactions to Reagan's leadership.<sup>73</sup>

He proposed that the administration work to 'minimize the intensity' of the Freeze because he did not believe it could be neutralized.<sup>74</sup> Cavaney cautioned against deriding the Freeze or the morality in the movement's argument. Instead, the administration should encourage 'pragmatic approaches to dealing with the issue of national defense'.<sup>75</sup> The administration took an uneven approach to Cavaney's recommendations as Reagan vacillated between deference toward Freeze supporters and attacking the movement.

Aside from attempting to divide the Nuclear Freeze Movement over social issues, the administration's anti-Nuclear Freeze campaign dubbed the movement a Soviet conspiracy, thus intensifying their campaign in November 1982. Deputy White House Press Secretary, Larry Speakes, informed the news media that the administration had State Department reports and articles from the conservative periodicals – including *Reader's Digest*, *Commentary*, and *The American Spectator* – to back up Reagan's assertion that Moscow secretly controlled the Nuclear Freeze Movement.<sup>76</sup> While asserting the 'sincere and well-intentioned' nature of Freeze supporters, Reagan himself cited evidence from the aforementioned magazines, stating that:

in the organization of some of the big demonstrations, the one in New York, and so forth, there is no question about foreign agents that were sent to help investigate and help create and keep such a movement going.<sup>77</sup>

This assertion did not gain much traction. Any member of the public would know that these conservative periodicals were hardly credible sources of unbiased information, and certainly lacked the intelligence gathering capabilities of the CIA. Nevertheless, it showed another aspect of Reagan's attack on the Freeze Movement.

In December 1982, Reagan spoke favorably of arms control, while casting aspersions on the Nuclear Freeze Movement. He argued that proponents unwittingly aided the Soviet Union despite being 'sincere and well-intentioned'.<sup>78</sup> The President spuriously claimed that 'the first man who proposed the Nuclear Freeze was on Feb. 21, 1981, in Moscow, Leonid Brezhnev', seemingly unaware that the first politician to propose a freeze was actually Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR) during the SALT II talks in 1979.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, an FBI report declassified in March 1983 revealed that the Kremlin did not 'directly control or manipulate' the U.S. Nuclear Freeze Movement.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, with no singular leader to refute the President's allegation, a seed of doubt was planted.

The President tried to project to his European allies an image of consensus support for his foreign policy which did not, in fact, exist. The administration was trying to discredit the popular Freeze by attempting to paint its leaders as pro-communist and pro-abortion. In the United States, linking support for a nuclear freeze resolution to

support for abortion possessed the potential to undermine the Nuclear Freeze Movement and create greater support for Reagan's defense policy. In Western Europe, however, social issues did not divide citizens in the same way. NATO nations registered diminishing support for ever-increasing American defense initiatives.

The White House attempted to gain European support for peace through strength by implementing National Security Decision Document (NSDD) 77 in January 1983. The document planned to improve public diplomacy by aggressively contrasting the American and Soviet systems. Perhaps born as much out of domestic considerations as by U.S.-European relations, the departments of defense and state, the national security council, the United States Information Agency, and the agency for international development planned to coordinate 'public information policies' to counter 'the Soviet peace offensive'.<sup>81</sup> Western European allies did not believe that the Zero Option proposal was serious and awaited a plan to which the Soviets might agree. They did not need to wait long. In March 1983, Reagan demonstrated his true intent by proposing a compromise with Moscow over the Zero Option proposal that would allow for its gradual implementation. The administration's interim agreement would allow each side to keep 300 warheads provided both sides agreed to the eventual elimination of intermediate nuclear weapons in Europe.<sup>82</sup> In the process, Reagan was also attempting to change his international image from that of ideological anti-communist to a pragmatic man of peace by compromising on means of realizing his beloved Zero Option proposal. He sought to appear supportive of the negotiations in order to demonstrate to NATO allies that he was serious about diplomacy.

More importantly, as Reagan revealed during a primetime television address to the nation, he proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) which comprised a plan to put a missile shield in outer space that would theoretically defend the United States from a Soviet nuclear missile attack and thus render a nuclear freeze irrelevant. SDI was in part a response to the Freeze. Reagan proposed this missile defense system because his administration was having difficulty dealing with the growing anti-nuclear sentiment in the United States. The SDI concept allowed the President to tell Americans that he was doing something to protect them against nuclear war and potentially create conditions to eliminate nuclear weapons. Reagan now possessed a clear and tangible counterproposal to the Nuclear Freeze that captured the American imagination in a manner the Zero Option did not.<sup>83</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Opposition by the Nuclear Freeze Movement to the President's defense buildup ran deep. Prioritizing weapons systems over the poor eroded support for peace through strength among many religious Americans. The administration realized its arguments were not resonating with the public. Instead of gearing persuasive security arguments toward Christian Freeze supporters, administration political operatives adopted conservative positions on social issues in an attempt to regain their support for the President's foreign policy. The Reagan administration calculated that diverting people's passions to these issues would take the political momentum from the Nuclear Freeze. Nevertheless, the White House underestimated the amount of nuclear fear in the United States during the early 1980s, which made strategizing against the Nuclear Freeze Movement difficult.

Political calculations rather than issues of war and peace governed the Reagan administration's efforts to deal with the Movement. The Nuclear Freeze mattered more to the White House as an issue of domestic politics than foreign policy. While the President hated the idea of nuclear war, he hated the idea of a political defeat even more. Reagan's pragmatism led to a calculated use of divisive social issues to fight the peace movement and defend his continued defense spending increases. The White House worked harder to soften the political blow than to reduce nuclear warheads. Meanwhile, the American people meanwhile were fed up with the arms race in the early 1980s. They embraced a simple prescription, the Nuclear Freeze.

In response, President Reagan revealed his plan for ending the arms race on 23 March 1983. Although the Reagan administration had been caught unprepared for the popularity of the Nuclear Freeze Movement in 1982, by 1983 the White House looked to the stars to find its footing against the peace protestors. In the 1984 presidential election, Americans chose the promise of peace through strength and its signature policy, SDI, over the Nuclear Freeze Movement's far less dramatic plan for strength through peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb, Vol. 3: Toward Nuclear Abolition*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2003, p.176.

<sup>2</sup> John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, Santa Barbara, CA, at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=42614&st=&st1> , Accessed 19 February 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Among the important works of Reagan historiography that either ignore the Nuclear Freeze Movement or discuss it in only a cursory manner include: Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*, Public Affairs, New York, 2000; James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, Viking, New York, 2009; Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*, Harper, New York, 2008; John Patrick Diggins, *Ronald Reagan: Fate, Freedom, and the Making of History*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2007; Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000; Don Oberdorfer, *From the Cold War to a New Era: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1983-1991*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1998; Richard Reeves, *President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> David Cortright, *Peace Works*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1993; Helen Caldicott, *Missile Envy: The Arms Race and Nuclear War*, Bantam Books, New York, 1986; Randall Forsberg,

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*Nonproliferation Primer*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1995; *Peace Action: Past, Present, and Future*, Glen Harold Stassen and Lawrence Wittner (eds), Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2007; While Wittner supported the Nuclear Freeze, his work *The Struggle Against the Bomb, Vol. 3: Toward Nuclear Abolition* treats the various sides of the nuclear weapons debate in a comprehensive and fair manner; See also Lawrence Wittner, 'Peace Movements and Foreign Policy: The Challenge to Diplomatic Historians', *Diplomatic History*, 11, Fall 1987, pp. 355-370.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *Struggles Against the Bomb*, p. 446.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries: Volume 1, January 1981-October 1985*, Douglas Brinkley (ed.), Harper Collins, New York, 2009, p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Lettow, *Ronald Reagan and His Quest to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, Random House, New York, 2005, pp. 1-7, 192-196.

<sup>8</sup> Ronald Reagan, *An American Life*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1990, pp. 257-258, 267-268, 294-295.

<sup>9</sup> Lou Cannon, *President Reagan*, pp. 260-261; Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp. 177-178; Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries: Volume I*, p. 273.

<sup>10</sup> Works that discuss the growing nuclear fear during the early 1980s include: Spencer Weart, *Nuclear Fear A History Of Images*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1988; Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*; J. Michael Hogan, *The Nuclear Freeze Campaign: Rhetoric and Foreign Policy in the Telepolitical Age*, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, MI, 1994; Simon Dalby, *Creating the Second Cold War: The Discourse of Politics*, Guilford Press, New York, 1990.

<sup>11</sup> *The CBS Evening News with Dan Rather*, 5:36:20 pm 6 March 1984, Vanderbilt Television News Archive, Nashville, TN.

<sup>12</sup> During the political debates among conservatives and Republicans in the 1980s, those who favored confrontational rhetoric and massive defense spending increases were known as 'hawks', while those who favored diplomatic language and moderate defense spending increases were known as 'pragmatists'.

<sup>13</sup> Reagan makes no mention of the ever present anti-nuclear protestors in his diary during his June 1982 trip to Western Europe. For that matter, Reagan did not mention the massive Ground Zero Week protest in New York City on 12 June 1982, instead finding room to mention that day he had seen 'the world's worst movie called "Heath."' Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries, Volume 1*, pp. 135-136. For an example of the protests during Reagan's European trips, see '200,000 Are Drawn to a Bonn Protest', *New York Times*, 11 June 1982.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, pp. 1-21.

<sup>15</sup> Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson, (eds), *Reagan, In His Own Hand*, The Free Press, New York, 2001, p. 102.

<sup>16</sup> Strobe Talbott, *Endgame*, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1980, pp. 24, 31, 60, 149-150, 158-161, 286-287; Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb Vol. 3*, pp. 65-67, 83-85; for a broader interpretation of Carter's foreign policy, including the decision to place Euromissiles in Western Europe, see Norman A. Graebner, Richard Dean Burris, and Joseph M. Siracusa, *America and the Cold War, 1941-1991*, Praeger, Denver, CO, 2010, pp. 419-420.

<sup>17</sup> John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, Santa Barbara, CA at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=44101>, Accessed 19 February 2011.

<sup>18</sup> John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*.

<sup>19</sup> 'Weinberger Seeks to Assure Allies On Reagan Remark On Atom War', *New York Times*, 21 October 1981.

<sup>20</sup> Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson (eds.), *Reagan, In His Own Hand*, pp. 26-178.

<sup>21</sup> Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson (eds.), *Reagan, In His Own Hand*, p. 118.

<sup>22</sup> Lester Thurow, 'Beware of Reagan's Military Spending', *New York Times*, 31 May 1981, p. F3. This increase in defense spending was based on the premise that the economy would grow up at least 4.4% per year.

<sup>23</sup> 'Remarks Of The President To A Joint Session Of The Oklahoma State Legislature', Nuclear Freeze: Edwin Meese Files, 16 March 1982, box 1; 'Statement By The Principal Deputy Press

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Secretary', Nuclear Freeze/Reduction: Public Affairs, White House Office and Records, 16 March 1982, box 5. Ronald Reagan Presidential Library (RRPL).

<sup>24</sup> Bernard Gwertzman, 'President Rejects A Nuclear Freeze But Calls For Cuts', *New York Times*, 1 April 1982, p. A22.

<sup>25</sup> The true position was that the Soviet Union possessed a decided advantage in land-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, while the United States had the advantage in nuclear weaponry at sea and in the air.

<sup>26</sup> Lou Cannon, *President Reagan*, pp. 232-233.

<sup>27</sup> 'Civilian Unemployment Rate, U.S. Department of Labor Statistics at <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:s44v1Lh2IVQJ:research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/data/UNRATE.txt+unemployment+rate+in+1980&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us&client=safari>, Accessed 19 February, 2011

<sup>28</sup> Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, p. 187.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, pp. 170-172.

<sup>31</sup> Dick Davies, 'Arms-Freeze Votes Lift Hopes in State', *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 1981, Section 11, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Dick Davies, 'Arms-Freeze Votes Lift Hopes in State', p. 1

<sup>33</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, pp. 130-201.

<sup>34</sup> Judith Miller, 'Effort to 'Freeze' Nuclear Arsenals Spreads in U.S.', *New York Times*, 15 March 1982, p. B-12; Nathaniel Shepherd Jr., 'Center for Nuclear Freeze Set Up in St. Louis', *New York Times*, 23 March 1982, p. A-19.

<sup>35</sup> Judith Miller, 'Effort to 'Freeze' Nuclear Arsenals Spreads in U.S.', p. B-12

<sup>36</sup> Judith Miller, 'Effort to 'Freeze' Nuclear Arsenals Spreads in U.S.', p. B-12

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence Wittner, *The Struggle Against the Bomb*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>38</sup> Nathaniel Sheppard Jr., 'European Atomic Arms Foes Tour U.S.', *New York Times*, 3 April 1982, Section 1, p. 8; Judith Miller, 'Anti-Nuclear Groups Forging Tentative Links', *New York Times*, 9 April 1982, p. A-5.

<sup>39</sup> Serge Schmemmann, 'Soviet Announces Freeze On Missiles In European Area', *New York Times*, 17 March 1982, p. A-6.

<sup>40</sup> An influential strain of thought originating with neoconservative advisors in the Reagan administration argued that not only could the Soviets not be trusted to implement a freeze or any other form of arms control, but that Moscow was heading past parity into nuclear superiority and actively planning to fight a limited nuclear war. See Richard Pipes, *Vixi*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2003, pp. 142-143. For a neoconservative critique of arms control by a participant in the negotiations, see Kenneth Adelman, *The Great Universal Embrace*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1989.

<sup>41</sup> Lou Cannon, *President Reagan*, pp. 260-261.

<sup>42</sup> Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp.270-274; Paul Nitze, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost*, Grove Weidenfeld, New York, 1989, pp. 373-389; George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1993, p. 120; Shultz's predecessor, Alexander Haig, opposed Nitze's compromise, which is perhaps why the 'Walk in the Woods' took place the month after Haig resigned: Alexander Haig, *Caveat*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1984, p. 232.

<sup>43</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark', 22 April 1982, *David Gergen Files*, Box 4 OA 10542, 'The Day After', RRPL. Emphasis in original.

<sup>44</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

<sup>45</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

<sup>46</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

<sup>47</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

<sup>48</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

<sup>49</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

<sup>50</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

<sup>51</sup> 'Memorandum for Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, Michael Deaver from William P. Clark'.

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- <sup>52</sup> 'Memorandum for William P. Clark From James A. Baker III', 28 April 1982, Elizabeth Dole Files, Series I: Subject Files, 1981-1989, Box 24, OA6390, RRPL.
- <sup>53</sup> 'Memorandum for William P. Clark From James A. Baker III'.
- <sup>54</sup> 'Proposed Administration response to the Nuclear Freeze/Anti-Defense Movement', Letter from John Kwapisz to Edwin Meese 30 April 1982, Elizabeth Dole Files: Nuclear Freeze, July-December 1982, folder 2, RRPL. Kwapisz is referring to Ground Zero Week, a nonpartisan national collaboration between peace groups of teach-ins and demonstrations that reached over one million people.
- <sup>55</sup> 'Proposed Administration response to the Nuclear Freeze/Anti-Defense Movement', Letter from John Kwapisz to Edwin Meese.
- <sup>56</sup> 'Proposed Administration response to the Nuclear Freeze/Anti-Defense Movement', Letter from John Kwapisz to Edwin Meese.
- <sup>57</sup> 'Proposed Administration response to the Nuclear Freeze/Anti-Defense Movement', Letter from John Kwapisz to Edwin Meese.
- <sup>58</sup> 'A proposed Administration response to the "peace movement"', Memorandum from John Kwapisz to Ronald Reagan. Elizabeth Dole Files: Nuclear Freeze (January-June, 1982), folder 2, RRPL.
- <sup>59</sup> 'A proposed Administration response to the "peace movement"', Memorandum from John Kwapisz to Ronald Reagan.
- <sup>60</sup> 'Poll Results', Elizabeth Dole Files: Nuclear Freeze (January-June, 1982), Series I, RRPL.
- <sup>61</sup> 'Memorandum for Red Cavaney from Dee Jepsen', Elizabeth Dole Files: Nuclear Freeze, July-December 1982, folder 1, 16 November 1982. RRPL.
- <sup>62</sup> 'Memorandum for James A. Baker, III from Elizabeth H. Dole', Elizabeth Dole Files: Nuclear Freeze, (July-December 1982), folder 1, 23 November 1982. RRPL.
- <sup>63</sup> 'Memorandum for James A. Baker, III from Elizabeth H. Dole'.
- <sup>64</sup> 'Memorandum: Catholic Bishops Nuclear Freeze Initiative', Morton Blackwell Files: Nuclear Freeze, 14 December 1982, folder 4, RRPL.
- <sup>65</sup> Therefore, the administration considered moving away from confrontation over the Freeze and toward agreements on the abortion issue. Factions within the administration suggested that they 'take the offensive away from them [the Catholic Bishops] on the [nuclear] issue, with the abortion question'. Administration insiders deemed abortion a 'public relations goldmine' that would divide the bishops over whether the Freeze or Abortion was the most important issue for the church. 'Memorandum: Catholic Bishops Nuclear Freeze Initiative', Morton Blackwell Files: Nuclear Freeze, 14 December 1982, folder 4, RRPL.
- <sup>66</sup> 'Memorandum: Catholic Bishops Nuclear Freeze Initiative'.
- <sup>67</sup> 'Memorandum: Catholic Bishops Nuclear Freeze Initiative'.
- <sup>68</sup> Marjorie Hyer, 'Poll Shows Evangelicals Support Nuclear Freeze', *Washington Post*, 8 July 1983, p. A-5.
- <sup>69</sup> 'Memorandum For Robert C. McFarlane From: Red Cavaney', Elizabeth Dole Files: Nuclear Freeze, January-June 1982, box 24, 30 April 1982, RRPL.
- <sup>70</sup> 'Memorandum For Michael Deaver From: Red Cavaney', Elizabeth Dole Files: Nuclear Freeze, January-June 1982, box 24, 16 April 1982, RRPL.
- <sup>71</sup> 'Memorandum For Michael Deaver From: Red Cavaney'.
- <sup>72</sup> 'Memorandum For Michael Deaver From: Red Cavaney'.
- <sup>73</sup> 'Memorandum For Michael Deaver From: Red Cavaney'.
- <sup>74</sup> 'Memorandum For Michael Deaver From: Red Cavaney'.
- <sup>75</sup> 'Memorandum For Michael Deaver From: Red Cavaney'.
- <sup>76</sup> Leslie Maitland, 'Sources Are Cited for Charge Of Soviet Tie to Arms Freeze', *New York Times*, 13 November 1982, Section 1, p. 7.
- <sup>77</sup> John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project*, Santa Barbara, CA, at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=41985&st=&st1=>, Accessed 21 February 2011.
- <sup>78</sup> Judith Miller, 'President Says Freeze Proponents May Unwittingly Aid the Russians,' *New York Times*, 11 December 1982, Section 1, p. 9.
- <sup>79</sup> 'President Says Freeze Proponents May Unwittingly Aid the Russians', p. 9.
- <sup>80</sup> Leslie Maitland, 'F.B.I. Rules Out Russian Control Of Freeze Drive', *New York Times*, 26 March 1983, Section 1, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> Bernard Gwertzman, 'Reagan Intensifies Drive To Promote Policies In Europe,' *New York Times*, 20 January 1983, p. A-1.

<sup>82</sup> Leslie H. Gelb, 'Aides Say Reagan Is Ready To Offer Arms Compromise', *New York Times*, 23 March 1983, p. A-1.

<sup>83</sup> Frances FitzGerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, pp. 203-204, 403.



**ERAS**

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Jon Peterson, 'Peace Through Strength or Strength Through Peace? The Reagan Administration and the Nuclear Freeze Movement in 1982', *Eras*, Edition 12, Issue 2, March 2011, pp. 1-32

The "Nuclear Freeze Movement," as it became known, railed against Reagan's defense buildup, the largest in America's peacetime history. What Reagan saw as a way to force the Soviet Union to the bargaining table—a strategy sometimes called "Peace through Strength"—critics viewed as a reckless gamble that might lead to war. Controversial as it was, his gamble worked, in no small part because the underlying goal—to eliminate all nuclear weapons—resonated with Gorbachev's own thinking. Youthful and energetic, Gorbachev had come to power in 1985 determined to modernize his country, especially the s