

# A Legacy of Reykjavik: Negotiating with Enemies

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THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING between the United States and the Soviet Union at Reykjavik exactly twenty years ago provided many lessons in arms control and diplomacy. Not all the circumstances with which President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev dealt continue to be relevant. Some opportunities were lost forever. But among the lessons that are of continuing value is the determination of both leaders to engage each other despite the differences between their countries and the manner in which each dealt with the challenge of negotiating with a state that was his country's main competitor if not outright enemy.

The United States currently refuses to deal, or has conditioned or drastically limited its dealings, with states it regards as irresponsible or potential enemies. At least two of those states—Iran and North Korea—are behaving in ways that gravely threaten international peace and security due to their possible development and use of nuclear weapons. Other states with which the United States has severely restricted dip-

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lomatic negotiations are also engaged in activities that threaten U.S. interests.

It is worthwhile, therefore, to ask how President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev managed to get to Reykjavik and beyond, despite the serious differences between their governments, reflected by direct and indirect hostility in several places, active programs of espionage, economic sanctions, and political ideologies that called for the destruction of each other's influence and power. We should then consider how their approach differs from the policies applied by the United States in curtailing diplomatic engagement with its current political enemies.

### **The Prerequisites of U.S./Soviet Engagement**

The meeting at Reykjavik did not develop out of thin air. It was preceded by four years of conflict among Reagan's advisers over how the U.S. government should deal with the Soviet Union. All of Reagan's principal aides shared his view that the Soviet Union was, as he famously put it, an "evil empire" based on oppression and actively attempting to spread socialism and overthrow democracies through terrorism and illegal interventions.<sup>1</sup> All supported his vision that the Soviet system should be consigned to the ash heap of human history. And all supported the Reagan doctrine that asserted the right to respond reciprocally to Soviet measures based on the Brezhnev doctrine by arming and assisting governments and political groups the Soviets tried to undermine or oppress.

The major difference among Reagan's advisers was whether, during this ongoing effort and as part of it, the administration should engage the Soviets diplomatically. Those

1. George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph* (New York: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 266–67. He used the phrase in a speech to the National Association of Evangelicals, in Orlando, Florida, on March 8, 1985.

who opposed engagement with the Soviets saw it as a continuation of the policy of *détente* under Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter, which sought a world in which the Americans and the Soviets treated each other as equals, minimized hostility, and maximized stability in their relations. As implemented, however, especially under Carter, this policy meant a decline in U.S. influence and a growth in Soviet aggression, most dramatically evidenced by the invasion of Afghanistan. It also meant downplaying American values to avoid offending the Soviets, as in Carter's failure to invite Alexander Solzhenitsyn to the White House. Many Reagan advisers believed that the Soviets had exploited *détente* to expand their influence and power, and that confrontation, not negotiation, was the best policy for weakening the Soviets and bringing about an end to that regime. They felt, in fact, that negotiation was most likely to give the Soviets advantages with little, if any, benefit to the United States and the free world. Soviet diplomacy was built on an ideology that viewed international law as a fraudulent, capitalist system that should be exploited through cheating and manipulation. U.S. and other Western diplomats—ever eager to make agreements—were also therefore a danger because they could not be trusted to realize that the benefits of any bargain with the Soviets depended on performance, which would not be forthcoming.

Those who supported engagement with the Soviets, led by Secretary of State George Shultz, believed that although the United States should persist in confronting the Soviets on every aspect of their improper behavior, the president should test the possibility that the Soviets might be prepared to respond on issues of interest to the United States. They wanted to see if the pressures on the Soviets that they supported were having an impact that could be exploited. President Reagan eventually backed Shultz's approach. He had from his first inaugural ad-

dress promised to negotiate for peace (“We’ll negotiate for it, sacrifice for it”), and he began to do so after rebuilding U.S. defenses and confronting Soviet aggression. That the Soviets cheated and lied was a given to Reagan and Shultz; but they were confident in their capacity to insist on agreements that served U.S. interests and could be verified.

This dual-track policy of pressure and persuasion differed from a full-fledged policy of *détente*. But it did require the administration to function on the basis of three fundamental principles that were anathema to many Cold Warriors: concepts I refer to here as *regime acceptance*, *limited linkage*, and *rhetorical restraint*.

The notion of *regime acceptance* meant to those seeking engagement that the United States would make no effort to overthrow or undermine the Soviet system through an attack or by providing material support to groups seeking such ends. Acceptance also implied that the U.S. government would seek to improve relations with the Soviet regime regardless of their differences. No one in any position of influence in the administration supported active efforts to overthrow the Soviet Union. But many opposed regime acceptance insofar as it could lead to accommodation or *détente*. They did not want to expand relations with the Soviets or to encourage cultural exchange or increased diplomatic and citizen relations. They preferred a policy of containment, keeping the Soviet Union at bay until it was unable to continue to compete. Secretary Shultz, on the other hand, convinced President Reagan to move beyond both containment and *détente*. He sought to focus and advance U.S. objectives by increasing diplomatic contacts at all levels, cultural and commercial contacts, and diplomatic engagement on the full range of issues. He believed these measures of acceptance would lead to increased diplomatic

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effectiveness if and when the Soviets were ready to move on issues of U.S. concern.

The policy of *limited linkage* was the most controversial of the changes in diplomatic policy adopted by President Reagan to enable his administration to engage the Soviets effectively. The Soviets regularly provided reasons for the United States to cite as a basis for refusing to negotiate arms reductions or anything else the Soviets wanted to achieve. Several of Reagan's principal advisers and many National Security Council specialists cited (among other things) Soviet human rights violations, foreign interventions, espionage activities, support for terrorism, and occasional acts of brutality, such as the shoot-down of the Korean civilian airliner, as conduct the United States should insist must be stopped before agreeing to engage the Soviets on issues they were prepared to discuss. Secretary Shultz realized that this policy effectively prevented the United States from engaging the Soviets on issues it wished to address. He went public with the idea of limiting linkage on June 15, 1983, in testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, drafted with Jack Matlock's substantial involvement and delivered with President Reagan's approval. Shultz agreed with the Soviet skeptics that neither *détente* nor increased diplomatic engagement would improve Soviet behavior. He anticipated that the Soviets would behave badly in one area or another regardless of progress in the overall relationship or on specific issues. But he felt that improper Soviet conduct in each area of its activities must be met with U.S. opposition and pressure in those specific areas and not through a refusal to engage on all other issues, including those on which the United States itself wanted to engage. "Linkage," he concluded, "was inhibiting our disposition to move forcefully and, ironically, often seemed to be turned on its head by the Soviets . . . to threaten

that the relationship would suffer if we undertook some action that they opposed.”<sup>2</sup>

The notion of *rhetorical restraint* was less a matter of principle than of practice. The Soviets had come to expect (as we had) a continuing stream of political rhetoric criticizing their actions and claiming credit for every step the Soviets took that was consistent with U.S. aims. As a result, the Soviet leadership paid a price domestically and internationally every time U.S. officials claimed credit for a Soviet move in a direction the United States had advocated. Some Reagan administration officials saw this result as highly desirable because all Soviet leaders were by definition illegitimate, because none of them deserved credit for changing policies that should not have been adopted to begin with, and because the less stability such leaders had, the more likely the entire regime would be undermined.

Reagan is not remembered for restrained rhetoric. But very early on, he realized, along with Shultz, that embarrassing Soviet leaders when they responded positively to U.S. initiatives did not work. So, in urging Ambassador Anatolii Dobrynin at a private meeting on February 15, 1983, to be more responsive on human rights issues and in particular to help resolve the problem of the Pentecostals, some of whom had taken refuge in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, President Reagan promised that if something positive were done, the United States would not “crow.” The Soviets responded positively to the promise of rhetorical restraint on such issues. Dobrynin told Shultz after his meeting with Reagan that the “special subject” of the Pentecostals should be handled “privately,” and the governments managed to bring an end to the issue by July of that year.<sup>3</sup>

2. *Ibid.*, p. 278.

3. *Ibid.*, pp.169–171.

President Reagan concluded it was more important to make progress on issues of concern to the United States than to make points at the expense of political opponents prepared to take the risk of compromise and accommodation.

The Reagan administration policy of confronting the Soviets, not any negotiating techniques, created the incentive for the Soviets to negotiate arms reductions. But effective diplomacy, conducted consistently with the principles of regime acceptance, limited linkage, and rhetorical restraint, made negotiations possible on a broader range of issues than would have otherwise been possible and with higher prospects of success. The increased trust that Gorbachev and Andrei Shevardnadze developed for Reagan and Shultz was based not on any belief that the U.S. administration had gone soft on its principles or objectives, but on confidence that no effort would be made to challenge the legal legitimacy of the Soviet regime, that both sides would avoid linking their many differences, and that Soviet leaders would not be publicly embarrassed when they took actions favored by the United States. Adherence to the combination of confrontation and effective diplomacy led, by October 1986, to the meeting at Reykjavik that enabled the leaders of both powers to discuss the most critical issues facing mankind in a direct, informal setting.

### **Diplomacy and the Reykjavik Record**

The negotiating record at Reykjavik establishes that President Reagan was able to resist accepting an agreement with some results he very much wanted as the price for what he believed effective security required. He wanted to eliminate nuclear weapons through disarmament, insisting that the doctrine of mutual assured destruction was immoral. He believed that missile defense made the elimination of nuclear weapons possible by giving states the ability to defend against cheaters and

madmen who might violate an agreed ban, and offered to share U.S. missile defense technology so that no state would have the advantage of such methods. By the end of the meeting, Reagan and Gorbachev had agreed on all the main issues and to the general objective of abolishing all nuclear weapons within ten years. But Gorbachev insisted on a package deal, in which the reductions would be agreed only if during that period the United States limited its antiballistic missile activities to laboratory research. Reagan refused to accept this deal despite his keen desire to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons.

The negotiating record at Reykjavik also makes clear how Reagan, and Gorbachev, adhered to and applied the three negotiating principles of regime acceptance, limited linkage, and rhetorical restraint. This is important to observe, not merely to confirm their commitment to these principles that enabled them to reach so pivotal a negotiation, but also to see that these concepts had important limits.

The premise of regime acceptance was evident at Reykjavik in several ways. As a matter of general tone, the notion of sovereign equality often surfaced. President Reagan, for example, described the meeting's objectives as being shared equally: "Both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. would like to see a world without nuclear missiles,"<sup>4</sup> and the Soviets insisted at several points on "equality and equal security."<sup>5</sup> The notion of equal or reciprocal treatment is an inevitable aspect of sovereign negotiations, and regime acceptance requires a willingness to entertain and deal seriously with such claims.

4. Memorandum of Conversation, 10:40 am–12:30 pm, Oct. 11, 1986, p. 2 (U.S. Dept. of State).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 4. Gorbachev used this phrase in stating that "the Soviet side was in favor of proposals which were aimed at total elimination of nuclear arms, and on the way to this goal there should be equality and equal security for the Soviet Union and the United States. Any other approach would not be acceptable."

The most explicit exchange reflecting both acceptance and limitations of the concept of regime acceptance took place on October 12, 1986, after discussions had created a high degree of frustration on both sides over defensive systems and testing. When Secretary Gorbachev argued for restrictions on missile defense in order to prevent evasion, the president said Gorbachev's remarks reflected a belief that the United States was in some way trying to attain an advantage out of hostility toward the Soviet Union. He assured Gorbachev that we harbored no hostile intentions toward the Soviets. We recognized the differences in our two systems. But . . . we could live as friendly competitors.

Reagan's acceptance of the Soviet regime did not, however, mean that he would accept the notion that the United States was no less trustworthy than the Soviet Union. "Each side mistrusted the other," he said, but with regard to trustworthiness "the evidence was all on our side." In fact, the president continued, Marx (and thereafter Lenin) "expressed the view that socialism had to be global in scope to succeed," and "every Soviet leader but Gorbachev—at least so far—has endorsed in speeches to Soviet Communist Party congresses the objective of establishing a world communist state."<sup>6</sup> He reminded Gorbachev that when the United States had been the sole nuclear weapons power after World War II, it had offered to eliminate all such weapons, but the Soviets had refused. All of which went to prove, he asserted, that Soviet "behavior reveals a belief on the Soviets' part in a worldwide mission which gives us legitimate grounds to suspect Soviet motives," while "the Soviets had no grounds for believing that the United States wanted war."<sup>7</sup>

6. MOC, 10:00 am–1:35 pm, Oct. 12, 1986, p. 13.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

Gorbachev did not flinch at this assault and, in fact, opened with a warning premised on his distrust of the United States. “History is full of examples of those who have sought to overcome their [Marx’s and Lenin’s] philosophy by force,” he said. “All have failed.” He advised the president “not to waste time and energy to such an end.” Like Reagan, he, too, felt free, despite acceptance of the U.S. regime, to vigorously criticize the U.S. system and Reagan’s own ideology. Treating Reagan’s remarks as an “invitation,” Gorbachev felt “obliged to say that the Soviet Union recognizes the right of the U.S. people to their own values, beliefs, society,” and the right “to conduct their affairs as they see fit.” He said he was surprised, therefore, to learn that President Reagan had recently reaffirmed his belief that the Soviet Union was an “evil empire,” which he had originally announced with a call for “a crusade against socialism in order to relegate it to the ash heap of history.”

“What would the outcome be,” Gorbachev asked, “if the United States sought to act according to these principles? Would we fight one another?”

Reagan made no effort to deny holding these views, but simply reminded Gorbachev that while the United States allows free debate, including a Communist Party, only one party existed in the Soviet Union, and the Soviets “enforced rather than persuaded.” A “fundamental difference” existed between the two societies, said Reagan, in that “the United States believes that people should have the right to determine their own form of government.”<sup>8</sup> Gorbachev, no doubt eager to get back to the issues, repeated the basic principle that regardless of the fundamental differences that existed between them, each society had the right to organize itself as it saw fit, and their leaders should be able to work together as people. The Memorandum of Conversation summarized this issue as follows:

8. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[T]he President's remarks showed that they differed fundamentally in their basic conceptions of the world. But the two leaders seemed to agree that each side had the right to organize its society according to its own philosophical or religious beliefs. This was an issue which the two might come back to at another time. Gorbachev had no desire to quarrel. He was convinced, (in fact, that, while he and the President might have different characters and conceptions, a man-to-man relationship between them was possible.<sup>9</sup>

This makes clear that Reagan was willing to accept the Soviet Union as a sovereign state entitled to its form of government and that he hoped to negotiate constructively and on an equal basis with its leaders. Like Gorbachev, he stressed the fact that the individuals in power mattered and could change the world through lasting agreements.<sup>10</sup> He had said in December 1985, after meeting Gorbachev in Geneva, that he agreed with Margaret Thatcher's statement, "We can do business with this man."<sup>11</sup> But Reagan did not regard the principle of regime acceptance as precluding him from stating his view that the Soviet Union lacked political and moral legitimacy compared with the free and rational society that existed in the United States. Reagan was similarly dismissive when Gorbachev later attempted to equate aspects of the two soci-

9. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

10. For example, he appealed to Gorbachev personally at several points, especially in urging him to accept a shared missile defense system: "He asked Gorbachev to think about us two standing there and telling the world that we have this thing, and asking others to join us in getting rid of these terrible systems." MOC, 3:30–5:40 pm, Oct. 11, 1986, p. 15. Gorbachev appealed to Reagan on a personal basis as well, telling him he would be a "great president" if he were to agree to Gorbachev's demand related to defensive systems. MOC, 5:25–6:00 pm, Oct. 12, 1986, p. 12.

11. Max Kampelman, "Bombs Away," Op-ed, *New York Times* (April 24, 2006).

eties in various ways, claiming, for example, that the Soviets would stop jamming the Voice of America if given the ability to broadcast to Americans.<sup>12</sup> Gorbachev was annoyed by Reagan's insistence that the United States was more humane and free—and therefore superior—to the Soviet system. But it was enough for him that Reagan accepted the principle that the Soviet government and its leadership represented a lawful regime with which the United States was prepared to have diplomatic dealings on issues of mutual concern.

Explicit evidence of U.S. adherence to the practices of limited linkage and rhetorical restraint came at the first meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev on October 11, 1986. Gorbachev proposed an agenda that would begin with discussion of arms reductions and shift later to regional, humanitarian, and other issues. Reagan agreed to the agenda, stressing that human rights needed to be discussed, not because the parties were to sign any agreement on the subject, but because Soviet behavior affected public opinion, and public opinion affected the degree to which the United States could work with the Soviet side. Reagan's purpose here was to make clear that Soviet concessions on human rights issues made progress on arms reduction easier to achieve politically, but that the United States would not formally link the two areas and would not use human rights progress as a basis for concessions on strategic issues. The United States would not advance such issues as demands, Reagan said, and "would never take credit for this,"<sup>13</sup> thereby assuring Gorbachev that no triumphal statements would follow Soviet humanitarian acts. During the morning meeting on October 12, when the leaders agreed briefly to discuss humanitarian issues, Reagan repeated these

12. MOC, 10:00 am–1:35 pm, Oct. 12, 1986, pp. 18–19.

13. MOC, 10:40 am–12:50 pm, Oct. 11, 1986, p. 2.

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points, making very clear that the United States would not resort to public pressure by linking these issues and would not exploit any concessions. This is summarized in the Memorandum of Conversation as follows:

The President . . . had no intention of saying publicly that he had demanded anything from Gorbachev in terms of such issues as family reunification and religious persecution. But he did want to urge Gorbachev to move forward in this area, since it was a major factor domestically in limiting how far the President could go in cooperation with the Soviet Union. . . . We would continue to provide lists of people we had reason to believe wanted to depart. And if the Soviets loosened up, we would not exploit it. We would simply express our appreciation.<sup>14</sup>

The results of the principled and disciplined manner in which the United States pursued its objectives with the Soviet Union, at Reykjavik and thereafter, were impressive. Despite their failure to agree on a comprehensive package at Reykjavik, a year later President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev signed a treaty eliminating intermediate-range missiles. Negotiations continued on the same basis under President George H. W. Bush, who completed the START I Treaty in 1991; under President Bill Clinton, who completed START II in 1993 and sought a START III treaty with deeper reductions; and under President George W. Bush, who signed the 2002 Moscow Treaty establishing ceilings of 1,700 to 2,200 operationally deployed warheads for each state, down from more than 10,000 each in 1986. The Nunn-Lugar Threat Reduction program has dismantled and destroyed or secured nuclear ma-

14. MOC, 10:00 am-1:35 pm, Oct. 12, 1986, p. 18.

terials; the major restraint on progress in this effort has been funds, not any failure of the parties to implement their understandings.

Future progress in achieving disarmament and international security, especially with regard to nuclear weapons and missiles, will be far more complicated even than the situation Reagan and Gorbachev faced in 1986. To what extent does the United States currently apply the negotiating legacy of Reykjavik in dealing with actual or potential enemies, that is, firm pressure on all issues, along with diplomacy based on the principles of regime acceptance, limited linkage, and restrained rhetoric? And to what extent should this legacy be followed in dealing with current threats?

### **The Reykjavik Legacy and Current Negotiating Policies**

We cannot equate the states to which the United States currently limits its negotiating efforts or the problems such efforts pose, with the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and the issues he and Reagan addressed. Nonetheless, it is a fact that the United States does not currently conduct its relations with governments whose policies it strongly disapproves on the basis of regime acceptance, limited linkage, or rhetorical restraint.

In recent years, it has become commonplace for the U.S. government to declare—sometimes with the explicit support of Congress—that a given regime is unacceptable and must be replaced. In some instances, Congress has provided funds for the specific purpose of supporting regime change in particular states. This approach appears to be the product of frustration in dealing with complex and difficult problems, rather than of any empirical evidence that the policy of regime change is so often successful that it should become a regular method for dealing with enemies or opponents. In fact, none of the regimes that the United States has insisted should be “changed”

has failed to outlast all the U.S. regimes that have indulged in this policy, except the two that were removed by force (Sadaam Hussein in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan). The change in Libya's policies, though not its regime, is often cited as evidence that a tough, no-talk line can produce results. But the historical record is clear that negotiations with Libya, led by the British, Saudis, and others, prepared the ground for Qadhafi's change of course; and he, too, was ultimately affected far more by multilateral sanctions and the use of force in Iraq than by our refusal to engage him diplomatically.

It should hardly be surprising that regime change is a policy calculated to prevent diplomatic engagement. Whether explicit or implicit, calls for regime change and actual support of activities intended to bring down a particular regime are a threat to the parties and people in power in the states involved. Warnings that the United States seeks regime change tend to strongly convey the threat that force may someday be used. For example, Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill recently said that the North Korean regime can "have a future or nuclear weapons, but not both,"<sup>15</sup> and declared on October 4, 2006, that "we are not going to live with a nuclear North Korea."<sup>16</sup> These statements—and many similar ones issued with regard to Iran and other states—are understood by these states as a warning that the United States will at some point insist on and enforce its desired outcome, without negotiating in order to make that outcome a reality. If it were clear that this form of negotiation is in fact likely to be followed by the use of force if necessary,

15. Christopher Hill, "Inaugural Address of the U.S.-Korea Institute" (The Johns Hopkins Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C., October 4, 2006).

16. David E. Sanger, "U.S. Weighs Sanctions Against North Korea," *New York Times* (October 6, 2006), <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/06/world/asia/06nuke.html> (accessed October 9, 2006).

the technique would have credibility despite the resentment it appears to provoke. But the well-known costs, to the United States, South and North Korea, and other states that could be affected by a military effort to end this threat, and the limited appetite that now exists in Congress and among the American people for such a venture have caused some observers—and perhaps even the states to which such threats are directed—to view such statements as posturing in the hope that the regimes involved will change course due to pressures and considerations brought to bear by activities other than bilateral negotiations. Forcing Iran to comply with U.S. demands is, if anything, likely to be even more costly and less likely to succeed than doing so with North Korea.

Simultaneously with issuing frequent calls for regime change, the United States has recently used linkage liberally as a basis for refusing to negotiate. In rejecting North Korea's offer of talks in November 2002, the administration's spokesman said: "It's not a question of talking. It's a question of action."<sup>17</sup> This echoes Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent statement explaining why talks with Syria were unnecessary: "Syria knows what it has to do."<sup>18</sup> After years of refusing to participate in negotiations with Iran, the United States has agreed to do so, but only if Iran first suspends its uranium enrichment activities. The premise here appears to be that a refusal to negotiate is more likely to produce the desired behavior than negotiation. This may not be so. It is also argued that a particular negotiation would be futile or would harm either the prestige or interests of the United States

17. Quoted in Philip Shenon, "White House Rejects North Korean Offer for Talks," *New York Times* (Nov. 4, 2002), p. A10.

18. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice press conference remarks at the London Meeting on the Support of the Palestinian Authority, March 8, 2005; in "Syria Under Attack," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, no. 732 (March 5–9, 2005).

more than continued stalemate or the most harmful adverse outcome. These claims are often unfounded, ultimately because negotiations need not cost anything and because they can be arranged at levels or on terms that avoid embarrassment or harmful consequences.

Secretary of State Colin Powell's statement, "You can't eat plutonium,"<sup>19</sup> suggested that North Korea would ultimately get reasonable in order to get food; but the leadership there appears to be well enough fed to endure the hardships their powerless citizens are facing. Indeed, Powell's premise may be flawed, since President Kim Jong Il may have concluded that making plutonium and fashioning it into bombs is in fact his regime's best meal ticket and the most valuable thing he will ever have for sale. Syria may well have an analogous reaction to warnings that it will get no help in starting a negotiation with Israel to get back the Golan Heights until it stops supporting Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and Al Qaeda in Iraq. Syria may believe, however, after some forty years of failing to reacquire control of its sovereign lands, that only through disruptive conduct, and perhaps ultimately a war with Israel (as futile but as effective as Egypt's attack in 1973), will it succeed in this aim. One cannot know without engaging Syria on the issues what it actually thinks and how it would respond to effective diplomacy that presents it with a credible alternative to misconduct.

It is also clear that in dealing with current threats, the United States has escalated its rhetoric. Calling North Korea, Syria, and Iran an "axis of evil" is neither inaccurate nor inconsistent with successful diplomacy. Such statements are likely to offend, but do not necessarily prevent the United

19. Quoted in David E. Sanger, "Next Question: How to Stop Nuclear Blackmail," *New York Times* (Mar. 9, 2002), Week in Review, p. 1.

States from negotiating effectively if advanced as the U.S. view of certain conduct that it disapproves. In the context of a refusal to negotiate, such statements are more likely to be regarded as the warning of a determination to overthrow those regimes, just as the Axis Powers were overthrown, through any means, including force. Repeated, public announcements that the United States will not tolerate Iran having a nuclear weapon and that Iran must stop all enrichment activities or face an escalation of international pressure are forcing Iran into decisions that translate domestically and internationally into its having given in to or resisted, U.S. pressure. The United States is currently negotiating with North Korea and Iran through a process based wholly on public pronouncements, leaving direct negotiations to its allies and international officials. A routine has developed in which the United States announces what it expects to be achieved in a round of negotiations conducted by others, and the consequences it intends to pursue through the Security Council or otherwise if it considers the result of that round insufficient. Any decision by North Korea or Iran to move in a direction supported by the United States will, in this context, be seen as something the United States has accomplished through pressure. The dim prospects of success in such a negotiating context are heightened, moreover, by the fact that these open, ongoing confrontations are focused exclusively on the nuclear issue and therefore cannot benefit from agreements on unrelated, more tractable issues that are usually possible in normal negotiating contexts.

### **Conclusion**

The negotiating legacy of U.S.-Soviet arms control efforts, dramatically evidenced by the fact that the Reykjavik meeting occurred and by its significant and positive consequences, suggest that successful diplomacy with hostile governments

begins with determined pressure against their misconduct, unflinchingly applied. The pressures must be real, however, and their effects need to be exploited through engagement based on rules that permit U.S. efforts to succeed. It may be no coincidence that this administration, like President Reagan's, has had great successes in its diplomatic efforts when it has engaged directly and robustly, as with China, India, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere. The facts that the United States is able to act as an effective bridge between India and Pakistan and that it remains the most effective mediating force in the Middle East indicate that it is not for lack of skill or capacity that U.S. diplomacy with regard to hostile regimes has been relatively ineffective.

Where regime change is the only option and is feasible, the challenges that face the United States are to obtain international legitimacy for removing the regime involved and for doing so successfully. Where regime change is not the only option, however, then regime acceptance is the ticket of admission to the diplomatic process that must be undertaken. If, as with the Soviets, the regime involved is acting badly in several areas—supporting terrorism, for example, or assisting in the spread of nuclear weapons or missile technology—linking those subjects to a willingness to discuss issues the United States needs to discuss will make negotiations unlikely if not impossible. Linkage may in some instances succeed in achieving results, but it often prevents the United States from pursuing important objectives of its own. Finally, rhetoric has its place, especially to express the moral and political principles that underlie U.S. positions. But rhetoric is no substitute for real pressure, and it can make it more difficult for the United States to evoke desired conduct and is therefore ineffective diplomacy.