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Pravda told the truth: abm in the soviet press and us-russian relations, 1966-1972

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***PRAVDA TOLD THE TRUTH: ABM IN THE SOVIET PRESS AND US-RUSSIAN
RELATIONS, 1966-1972***

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 “US-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS, 1969-1972”	23
CHAPTER 2 “ <i>PRAVDA</i> TELLS THE TRUTH”	47
CONCLUSION.....	73
REFERENCES	76
ABSTRACT.....	81
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT	82

INTRODUCTION

Eighty thousand feet over the Kazakh steppe on March 4, 1961 two of the world's most advanced missiles collided in an explosion whose shockwaves opened a new chapter of the Cold War arms race. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics successfully tested the first hit-to-kill anti-ballistic missile system (ABM) on one of its own missiles.¹ The Soviet leadership had considered ABM systems since rockets had been in their earliest stages.² The poor state of rocket technology and the focus on World War II prevented any ABM development. The need for ABM and fear of rockets rose, however, after the development of offensive nuclear missiles. Soviet defense planners understood that nothing short of ABM systems would stop a US rocket assault. In the end, "the lobbying effort by the Soviet marshals coupled with support by key members of the Soviet military-industrial complex, and later by the majority of the Politburo, carried the day for missile defense."³ The successful test launched from Sary Shagan in 1961 convinced the Soviet leadership to expand the program. The USSR conducted the first successful test but it was not the only nation developing ABM systems. The development of defense by both sides triggered further tension and perpetuated the growing arms race.

The advent of anti-ballistic missile systems—weapon systems that can intercept enemy ballistic missiles during flight—brought the issue of strategic defensive weapon systems to the global stage. Both the United States and the USSR began to develop ABM systems by the middle of the 1960s. However, both governments soon realized the ABM's destabilizing nature and the great costs of production. ABM systems were the apex of each country's defense

¹ Thomas C. Reed and Danny B. Stillman, *The Nuclear Express: A Political History of the Bomb and Its Proliferation* (Minneapolis: Zenith Imprint, 2009).

² Victor Gobarev, "The Early Development of Russia's Ballistic Missile Defense System," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, vol. 2, issue 2, (2001) 29.

³ *Ibid.*, 32.

industry as they combined advanced radar systems with the best propulsion and guidance mechanisms available. The research and development of the weapon systems demanded immense monetary support for uncertain results. These defensive systems had the difficult task of, in essence, hitting a bullet with another bullet. Further, as the strategic offensive technology improved, contemporary observers doubted that the new ABM systems would work during an attack. Multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV) were capable of overwhelming ABM systems. The systems' projected monetary cost and efficacy were part of the public discourse in the United States and the Soviet Union.

During the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty negotiations from 1969-1972, Soviet officials discussed the ABM issue with their American counterparts. Their representation of the issue became a distinct narrative that officials perpetuated throughout negotiations. Soviet officials repeatedly covered internal US dissent, their Leninist Foreign Policy of peace, and their desire for an equal treaty. The themes of this diplomatic narrative appeared in the Soviet newspapers as well. Soviet officials created newspaper content through the course of their negotiations.

Pravda and *Izvestiia* mirrored Soviet officials' words when covering the ABM issue. The newspapers covered the Leninist Foreign Policy of Peace and denounced the destabilizing practices American ABM policy. The Soviet delegation consistently mentioned their Leninist Foreign Policy of Peace and criticized US military policy, using American newspapers to make their point. Soviet newspapers used American publications as well. The issues that Soviet officials raised were at times published by the newspapers shortly thereafter. When negotiations were showing promise, the newspapers toned down the rhetoric and focused on the positives of improved bilateral relations. After the two countries signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in

May 1972, the papers championed the treaty's equality—the very point which Soviet officials stressed above all others. In the case of ABM, one sees the direct influence that Soviet officials held over the newspapers.

My work will add to the current scholarship on Soviet foreign policy, the ABM issue, and the dichotomy between the propagandandistic Soviet position in the press and the private diplomatic position as expressed by Soviet officials in negotiations between the USA and the USSR. Analysis of Soviet newspaper coverage on ABM reveals a correlation between the language and methods of the public narrative and the diplomatic narrative. The presence of ideological language in private talks reflects the ideological influence in Soviet foreign policy. That presence, which supports an ideological interpretation of Soviet foreign polic, builds on prior scholarship.

I analyze declassified documents to show the presence of ideology in Soviet foreign policy and Soviet officials' control of their propaganda apparatuses. I use a joint publication of documents from the US State Department and the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation.⁴ The official transcripts of conversations between Soviet and American officials negotiating ABM reveal the ideology's strong presence. Soviet officials consistently mentioned their Leninist Foreign Policy and how it was necessary that they followed it. I analyze articles from *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* on the ABM and negotiations. These articles that were written before, during, and after negotiations mirrored Soviet officials' narrative. The press portrayed a United States that was divided with a government in the hands of the military-industrial complex; championed the Leninist Foreign Policy; and stated the treaty was a Soviet victory because of its

⁴ *Soviet-American Relations: The Détente Years, 1969-1972*, eds., Edward C. Keefer, et al. (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 2007).

equality for both sides. The newspapers' use of the Soviet diplomats' narrative reaffirms Soviet officials' control over their propaganda apparatuses. Further, the Soviet officials' ideologically driven narrative shows the presence of ideology in Soviet foreign policy.

National Interests and Ideological Inclinations: The Historiography of Soviet Foreign Policy

The Cold War affected the foreign policies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America more than any other political event in the twentieth-century. Moreover, the two nations' relationship affected events in nearly all countries around the globe. Their weapons of global destruction stayed silent, however, and the conflict shifted to proxy wars and diplomatic battles. The diplomatic relations between the US and the USSR had formed the foundation of the global political system since the end of World War II.

Historians ask broad questions that aim to deepen one's understanding of Soviet foreign policy. Can one look at Soviet actions as an extension of socialist ideology? What amount of weight did Soviet policy makers give to national interests? To what extent did personality affect Soviet policy? Because of the great impact that Soviet foreign policy had, an analysis of its decision making process and motives may help to fill any gaps in the narrative of the postwar conflict of the twentieth-century. Out of this analysis two distinct groups have emerged to answer these questions in opposing ways.

These two groups are realists and idealists respectively. Proponents of ideology argue that socialist ideology was the foundation of Soviet foreign policy. Viewed in this way, the Soviet state made its decisions with the destruction of imperialist capitalism and the spread of socialism in mind. Realists argue the opposite—that the Soviet government based its policy decisions on the best interests of the nation, irrespective of what ideology would dictate. For

example, Moscow pursued policies that did not fit within the philosophy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) but that would benefit its economic and military interests.

Proponents of realism and ideology differ in what they each hold to be the predominate rationale for policy decisions. Realists view ideology as merely an inheritance that played no role in foreign-policy decisions while proponents of ideology see it as the driving force. However, all realists emphasize national interests over ideology as the greatest influence over Soviet foreign policy. Proponents of realism argue that the national interests of the USSR, e.g., greater international influence or the avoidance of conflict, determined Moscow's foreign policy. Certain proponents of realism allow for a minimal ideological influence but by far they all contend that the national interests of the USSR came first when deciding foreign policy.

Realists show great continuity and build on their colleagues' prior work. Most realists established their thesis after détente with most works occurring after 1983. They agree that the period of peaceful relations violated an ideology that called for worldwide revolution. Several realists see the roots of Soviet policy in Imperial Russia such as the need for defense in depth and the influence of the military. Subsequent works build on this premise and realists have come to agree that the primary determinant for action in Soviet foreign policy was the perpetuation of the Communist Party's sovereignty over a vast state.

W.W. Kulski, a former writer for *Foreign Affairs*, argued in 1973 that Soviet leaders overlooked ideology in favor of national interests when deciding the nation's foreign policy towards the United States.⁵ He dilutes this by saying that ideology had its role, particularly in relation with other socialist state, but the Soviet leadership ultimately considered national

⁵ W. W. Kulski, *The Soviet Union in World Affairs: A Documented Analysis, 1964-1972* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1973).

interests paramount when making decisions.⁶ The key when looking at US-Soviet relations, Kulski argued, was the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) negotiations and the move towards peaceful coexistence. Moscow ignored Lenin's thesis that war with capitalism was inevitable when conducting foreign policy. Soviet leaders chose to relax tension with the other nuclear-armed superpower rather than act confrontationally. The addition of new destabilizing technology—multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRV) and ABM—gave greater impetus to establish a dialogue and reduce tensions. By defusing a potentially dangerous situation and managing the conflict rather than confronting it, Soviet policy makers sought the preservation of their territory over the spread of socialism. Kulski argued that the USSR chose peaceful coexistence over confronting capitalism.

Kulski's work offers a unique analysis of Soviet foreign policy. *The Soviet Union in World Affairs: A Documented Analysis 1964-1972* uses Soviet academic and political journals as its primary source base. He differed from his contemporaries because of his reliance on Soviet primary sources. Kulski contributes to the realist thesis by attacking Moscow's meekness and inconsistency in following its own ideological doctrine. The Soviet state apparatus that was built on and advocated for Marxism-Leninism and yet it overlooked one of Lenin's tenants regarding a socialist state's relations with the capitalist world. Kulski's literal analysis of Lenin's writings and how the state adhered to them in its foreign policy serve the realist thesis well on the grounds that Moscow simply overlooked their influence when deciding policy.

In 1984 Anders Stephanson argued that the Soviet government was only concerned "with its own perpetuation... [and] Soviet foreign policy [was] a matter of securing the welfare of a

⁶ Ibid., 265.

ruling class.”⁷ The situation facing the young Bolshevik regime prevented the global revolution that it predicted. It was weak both economically and militarily—it could not exert its will on any of the powerful Western democracies. As a result, Lenin decided to stand firm and prepare the country for the conflict that would still come. The influence of the revolution faded over time and with Joseph Stalin’s time in power. In the bipolar post war world the regime came to accept its political situation where any grand, overt expression of its ideological culmination would result in a very destructive war. Out of necessity to sustain its position in power and recognizing the military parity with the US, Moscow engaged in a foreign policy that aimed at managing the Cold War. Stephanson marks a turn in the realist thesis, focusing attention directly on the state’s perpetuation.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian historians Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov argued that ideology did not play a great role in Soviet foreign policy after Stalin and Vyacheslav Molotov.⁸ The legacy of Stalin and the tsarist empire loomed over the Soviet leadership’s actions in what the authors call the “revolutionary-imperial paradigm.”⁹ Tsarist expansionism joined with a determination for worldwide proletarian revolution to create this paradigm. As the Cold War wore on, the ideological component of the paradigm faded, and the Soviet government relied more on national interests to dictate its foreign policy. Zubok and Pleshakov saw the Cold War as having two distinct phases: a period of bipolar brinkmanship until 1962, followed by a period of truce from 1962 onward which their monograph does not cover. The Soviet Union did not need ideology when it was safe under the protection of its armada of offensive missiles. The Soviet state then longed for domestic tranquility because it no

⁷ Anders Stephanson, “On Soviet Foreign Policy,” *Social Text*, no. 8, Winter, (1983-1984), 36.

⁸ Constantine Pleshakov and Vladislav Zubok, *Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996) 109

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

longer had to fear foreign attack.¹⁰ The period of truce following the Cuban Missile Crisis shows that after having faced potential annihilation, Soviet leadership chose a pragmatic truce rather than confront potential war again.

Zubok and Pleshakov's work contributes to the realist thesis in two ways. First, the authors use a variety of Russian sources and have the added benefit of having grown up in the USSR. The newspapers, memoirs, and archival documents, which form the basis of their work, bolster their narrative and set it apart from older works. Memoirs in particular offer a detailed view of their second contribution—analyzing how personality affected policy. By intimately showing the transition from Stalin to Nikita Khrushchev Zubok and Pleshakov illustrate the departure from ideology and how pragmatism and self-preservation win out. The authors' quality sources and an analysis of the key change in Soviet foreign policy bolster the realist thesis.

Published about the same time as Zubok and Pleshakov's work, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation-State* is Nicolai Petro's advancement of the realist thesis.¹¹ Petro argues that the principles of Soviet foreign policy have foundations as old as Russia: ambitious expansion to provide a defense from external threats. Soviet actions adhered to these principles as it remained in the hands of the ruling Party block. Moscow approached Washington for arms talks in order to negate US superiority, thus providing better security to the USSR. Petro argued that SALT served to eliminate a new ABM arms race and recognized Moscow as an equal in the realm of strategic nuclear arms. The Soviet government followed a course that would best serve its national interests when dealing with the US and other countries in its international relations.

¹⁰ Ibid., 274

¹¹ Nicolai Petro, *Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation-State* (New York: Longman, 1997).

Petro shared some similarities with Zubok and Pleshakov when he argued that the Soviets inherited imperial foreign-policy tendencies. The perceived need to defend Russia evolved from the Russian Empire and solidified itself in the early days of a vulnerable Bolshevik regime when foreign intervention was possible and could likely dislodge the regime from power. The desire to preserve the state and defend its territory has thus been embedded in a foreign policy that spans different regimes. The Soviet government created the Eastern Bloc and treaties with the United States were just part of the Soviet policy, Petro argued, to defend itself, avoid encirclement, and preserve the regime.

More recently, Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee argued that external and national interests drove Soviet foreign policy.¹² The Soviet government sought to manage the conflict with the United States, not to eliminate or to escalate it. The Sino-Soviet split and Vietnam consistently affected relations between the superpowers after the fifties. The regime focused primarily on its own preservation and managing the conflict with the United States. Donaldson and Noguee conclude that the defense of the USSR—avoiding total destruction and a desire to manage hostility—explained Soviet foreign policy.

Donaldson and Noguee supported the realist thesis by emphasizing the geopolitical situation that confronted the USSR. They argue that Moscow was in a bipolar world, where total destruction was possible, and a growing bureaucratic oligarchy made policy decisions. The American threat and the sheer number of bureaucrats stymied Soviet foreign-policy innovation. By managing the conflict with the US, the oligarchy would preserve the state. Donaldson and Noguee, like other realists, link policy in part to a tsarist inheritance, that the government and

¹² Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2005).

ideology changed but the national interests did not.¹³ Indeed, they hint as much in the title of their work but Donaldson and Noguee lack significant archival sources to make their arguments. They lack Russian materials and are limited primarily to English secondary sources and a few Soviet newspapers.

Proponents of ideological supremacy in foreign policy also argue for an inheritance. The inherited doctrine of the revolution, not Imperial Russia, drove Soviet foreign policy, according to them. Proponents of ideology arrive at the same conclusion through different premises. Some argue that the fulfillment of ideological policy proves ideological motivation. Others argue on the basis of politburo dynamics and the influence of conservative, ideological factions. Like realism, this school of thought culminates with a thoroughly researched study launched long after the fall of communism.

In 1983, Robin Edmonds argued that Soviet foreign policy showed great continuity from the 1917 Revolution.¹⁴ But détente and the peaceful coexistence of the Brezhnev years seems to run counter to revolutionary ideology. Edmonds argued, however, that the Brezhnev years represent an ideologically motivated foreign policy committed to its inherited doctrine because of the resistance to imperialism by supporting socialism in the Third World and by détente's failure. The doctrinal continuity was exemplified by the Brezhnev doctrine, gave the Soviet government justification to extend the Soviet sphere of influence into the Third World and strengthen ties with socialist countries. Edmonds saw ideology in action as the Soviet government expanded its policy to improve relations in the Third World, the invasion of Afghanistan, and détente's failure.

¹³ Ibid., 36.

¹⁴ Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Foreign Policy: The Brezhnev Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Edmonds shared some similar thoughts and premises with several others in the ideologist camp. He attributes the enhanced military strength of the USSR to be a key factor its new global role because it gave Moscow the security from invasion needed to be more adventurous in its policy like contemporary ideologist Harry Gelman.¹⁵ One unique aspect of Edmonds' thesis is his exploration of Soviet actions in the Third World. The ideological connection to embryonic socialism in the Third World explains this expansion of policy in a realm that does not fit the national interests of the USSR. Edmonds sees this policy as an indicator of ideological motivations. This same indicator manifested on the ABM issue, as my analysis will show. Edmonds asserts that there was not a great deal to gain, such as resources or a better strategic position, in Soviet interaction with the Third World. Yet in so doing, the Soviet government sought to further its own ideological policy.¹⁶

In a work that also appeared in the late Brezhnev era, Harry Gelman argued that détente was merely a delay for the USSR. The Soviet military buildup gave the USSR a claim to parity but also gave greater influence to the military within the politburo. This influence in the politburo had its costs. "As a result [of military influence], conservative ideological assumptions and a heightened sense of the priority to be given Soviet military power dominated the leadership's thinking."¹⁷ Gelman emphasizes the military's influence over the Politburo and keeping it from a platform based on national interests.

While Gelman presented a strong contrast to the realist thesis, he failed to support his argument properly. Gelman differs notably with Zubok and Pleshakov, who argued that closing the missile gap awarded the regime security enough to turn to more pragmatic domestic matters.

¹⁵ Harry Gelman, *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Détente* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984) 32.

¹⁶ Edmonds, 197.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16

Gelman, however, sees this same military buildup as an instigator for change towards ideology because the military was more conservative. The new conservative influence in the Politburo steered policy away from conflict. However, the foundations of Gelman's argument begin to crack when one dissects his sources. Gelman described relationships and thoughts at the highest level of the Soviet government—and he did so with only open-source Russian and English secondary sources. It is difficult to believe that Gelman can understand the Politburo's foreign-policy decision-making process on open-source information alone. Overall, Gelman's thesis is unique among ideologists and shows the potential influence and power of decisions that could be held by the factional groups surrounding the politburo.

Most recently Jonathan Haslam has argued that Soviet foreign policy's Leninist inheritance played a large role.¹⁸ The legacy of the revolution, which meant that the USSR was in constant preparation for the inevitable war with imperialist capitalism, determined Soviet foreign policy. The Leninist inheritance meant that the Soviet state needed to express a certain set of values in all of its policy. Ideology drove Stalin's policy, for example, and subsequent Soviet advancement into the Third World was based on a need for more countries to be counted as allies. That the USSR kept its revolutionary ambitions was most evident in the eventual failure of détente and the continued support of Third World revolution.¹⁹ Ideology mixed with other factors—the necessity for allies in the Third World and the recognition of US military strength—to create the operational foreign policy of the USSR.

Russia's Cold War is a central example of a piece that supports the ideology thesis and it differs from the realist thesis in several ways. First, Haslam accepts external influence and

¹⁸ Jonathan Haslam, *Russia's Cold War: From the October Revolution to the Fall of the Wall*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2011).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 398.

national interests as important. However, he holds that ideology and specifically the Leninist inheritance was paramount. Each school accepts the influence of the other but Haslam presents a strong case for the primacy of ideology. Second, he does not limit his scope to a specific section of the Cold War but rather looks at the conflict as a whole. This allows Haslam to support his argument for the Leninist inheritance, because of the dichotomy of ideologies between the US and the USSR present from the revolution and the inception of the socialist influence on Soviet foreign policy. Lastly, Haslam had the benefit of greater hindsight and had access to more Russian sources because he conducted research in post-Soviet archives. Like other proponents of ideology, Haslam places great weight on the inherited legacy of the Russian Revolution to which each regime must pay homage as it conducts relations with the rest of the world. Haslam's work, as a new piece with excellent sources that covers the entirety of the Cold War, supports the ideology thesis and is a major contribution to the historiography of US-Soviet relations.

Ronald Powaski's 1997 survey of the Cold War is a prime example of how recent monographs have dealt with the ABM issue. Powaski argues that the United States tried to convince the USSR that ABM systems did not justify their great cost. After the successful negotiation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1968 there was an environment conducive to further arms-negotiation. However, the two sides could not come to an agreement on the ABM. The Soviets were reluctant to abandon their deployed ABM system.²⁰ Since the treaty limited the total number of ABM sites and interceptors, it effectively cemented the notion of mutually assured destruction for both sides by eliminating any possibilities for defense.

²⁰ Ronald E. Powaski, *The Cold War: The United States and the Soviet Union, 1917-1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 165.

Powaski's account of the ABM issue is an example of the sparse coverage of ABM in secondary sources. More often than not, the secondary literature on the Cold War makes a passing note of the ABM Treaty, belying its significance. Indeed, ABM is often one of the smallest entries in indexes. Historians generally regard ABM as destabilizing US-Soviet relations because new technology defensive systems possible. Powaski and others do not connect the issue to the broader question of Soviet foreign-policy conduct, national interests or ideology. One can support either thesis but a more definitive study is needed to expand on the ABM issue and its relationship to Soviet foreign policy as a whole.

Proponents of the realist thesis apply universal interests to the USSR and argue that its greatest stimulus for action was preservation. Stephanson and Kulski argue that the USSR was primarily concerned with its own perpetuation. The need to uphold the Soviet state dates back to its inception and is highlighted during the Cold War by the brush with nuclear war in 1962. Indeed, the notion of preservation and defense goes back further, Zubok and Pleshakov show, to the Russian Empire. The need for defense in depth against the potential encirclement of the tsar's enemies drove the Russian Empire's foreign policy and this sentiment lasted through the revolution. Donaldson and Noguee show the pull of external factors and how these external factors shaped national interests. In sum, the realist school agrees unanimously that national interests determined Soviet foreign policy.

The ideology thesis asserts that there was ideological continuity from the revolution throughout the reign of the USSR. The different arguments of each ideologist share similar traits. Haslam contends that the ideology of the revolution, a movement for expansion and the spread of socialism, permeates Soviet foreign policy. Edmonds demonstrates a similar continuity and points out the way in which ideology survived and continued to be passed on

through regimes. Gelman argues that the ideologically charged military held sway over the Politburo. Common among proponents of the ideology thesis are the notions of continuity and the expansion of socialism. They all see Soviet action in the Third World as a manifestation of the ideological arm of foreign policy. Because these ideas came from the revolution, it becomes necessary for proponents of ideology to refer back to the revolution throughout, thus showing continuity and the origins that support the ideology thesis.

The two schools are diametrically opposed, naturally, but they both concede ground to one another. While proponents of ideology give primacy to ideology they all concede that national interests played a role in Soviet foreign policy and the inverse is true as well. In Gelman's case, the ideology school can have an issue with sources, in particular relating to policy and decision making at the highest level. Ideologists require clear representations of ideological inclinations in the decision-making process. They cannot rely on Soviet actions to support their arguments. For Gelman especially, the necessary documents were behind the Iron Curtain and not available. Proponents of ideology often cede some policy decisions to national interests but the inverse in this instance is rarely true. When examining the actions of the USSR realists view a Cold War as an admission of realist thinking. The Soviet government avoided its predetermined war with capitalism to heed to the nation's best interests, the Party's best interests.

Jonathan Haslam's work combines the best sources and most balanced argument in the scholarship. Haslam benefited from access to post-Soviet archives and it shows in his work. He constructed the best argument by conceding the ground to realists. He arrived at a mix of ideology and national interests. My work builds on his and arrives at a similar conclusion. Haslam asserted that the Soviet government had to express Leninist values in foreign policy regardless of their motives. I find that the same was true during the ABM negotiations. Soviet

officials mentioned their Leninist Foreign Policy throughout the talks as I will show in Chapter 1. My work builds on the existing scholarship, especially Haslam's work, to show the influence and overt presence of ideology in Soviet foreign policy.

All the Propaganda That's Fit to Print: The Historiography of Soviet Newspapers

When combined with diplomatic conversations, analysis of Soviet newspapers compliments a study of Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet press represents the narrative that the Soviet state desired to promulgate to a global audience. *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* were the printed voice of the Soviet leadership and the CPSU. Contrasting newspapers' stated policy with government action and private diplomatic conversations is beneficial to the study of Soviet foreign policy. Concluding whether Soviet leadership acted in accordance with their promulgated narrative helps determine what extent that narrative was true. My study puts the Soviet position on ABM to this test. Let us begin by first examining the historiography of the Soviet press.

Historians agree unanimously that the press served as the Central Committee's organ for propaganda and mobilizing the masses. The papers often used heroic and grandiose language to encourage its readership to take action in the name of communism. They also announced the Central Committee's position on international matters and its policies to define the USSR and contrast it the United States. Though historians use different methodologies when they study the newspapers, they arrive at similar conclusions regarding the role of the press in the Soviet state. Historians argue that the Soviet newspapers were the Party's tool to spread its doctrine.

In 2004 Matthew Lenoe argued that the newspapers were not items for entertainment but instruments of propaganda. Stalin's drive for industrialization brought militaristic language and

helped bring about modern newspapers.²¹ Industrialization became a military campaign and the country's future hinged on its success. The newspapers began a "shock campaign...to mobilize the masses."²² Workers fought on the "front lines" and won "victories" with their industrial output. Agitating the masses was the key goal of the newspapers and they needed to connect with the target audience. Lenoe suggests that the newspapers' target audience was the *obshchestvennost'*, as he defined it the "official society" of the USSR.²³ Party officials and others of a "high political authority" formed the foundation of the regime and it was incumbent upon the newspapers to mobilize this part of society.²⁴ They also followed Lenin's ideas for general enlightenment. The papers at times used reason to connect with its audience and enlighten them in a manner the Party deemed acceptable. The newspapers maintained the Party's legitimacy by portraying it as the vanguard in a war with industrialization—an indispensable part to a nation in a time of trouble.

Another work, by Martin Ebon, *The Soviet Propaganda Machine*, argued that Soviet propaganda's principle task was to improve the Soviet sphere of influence in the world. The broad themes of the propaganda narrative pitted the peaceful Soviet Union struggling to confront the warmongering United States.²⁵ The Soviet leadership believed that their message would resonate with other nations and expand their nation's sphere of influence. The platform of peace was universal and utopian, which the Party believed other nations could accept. The agenda matched Soviet action with that of its World Peace Council and its universal platform—all an effort to expand Soviet leadership in the world. Ebon also argued that the Russian state had a

²¹ Matthew Lenoe, *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2004) 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 38.

²³ *Ibid.*, 254.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁵ Martin Ebon, *The Soviet Propaganda Machine*, (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1987) 3.

history of trying to influence popular opinion.²⁶ Tsarist organizations stymied independent papers and tried to control information. The USSR and its propaganda machine was an extension of this that focused on expanding Soviet influence.

In 1972 Gayle Durham Hollander asserted that the media taught the Soviet population the Party's chosen doctrine for political socialization.²⁷ The papers were the instruments of indoctrination for the masses. Hollander stresses that because of the collective nature of society and politics in the USSR, wide indoctrination was necessary. The papers then put forward a controlled, repetitive, and simple message to its readers. News stories largely consisted of Party policy and negative items such as crime did not make headlines. The press was a tool for the Party to disseminate its policy.

Ebon, Hollander, and Lenoe share several views on the Soviet press. Lenoe and Ebon both emphasize Lenin's influence in the rational, enlightening aspect of the papers. All agree that the Party benefited greatly from the papers. The papers promulgated state policy from the highest levels. Hollander argues that this was to indoctrinate Soviet citizens while Ebon argues that the promulgated platform of peace helped expand Soviet influence. Lenoe's claim that the rhetoric helped define the Party is similar to Ebon's. Ebon argues that the consistency of the papers' message from the Central Committee that sought to increase its influence in the world. One sees the same themes in the Soviet press during its coverage of ABM.

Analysis of the ABM issue in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* corroborates much of the prior historiography while showing the depths of policy influence and these two papers form the basis of my study. They were the printed voice of the CPSU and the Central Committee. Further,

²⁶ Ibid., 6.

²⁷ Gayle Durham Hollander, *Soviet Political Indoctrination: Developments in Mass Media and Propaganda Since Stalin*, (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1972) xvii.

their circulation abroad meant that the newspapers wrote not only for their fellow countrymen but for a global audience. On ABM the Soviet press again established a strong narrative. The USSR was the nation of peace, fighting against the powers of imperialism who continued to produce destabilizing weapon systems that endanger mankind. The press often repeated its message, using similar phrases across many different articles. Articles denounced US policies as destabilizing international security but noted that the Soviet government followed its own policy of peace to counter this aggression. The peace-loving CPSU that advocated for disarmament could not fully define itself without its constitutive other and antagonist in world affairs. The Soviet position on ABM in the papers mirrored the diplomatic position as presented in negotiations. The papers served as the ideological tool of the Central Committee for disseminating the Soviet position and issues that the negotiators raised. This further supports the conception that the newspapers were the direct voice of the highest levels of Soviet policy making.

Additions to the Existing Scholarship

My work benefits from the end of the communist era and subsequent publication of sources that fill gaps in the prior historiography. With declassified sources, my analysis shows the importance of the diplomatic narrative to the newspapers. Soviet officials from Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin to Leonid Brezhnev used the same language as the papers. Newspaper reports and diplomatic cables covered the same topics. This close relationship between the leadership and its propaganda supports the ideology thesis. My work shows that the Soviet delegates used propagandistic language when talking to their American counterparts and worked towards the fulfillment of the stated Soviet ideological foreign policy. This demonstrates a large role for ideology within the ABM issue. Further, the ABM issue has never been the focus

of prolonged scholarship. Prior work on US-Soviet relations relegated the ABM issue to the periphery. They focus on broader issues and spend little time on ABM. My work examines an acute issue with primary sources that directly address it.

My analysis expands on the current scholarship on the Soviet press, the ABM issue, and what drove Soviet foreign policy. Like historians before me, I use Soviet newspapers, in this case *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*. They are a valuable public source for understanding the Soviet Union. In my research I looked for articles containing keywords such as ABM and SALT in a digital database of *Pravda* articles. This allowed me to narrow my search and find the articles that best address this topic. My thesis examines their role in the dissemination of policy and their close relationship to the Soviet leadership. The prior scarcity of sources hindered the efforts of proponents of realism and ideology alike. After the fall of communism, sources became more readily available. I use the official transcripts of ABM negotiations jointly published by both Russia and the United States. This very large book contains the transcripts of three hundred and eighty conversations, memos, and letters from 1969-1972. Among these are notes from Soviet leaders directly to the president, transcripts of conversation between Soviet diplomats and US officials, and memos from Soviet delegates to their superiors. Together with the newspapers I analyze two distinct narratives, their relationship to one another, and how they overlapped. Such sources and insight that Soviet censorship kept from prior historians benefits the historiography as a whole.

My analysis will support the prior historiography on the Soviet press and show the narrative's genesis in the diplomatic world. As in the past, Soviet newspapers covering ABM used grandiose, militaristic language and defined the USSR by reflecting it against its antagonist. The language in diplomatic talks mirrored the language and points made in articles on the very

same issues and the papers explored subjects of concern that arose during the closed diplomatic negotiations. The message that Soviet diplomats discussed in private ran in the paper shortly thereafter.

This has further implications for the ideology thesis in the historiography of Soviet foreign policy. Soviet diplomats expressed a clear narrative that denounced the American ABM. According to their narrative the United States was needlessly destabilizing international peace and security but the Party's Leninist Foreign Policy of Peace stood in the imperialists' way. The Soviet government adhered to its policy which culminated in the ABM Treaty. The Treaty was a victory for the Soviet Union and a victory for ideology in foreign policy. The Soviet government accomplished goals that fit its national interests while fulfilling its stated Leninist values.

In the following chapters, I will explore the negotiations on ABM, how it related to Soviet foreign policy as a whole, and the dichotomy between the Soviet narrative in negotiations and in the press. Chapter 1 examines the diplomatic narrative during negotiations from 1969-1972 and the recurring themes therein. The Soviet officials present in negotiations compared the peaceful Soviet Union to the warmongering United States, established a narrative of association to depict a fractured US leadership, and portrayed ABM as a destabilizing issue impeding progress in US-Soviet relations. This chapter on the negotiations comes first because it focuses on the Soviet officials' narrative and it gives the reader greater context for Chapter 2. Chapter 2 contrasts the diplomatic narrative with the public narrative in the newspapers. Using *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*, I find that the Soviet newspapers used the same language and tactics of association as Soviet officials. Soviet delegates reported on US internal policy to create a narrative of association for their superiors as the papers did and consistently used propagandistic language in discussions with their American counterparts. The diplomatic narrative came to influence and

crossover into the public narrative as the issues of negotiations became part of the press coverage of the ABM Treaty.

I argue that the Party had total control over its principle propaganda apparatuses as the promulgated Soviet position on ABM mirrored the private, diplomatic position. Further, issues raised in diplomatic talks appeared in newspaper articles soon thereafter. The correlation between the private and public Soviet ABM position shows a mix of ideology in Soviet foreign policy—the ABM Treaty was a victory for the Soviet policy of peace that accomplished realistic aims. The ABM issue in US-Soviet relations represents the depth of control of and belief in the Soviet propaganda apparatus' message and a victory for the new mix of realism and ideology in Soviet foreign policy.

CHAPTER 1 “US-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS, 1969-1972”

By the late 1960s the USSR was building an ABM system around Moscow and the United States was preparing its own system. Concurrently, each country was making great strides in offensive weapon technology—missiles armed with multiple independent reentry vehicles (MIRVs) that could overwhelm the crude ABM systems of the day. Advancements in ABM technology could result in a parallel arms race on defensive weapon systems. However, the two sides failed to reach an agreement on ABM before the 1968 Presidential Election. When the USSR reached strategic nuclear parity with the USA, Moscow agreed to restart arms talks from a position of strength.²⁸ With Richard Nixon’s victory in the 1968 Presidential Election, Moscow now had a president more willing to conduct greater diplomatic cooperation.

The two entered negotiations in 1969 on the limitation of strategic offensive arms (SALT) and whether or not to ban or limit ABM systems. The Nixon administration aimed to use ABM as a bargaining tool while the USSR hoped to secure strategic parity.²⁹ Nixon and his national security advisor Henry Kissinger sought a freeze on offensive weapons and were willing to use ABM as a means to that end. By freezing the production of new offensive arms construction, the United States could complete its missile production while the USSR could not surpass it. An agreement on ABM, a field in which the United States held a strong technological advantage, would allow the USSR to reciprocate on offensive arms, their area of advantage. When the two sides began talks in 1969 they revolved around the issues of ABM, delivery systems, and the overall number of strategic weapons.

²⁸ Powaski, 165.

²⁹ Ibid., 174.

During the SALT negotiations, Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, Leonid Brezhnev, and other Soviet diplomats demonstrated their belief in the Leninist Foreign Policy. They established a clear narrative centered on this ideology. They strove for peace while the American ABM destabilized relations. Soviet officials wrote reports on a divided US leadership. Their work influenced newspaper content directly. Prior to negotiations, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* established a distinct public narrative on the ABM issue and the arms race. This narrative invoked the Soviet Union's Leninist Foreign Policy of Peace as the justification for cooperating with a capitalist country. Analysis of the Soviet delegates' actions during negotiations shows a strong belief and adherence to the Leninist policy as stated publicly in the newspapers.

American Aims in Negotiations and Perspectives on Soviets

In his memoirs, Henry Kissinger outlines the American position on ABM and gives insight into his relationship with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin.³⁰ As he entered office, Kissinger recognized the coming nuclear parity with the USSR as a threat to the geopolitical position of the United States. A large Soviet nuclear advantage would embolden Soviet leadership and endanger US interests and conventional forces. His response aimed to secure both short- and long-term gains for the United States. Kissinger entered negotiations with the goal to stop Soviet missile production while the United States could catch up with its own missile production. New American missiles would take years to complete so Kissinger sought to freeze Soviet offensive arms. The USSR also enjoyed an early lead in the development of an ABM system. The Soviet ABM system constrained US policy and heightened tensions. The development of strategic defensive weapons met with a response in offensive weaponry as each

³⁰ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979).

side sought the upper hand in the gamesmanship that exemplified the Cold War. Negotiations began simultaneously on offensive and defensive arms in 1969.

Kissinger worked with many statesmen in the Kremlin but very frequently met to discuss Soviet issues with Dobrynin because of his position as ambassador. They came to have a friendly rapport with one another, Dobrynin insisting that they call each other by their first names.³¹ Kissinger describes him as a sound diplomat and a great contributor to the improvement in relations and the tensions of the time. Kissinger wrote that he and Dobrynin conducted “preliminary negotiations on almost all major issues, he on behalf of the Politburo, I as confidant to Nixon.”³² Kissinger dubbed this avenue of communication “the Channel.”

Kissinger used the ABM issue as a means to secure American ends on limiting Soviet offensive arms. Kissinger wrote that ABM was “our chief bargaining chip in SALT negotiations.”³³ The USSR did not want to limit its production of offensive arms, especially at a time when their numbers would surpass the American nuclear arsenal. To gain this concession from the Soviets, Kissinger was willing to limit or cease US ABM development. The lack of support for ABM systems in Congress both helped and harmed negotiations. Congress’ antagonism towards ABM meant that it had a minute chance for long-term funding and development. Eliminating the program too soon would “deprive us of any bargaining leverage.”³⁴ Kissinger, as a representative of US interests and with his connection to Dobrynin in the Channel, entered negotiations with the chief aim of limiting Soviet offensive weapon development using ABM as his bait.

³¹ Ibid., 113. Kissinger noted that he “did not make fun of him because he spoke with an accent.”

³² Ibid., 139

³³ Ibid., 799

³⁴ Ibid., 546

Dobrynin's View of Negotiations

Anatoly Dobrynin's memoirs alluded to the corresponding themes between the public and diplomatic narratives and gave insight into his view of Soviet foreign policy.³⁵ Dobrynin noted that ABM emerged as an important topic in disarmament since its inception. Soviet leadership did not foresee it becoming a great issue—weapon systems designed to protect civilians “was considered in Moscow as a legitimate matter and was not supposed to arouse suspicion abroad.”³⁶ Dobrynin held the United States culpable for turning ABM into a destabilizing issue. Members of the Johnson administration held that it was more cost effective to improve offensive weapon systems to defeat the Soviet ABM than to develop an American ABM system. With this decision, there was no US-Soviet agreement on ABM until the ABM Treaty. Dobrynin also lamented the divided authority in Washington on ABM during talks with the Nixon Administration.³⁷ Congress, the Pentagon, and different administration officials all complicated issues and contradicted one another. In Dobrynin's narrative, the American delegates held up the issue, not the peace-loving Soviets.

Dobrynin shed light on his view of Soviet foreign policy and détente and argued simultaneously for idealism and realism in Soviet foreign policy. Dobrynin wrote that “Soviet foreign policy was always closely connected to the philosophy and ideology of the Communist Party.”³⁸ Dobrynin justified détente and the policy of peaceful coexistence by extolling Lenin. Should history play itself out, he argued, communism would prevail over capitalism as Marx has written. Therefore, there was no need to act in a confrontational manner towards capitalist

³⁵ Anatoly Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents, (1962-1986)*, (New York: Random House, 1995).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 148

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 205

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 191

countries. A policy of peaceful coexistence was wise and “recognized as a basic principle of Soviet foreign policy” because it suited the Party’s policy.³⁹

Dobrynin acknowledged that while Soviet foreign policy was connected to ideology, it did not operate in a vacuum separated from outside events. “Admittedly, Soviet foreign policy was largely shaped by events in the world.”⁴⁰ Dobrynin noted several contemporary events that “made Brezhnev and the highest officials of the party and state adjust their approach to foreign policy.”⁴¹ The Cuban Missile Crisis demonstrated the possibility of nuclear war and the USSR made every effort to avoid it in further confrontations. Moscow also sought to improve relations with both Western Europe and China. An improvement in West German relations was tied to American agreements in the arms talks. The Soviet government saw good US-Sino relations as a threat given the “sharp aggravation in Soviet-Chinese relations in the late 1960s and early 1970s.”⁴² Better relations with the United States could also bolster Brezhnev’s prestige. Because of these external considerations, Dobrynin arrives at a mix of realism and idealism in his memoir. This mix corroborates the findings in this study.

Dobrynin’s views of the United States echo the newspapers’ position. Events in the USSR changed US policy and forced a “painful reassessment of the political maxims of the Cold War.”⁴³ The primary stimulus for change was the comparable power of Soviet missiles. The parity in strategic forces forced the United States to move towards more normal relations. Dobrynin was also dealing with a fractured and deceitful partner. Nixon and Kissinger did not truly try to achieve a breakthrough in relations. Rather, they sought national interests on the

³⁹ Ibid., 192

⁴⁰ Ibid., 193.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 194

“basis of a policy that was essentially based on military strength.”⁴⁴ Dobrynin holds the party line, denouncing the selfish aims of US foreign policy and its foundation on the military-industrial complex. Negotiations would not improve his perception. Soviet diplomats dealt with a “divided authority in Washington.”⁴⁵ Cabinet members, the Pentagon, and congress all advanced different positions during negotiations. Nixon and Kissinger had to alter their strategy correspondingly and Dobrynin recognized it.

Though Dobrynin did not discuss it directly, he participated in and fueled the Soviet diplomatic narrative. The diplomatic narrative represented the themes, issues, and conventions of the Soviet dialogue with the United States and its own leadership. Compared to the public narrative in the press, this narrative was private—conversations and exchanges between Soviet and American diplomats and reports from Soviet agents back to Moscow. Soviet delegates presented a specific narrative to themselves and their American counterparts. They surely withheld some information from the Americans but were more forthcoming than they would have been in public. One may view the diplomatic narrative as one level closer to their actual beliefs and thoughts. The diplomatic narrative evolved over the course of negotiations. After the ABM Treaty the issues Soviet diplomats raised in negotiations crossed over into the public narrative. The ABM issue illuminates the presence of ideology in Soviet foreign policy and the leadership’s investment in the use of propaganda. Soviet actors moved for concessions in line with their national interests and used ideology to justify doing so. The Soviet press closely mirrored the feelings of its leadership on this issue.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 195

⁴⁵ Ibid., 205

The US-Soviet negotiations conducted from February 1969 to May 1972 were not isolated to the ABM but included a range of topics relevant to US-Soviet negotiations. American and Soviet diplomats discussed arms reductions, the Vietnam War, the Middle East, China, and issues in Europe. Regarding China, both sides mentioned that their ABM systems were made with eliminating the threat from Mao Zedong's missiles.⁴⁶ They each asserted that their weapons were not aimed at each other to ease one another's nerves during negotiations. This mention instance aside, China and other countries did not play a large role in ABM discussions. The details and impact of these other relations have rightly been the subject of many historians' work. Because of my work's specific scope, I focus on US-Soviet discussions on the ABM primarily. I examine this issue thematically rather than simply chronologically to show the reader the distinguishing topics throughout negotiations.

I will examine the definitive themes of negotiations in the following sections in detail. The first examines instances of propagandistic language in negotiations. Often, Soviet diplomats used the same phrases as the newspapers when they described relations. The second looks at the Soviet view of their American counterparts during negotiations. They consistently expressed their belief that the United States had ulterior motives. The following section analyzes Ambassador Dobrynin's reports, finding that he used similar language and methodology as the newspapers. The final section covers the Soviet desire for an equal treaty. Once the two sides agreed in principle on an ABM agreement, the Soviets pressed to eliminate any possible US advantage. The result was a fair and equal treaty which the Soviet press championed, as Chapter 2 shows. Through the course of this chapter one sees the propagandistic diplomatic narrative manifest over the course of negotiations.

⁴⁶ For the Americans "50. Memorandum of Conversation" in *Soviet-American Relations*, 127, and for the Soviets "224. Memorandum of Conversation" in *Soviet-American Relations*, 522.

Propagandistic Language During Negotiations

Ambassador Dobrynin, Foreign Minister Gromyko, and General Secretary Brezhnev shared a common language when dealing with the United States. They never swayed from their stated position of peace and repeated the same phrases. The CPSU followed its stated Leninist Foreign Policy of peace and pursued an agreement consistent with its principles. The Soviet leadership all projected and shared a belief in its public narrative on ABM throughout the negotiations with the United States.

In 1969 the Nixon administration entered office with the aim of improving negotiations with the USSR through personal dialogue and agreements on contemporary issues. Direct dialogue between leaders in Moscow and Washington went through Ambassador Dobrynin to Kissinger starting with their first meeting in February, 1969. Kissinger spoke with the president's voice from their first meeting onward, saying that "the President attaches great importance to establishing good, confidential contacts with the Soviet Government."⁴⁷ A principle issue in formation of new relations was ABM. When negotiations started the Soviet military had already begun construction on a system ABM system near Moscow and the United States was developing its own.

As part of its first steps in establishing contact with the new administration, Soviet officials greeted their American counterparts and issued their official position on ABM. Dobrynin gave Nixon a note from the Soviet leadership at the start of relations on February 14, 1969. "As it is known, the Soviet Union pursues and will pursue the policy of peace," they

⁴⁷ Dobrynin, "3. Memorandum of Conversation (USSR)," in *Soviet-American Relations*, 5.

wrote.⁴⁸ The note calls for peace throughout the world and on all issues in Europe, the Middle East, and Vietnam. On the issue of strategic arms, the Soviet leadership desired “[a] significant step in the field of the containment of the arms race and the reduction of a war threat [...] through the achievement of an agreement between the USSR and the United States on the limitation and subsequent reduction of strategic arms, both offensive and defensive.”⁴⁹ The agreements must not come at the expense of joint strategic deterrence and each side’s security must be maintained.

The Soviet leadership and delegates—including Brezhnev, Gromyko, Dobrynin, et al.—set the tone of negotiations by presenting their position in ideological language and qualifying it with their own pragmatic interests. The Soviet government stated that it pursued an international policy of peace. It sought the reduction of the threat of war with the United States by curbing the arms race and also peaceful solutions to problems in all parts of the world. The note also qualifies its position by immediately giving obligations whose fulfillment would predate any agreement; namely, that the treaty would in no way give one side (the United States) an advantage over the other. Such an advantage would give the United States greater flexibility to initiate a first strike and endanger the USSR. This theme would recur with great regularity in negotiations as the Soviet government feared ceding an advantage.

Negotiations continued as both sides moved towards greater dialogue on outstanding issues. Soviet leadership instructed Dobrynin to use the “Channel” with Kissinger and keep in mind the “interests of peace” on all matters.⁵⁰ During a meeting with Secretary of State William

⁴⁸ “Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 11. Keefer notes that the document had no classification marking and was unsigned.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁰ V. Kuznetsov, “9. Telegram From First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov to Ambassador Dobrynin” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 27.

Rogers, Foreign Minister Gromyko brought up the ABM issue.⁵¹ Gromyko asked whether the US government was serious about this agreement because the Soviet government wanted an agreement “that would benefit both countries and the world as a whole.”⁵² Kissinger and Dobrynin continued to meet regularly but events in the Middle East and Vietnam demanded their attention.

In early 1971, Kissinger told Dobrynin that they would like to conclude an ABM agreement within eighteen months.⁵³ Dobrynin was happy to hear this news, saying that “the Soviet side believes that limitation of ABM defense will not only put an end to competition in the field of defensive strategic arms, but will be a significant factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms.”⁵⁴ The commitment to a separate agreement on ABM improved relations at a time when discussion of Vietnam and the Middle East had previously soured talks.

Continuing the dialogue, Dobrynin shared a draft letter containing the Soviet government’s position for US consideration.⁵⁵ The Soviet government was willing to discuss an ABM agreement because “restrictions on ABM would not only curb a defensive arms race but strategic offensive arms as well.”⁵⁶ Both sides exchanged letters of understanding and continued to make preliminary steps regarding an ABM agreement. At a later meeting, Dobrynin said that Moscow was ready to accept the initial US position to limit ABM systems to the defense of each country’s capital. In preparation for negotiations, the Soviet leadership would instruct its

⁵¹ A. Gromyko, “26. Telegram From Foreign Minister Gromyko to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 75.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ “120. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 288.

⁵⁴ Dobrynin, “121. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 289.

⁵⁵ Dobrynin, “130. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 307.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

delegation to “adhere to this position, namely that in order to exert a restraining influence on the strategic-arms race” both sides should limit ABM deployments to capitals.

In September of 1971, Brezhnev sent a letter to Nixon that held the party line on propagandistic language in the diplomatic dialogue.⁵⁷ Brezhnev again named peace the driving force in Soviet foreign policy and any policy that “might lead to a growing threat of war would be organically alien to the very nature of our social system.”⁵⁸ Brezhnev sought an ABM agreement “but only on the basis of the principle of complete equivalence.”⁵⁹ He commends the United States on the mutual agreement to reduce the outbreak of nuclear war and proposed the possibility of banning nuclear weapons altogether.⁶⁰ In closing, Brezhnev reiterated that they would take the course of peaceful coexistence, that the USSR stated that it made these declarations of peace in earnest, and that they were guided not by current events “but by the fundamental interests of peace.”⁶¹

In the very same month that Nixon received the letter, Gromyko used similar language in a meeting with the president. Gromyko reiterated that the USSR sought peace and peaceful relations and not war with the United States.⁶² He went on to say that war was “alien to [...] the basic principles on which our state and its social structure were founded.”⁶³ Gromyko’s remarks represent a shared ideological narrative within the Soviet leadership. To the same audience and in quick succession, two senior leaders gave the same ideological message. The identical overtures show a shared belief in the ideological message and a desire to promulgate it.

⁵⁷ Brezhnev, “196. Letter From General Secretary Brezhnev to President Nixon” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 441.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 442

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 443

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 444

⁶² “204. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 468.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Brezhnev later bolstered the narrative of peace during a meeting with Kissinger in Moscow on April 21, 1972. Speaking of the general political situation in the world, Brezhnev said, “There are forces in the world which seek to bring about a heightening of tension, but of course the majority of the countries of the world endeavor to bring about an atmosphere conducive to the lessening of tensions.”⁶⁴ There were those who increased the tensions of war, capitalists, and the majority of peace-loving countries, led by the USSR, who moved to decrease tension in the world. Brezhnev spoke of a bipolar world as in the Party narrative. He specified external forces—i.e., not the USSR—as destabilizing elements and further illustrated the dichotomy between the Soviet Union and the United States. The eventual agreement “should encourage tranquility in the world and respect in all states.”⁶⁵ Besides asserting their nation’s love of peace, Soviet officials made sure to report divisions within US leadership.

A House Divided: Soviet Views of the Disunited US Leadership

Dobrynin and other Soviet delegates perpetuated the notion that internal considerations drove US policy. Dobrynin reported back to Soviet leadership his views on the fractured US leadership and how contemporary events affected negotiations and policy. Dobrynin associated the United States with dissent when he could. His reports on US policy mentioned on numerous occasions events in Congress to show dissent among the leadership. He included analysis on the motives of his US counterparts, indicating that they at times acted on personal interests. Dobrynin’s reports formed a mental correlation—he associated US leadership with dissent, personal interests, and divisions within their ranks. This narrative of association affected the Soviet leadership and strongly foreshadowed the public narrative in content and methods.

⁶⁴ “303. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 682.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 685.

Dobrynin saw ulterior motives in Kissinger or, as he called them, “personal elements.”⁶⁶ Dobrynin believed that Kissinger used the Channel to advance his personal position. Dobrynin wrote, Kissinger was “to a considerable extent, against any independent negotiations [between other American and Soviet delegates].”⁶⁷ Kissinger feared any failure in his personal negotiations with Dobrynin, conducted outside normal diplomatic channels like the State Department, would hurt his strong personal position with the president. The president, Dobrynin wrote in the same report, “zigzags with an obvious tendency to oppose practically all of our steps in the international arena.”⁶⁸

The leadership cemented its belief in its Leninist Foreign Policy and broader narrative in a letter to Nixon on February 23, 1972.⁶⁹ The leadership took issue with what it perceived to be anti-Soviet remarks by the Nixon administration and the Secretary of Defense and asked a very pointed question to Nixon: “What indeed is going on?”⁷⁰ Soviet leadership took issue with the administration’s two concurrent narratives—one in private calling for improved relations and another in public with “totally groundless reproaches addressed to the Soviet Union and in which its policy is presented in a distorted light and intentions are ascribed to it which we never had and do not have.”⁷¹ Soviet leadership asked Nixon whether this sort of duality was constructive to talks. It was the leadership’s “deep conviction” that it was “impossible to conduct business in a double way at the same time.”⁷² They implored the president to act more like the USSR, showing great conviction in their beliefs and methods. Soviet leadership positioned itself as the model to follow. The Soviet leadership’s note came a year after Dobrynin’s comments but the

⁶⁶ Dobrynin, “152. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 351.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ “264. Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 594.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 595.

two were inextricably related—they were both part of the broader Soviet narrative on US leadership.

The Soviet press both accused internal US actors of collusion with the government and wrote stories detailing internal dissatisfaction with government policy. As Presidents Johnson and Nixon advanced the development and later deployment of ABM systems, the Soviet press increased its coverage of the issue to show internal divisions in the United States. Articles told of the great influence the military-industrial complex had over government policy.⁷³ *Pravda* also published articles detailing dissent within the government and in civil society. “Americans are Concerned” headlines one article detailing disagreement with the president in Congress.⁷⁴ It tried to determine who could support the ABM deployment, given the immense public and congressional opposition.⁷⁵ Other articles merely described tensions in the United States over the ABM issue.⁷⁶ The articles did not provide deep analysis of the situation in the United States or forecasts on future proceedings. Rather, the articles contributed only their presence and a description of events as a way to establish its desired narrative. By consistently reporting on dissent, the press built a narrative like Soviet officials that associated dissent in US leadership with the United States.

Dobrynin’s narrative affected his audience enough to act on its feelings. Dobrynin’s comments were part of the broader Soviet narrative of association in the press and other officials. In the public narrative the press established the notion of a divided US populace and a leadership bound to malicious considerations. Dobrynin initiated this paradigm and showed its origins

⁷³ Kurdiumov, “SShA: v ugodu voenno-promyshlennomu kompleksu” *Pravda*, August 8, 1969 and “Generalny delaiut politiku.” *Pravda*, May 7, 1969.

⁷⁴ “Amerikantsy obespokoeny” *Pravda*, March 16, 1969.

⁷⁵ Kurdiumov, “Kto ratuet za «Seifgard»?” *Pravda*, August 5, 1969.

⁷⁶ “Obshchestvennost’ SShA protiv politiki Pentagona” *Pravda*, May 5, 1969 and TASS, “Ne «Seifgard», a borba s bednost’iu-trebovanie obshchestvennosti SShA” *Pravda*, July 26, 1969.

within the Party apparatus. He continued to mention subjects of discontent among Congress or the “personal elements” that drove policy. Soviet leadership saw hypocrisy in Nixon’s actions and demanded answers. The combined Soviet narrative led Soviet leadership to ask President Nixon just what exactly he was doing.

As summit negotiations in Vienna loomed in 1971, Kissinger pressed Dobrynin for the Soviet position on the latest US proposal on ABM.⁷⁷ Kissinger needed some sort of affirmative response to start broader negotiations and he would accept even the most general Soviet position. From his conversation with Kissinger, Dobrynin added, in Kissinger’s words, that Nixon was “beginning to feel the pressure of the approaching deadline for making an ABM appropriation request to the US Congress.”⁷⁸ Kissinger’s report did not include these qualifications to his position.⁷⁹ That is not to say that Dobrynin fabricated his report but to note that Dobrynin felt it was worthy of including. Dobrynin was building a narrative of association. He gave a description of events that would combine to form a lasting narrative with his audience. The two became intertwined—Dobrynin associated Nixon and Kissinger with internal considerations for his audience so that they would always appear connected.

On Nixon’s behalf, Kissinger began to press Dobrynin and the Soviet leadership for a summit meeting. Nixon and his advisors initially believed that a summit meeting would greatly benefit relations but “were putting it off until 1971 or 1972.”⁸⁰ When Nixon began to push for a summit in 1970, Dobrynin knew something had changed. He did not see why the Americans would change their minds and push for a summit.⁸¹ Dobrynin believed he found the stimulus for

⁷⁷ Dobrynin, “128. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 305.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Kissinger, “127. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 303-304.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Nixon's new behavior in the bicameral elections. The "growing political differences in the country," "the increasing discord between the Administration and the US Congress," and "the results of this year's election, are becoming more and more important for Nixon."⁸² Dobrynin also did not miss an opportunity to suggest the "advisable" course and "put pressure on [Nixon] to move toward accepting" measures "of great interest to us."⁸³

In this instance, Dobrynin offers analysis that was consistent with his prior views and the broader narrative. Dobrynin recommended using the president's eager feelings for Soviet ends as in the case of Kissinger's influence. Further, he dictated his view of internal US proceedings regarding the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. He kept to the established narrative—that US policy makers were a fractured lot and internal divisions bended policy. Unlike other descriptive pieces that built a narrative of association, Dobrynin showed the ability to analyze and directly comment upon the internal US position.

Reporting on a conversation with Kissinger, Dobrynin wrote a parenthetical paragraph for his superiors that internal factors influenced the US negotiating position.⁸⁴ When the two sides did not agree to an ABM agreement during the Johnson administration, Secretary of Defense McNamara went ahead with an American ABM system. Since then, both sides had been reluctant to discuss a "zero ABM" option because they were each in the midst of constructing ABM systems; moving towards the "zero ABM" option would calm the issue but waste resources already spent. It should have surprised Dobrynin for Kissinger to raise "zero ABM" so late in negotiations. On the contrary, Dobrynin expected it.

⁸² Ibid., 175.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Dobrynin, "172. Memorandum of Conversation" in *Soviet-American Relations*, 390-395.

Dobrynin's preconceived expectation and his memorandum's analysis both signify how deeply the Soviets believed in internal discord within the US leadership. "[Kissinger's 'zero ABM' proposal] is in fact dictated by domestic considerations."⁸⁵ Dobrynin wrote that influential senators and prominent US scientists persisted in arguing for no ABM system because it was unproven and a waste of money. Dobrynin writes that it was "important for the administration, in the event pressure on it from these circles increases, to be able to say it proposed total elimination of ABM systems."⁸⁶ Dobrynin knew that the Nixon administration would try to take credit for the initiative. Concurrently, he did not think that the proposal was serious because "[i]n fact, as far as we know, neither the administration itself nor the Pentagon intends to end construction of an ABM defense in the US."⁸⁷

In this single parenthetical paragraph, one sees the strong relationship that existed between the public narrative in the diplomatic. Dobrynin's report mirrored past articles from *Pravda*, showing Soviet officials' belief in the shared narrative. Describing the faction that was against ABM, Dobrynin described several senators by name and mentioned that prominent scientists shared the view. In March, 1969, *Pravda* reported that prominent senators, the *New York Times*, and "public organizations and renowned American scientists spoke out against the creation of an ABM system."⁸⁸ Dobrynin also wrote that the Pentagon was one of the forces keeping ABM in place. To answer the question, "Who Advocates for 'Safeguard'", Dobrynin came to the same conclusion that *Pravda* did.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Ibid., 394.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ "Amerikantsy obespokoeny."

⁸⁹ Kurdiumov, "Kto ratuet za «Seifgard»".

Dobrynin showed the strong belief he and his superiors held in the public narrative. Dobrynin's reports mimic the press in technique and tone. He sought to report on internal disagreements in the same manner as the press—giving descriptive accounts to add to the narrative of association. Dobrynin also turned to analysis. He copied the methodology and arrived at the same conclusions the press, only years later. He saw the ulterior motives in his American counterparts and fed into the narrative as well. His contributions to the narrative helped push the Soviet leadership to act, asking Nixon to explain his actions. Dobrynin's reports on internal divisions in the United States bolstered and benefited from the public narrative. Dobrynin's reports show the roots of the public narrative. His beliefs and methods represent the genesis of the information that the "Organ of the Central Committee" put forth.

Concern for an Unequal Treaty: The Soviet Fear of Encirclement in Negotiations

The notion of "capitalist encirclement" had a long history in the Soviet Union.⁹⁰ Proponents argue that the greatest considerations of the Soviet state were its own safety. Even in Imperial Russia, the empire needed a buffer between the heart of the empire and foreign adversaries. Without any natural barriers, imperial and Soviet regimes strove to secure a large land mass capable of absorbing an enemy's might. With the advent of the Cold War and nuclear weapons, the USSR sought greater natural barriers and strategic offensive weapons to protect itself. Historians differ on the origin of the fear, whether it was purely Soviet or the product of a modern state, but the notion remains a common explanation of Soviet actions.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Alfred Vagts, "Capitalist Encirclement; A Russian Obsession—Genuine or Feigned?" *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 18, No. 3, August, 1956, 499-519.

⁹¹ For more on the Soviet "garrison state" as a product of modernity, see Alexander J. Groth and Stuart Britton, "Gorbachev and Lenin: Psychological Walls of the Soviet 'Garrison State'," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 14, No. 4, December, 1993, 627-650.

This fear was present during negotiations and was one of its most acute issues. From an early stage, Dobrynin “criticized the attempts by the Americans in Vienna to push through an approach to resolving the problem of strategic arms that is clearly aimed at gaining unilateral military advantage for the United States.”⁹² The tipping point on the offensive issue would always be the US forward-based systems (FBS). Dobrynin defined these as the “strategic forces US carrier-based and tactical aircraft at US bases surrounding the USSR that are capable of carrying out nuclear strikes against our territory.”⁹³ The US forces were “surrounding” the USSR and placed in it danger of attack. Offensive and defensive strategic arms were persistently linked in the real world and in negotiations. Because Kissinger held that there would be an agreement on both or an agreement on none, the Soviets held a strong bargaining chip in negotiations.

Dobrynin met with Kissinger on January 23rd, 1971. His report on the conversation noted that the US agreed to the principle of “equal security of the sides and not give military advantages to either” in an arms agreement.⁹⁴ The issue of equality threatened to hurt negotiations. According to Dobrynin, “the main obstacle to achieving an agreement—whether it is a broad or narrower one—is precisely the US refusal to take forward-based nuclear systems into account.”⁹⁵ On behalf of the USSR, Dobrynin constantly stressed the importance of equality in the final agreement—often meaning the inclusion of FBS into the equation. Having reached nuclear parity with the United States, the Soviet officials fought in negotiations for qualitative limits rather than quantitative. The matter became paramount for Soviet strategic and ideological

⁹² Dobrynin, “63. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 159.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁹⁴ Dobrynin, “113. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 269.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

considerations. The USSR could not “implement the principle of equal security” without the FBS issue left outstanding.⁹⁶

The worry of a US first strike implicitly became part of the Soviet diplomatic position. Kissinger reported that Dobrynin expressed concern over ABM locations. By placing them around silos, the United States was in a better position to launch a first strike.⁹⁷ Dobrynin’s report omits this concern.⁹⁸ This separation shows that the Dobrynin believed it was not worth including in his report. He would have included it if he felt that Soviet leadership did not believe he would already have been discussing this issue. The evidence for the fear of encirclement in negotiations supports the realist thesis of Soviet foreign policy. However, the treaty clearly followed the Soviet Union’s stated and ideologically influenced Leninist Foreign Policy of peace.

Proponents of the realist thesis would argue that the stated foreign policy was merely a façade for the true Soviet machinations.⁹⁹ The historiography on the Soviet press supports this notion. It argues that the press was largely for propaganda purposes and not for the leadership’s belief in the propaganda. However, the diplomatic narrative supports idealism in Soviet foreign policy. During the diplomatic talks the Soviet leadership spoke propagandistic phrases and advocated for their policy of peace. Dobrynin mentioned then and in his memoirs that global events or national interests did at times play a role. Yet in this specific case, it went beyond a fear of encirclement. The Soviet Union’s fear of a nation that could destroy it with the most advanced weaponry on the planet was quite justifiable. It was entirely possible that the Soviet leadership pursued their idealist foreign policy and in the process achieved goals pertinent to

⁹⁶ Dobrynin, “121. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 290.

⁹⁷ Kissinger, “143. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 327.

⁹⁸ Dobrynin, “144. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 329-331.

⁹⁹ Zubok and Pleshakov, Petro, and Stephanson, for example.

their nation's interests. Further, the Party promulgated the Leninist Foreign Policy of peace during the congress in 1967—at a time when the ABM issue was in its infancy. It was not invented to justify actions made years later but rather the policy pursued and vindicated by the ABM treaty.

The Issue of Equality

Once both sides agreed in principle to limit ABM systems, the principle issue for Soviet diplomats became equality. The notion became an integral part of the Soviet position in negotiations from early 1971 onwards. In a draft letter to Nixon, Soviet leadership wrote that they instructed their delegation to seek an agreement “equal for both sides and should give to either of them any advantages.”¹⁰⁰ In the following meeting, Dobrynin and Kissinger continued to debate and edit the language of the mutual public draft letter.¹⁰¹ Several issues on the wording arose, including the issue of equality. Dobrynin wrote, “they have persistently sought to delete any reference whatsoever to the fact that these limitations must be equal for both sides and not give either one any advantages.”¹⁰² Dobrynin did not write of the specifics, but he carried the issue after “lengthy debates.”¹⁰³ Dobrynin's tone and persistence shows the issue's importance. Soviet leadership made equality one of its most important stipulations for an agreement. The draft letter was a harbinger of the consistent Soviet press for equality.

One problem affecting the issue of equality was the location of each side's ABM system already under construction. Neither side wanted to halt or eliminate its existing site. The Soviet site was near Moscow while the US site would protect missile silos. Because the US site was

¹⁰⁰ Dobrynin, “154. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 353.

¹⁰¹ Dobrynin, “156. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 356-359.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 356.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 357.

near missiles, the USSR presumed that its construction was the first step towards improved first-strike capability. The issue crystallized as the defense of civilians in the USSR contrasted with the defense of US strategic offensive weapons. In the Soviet view, these differences represented an unequal status quo. Any agreement would then have to address it, likely with US concessions to balance the scale.

Kissinger would recommend ABM proposals only to have Dobrynin shoot them down and remind him of the need for equality.¹⁰⁴ Kissinger proposed keeping the status quo: “he noted that the most realistic and promising approach [...] would be the Safeguard principle for the US side and the defense of Moscow for the Soviet side.”¹⁰⁵ Kissinger proposed this solution given the “substantial monetary and material outlays that both sides have already put into their systems.”¹⁰⁶ Dobrynin “reminded Kissinger” the USSR “clearly specified” that “the principle of equal security and of not allowing unilateral advantages is one of the basic principles of a possible ABM agreement.”¹⁰⁷ Dobrynin on multiple occasions “stressed the importance of applying the principle of equal security and an identical approach in such matters as strategic arms reduction.”¹⁰⁸

SALT Meetings in Moscow

From May 22-29, 1972, delegations from the United States and the Soviet Union met in Moscow to finalize the ABM Treaty. Brezhnev said the Soviet Union attached “great importance” to the talks.¹⁰⁹ He believed it was possible “to exert fruitful influence on the entire

¹⁰⁴ Dobrynin, “162. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 367.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 367.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Dobrynin, “169. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 384.

¹⁰⁹ “347. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 831.

international situation” with an agreement if they could settle the few outstanding points.¹¹⁰ The preliminary meetings went on in this vein as each side sought to outshine the other’s pleasantries. Nixon and Brezhnev agreed to assign the details to subordinates and scheduled the necessary meetings.¹¹¹ Nixon was also kind enough to conclude the day’s agreements “so that the announcements can make it into your morning newspapers.”¹¹²

SALT dominated the summit talks as each side voiced its opinion of outstanding issues.¹¹³ Kissinger said that outstanding issue on ABM was “the location of the second Soviet ABM site.”¹¹⁴ Regarding offensive arms, both sides wanted concrete agreements that eliminated an exploitable interpretation for the agreement. In the meeting on May 23rd, Brezhnev and Kissinger argued over the size of missile silos, the distance between Soviet ABM sites, and which submarines would be included in agreement.¹¹⁵ The two sides were slowly moving towards an agreement to freeze offensive weapons but Brezhnev doubted the Americans’ pledge. Brezhnev cited a report from the *Washington Post*, “quoting your Secretary of Defense [Melvin] Laird that the United States is planning to build 10 big new submarines.”¹¹⁶ “This is not an evening out, but on the contrary, the United States will get an advantage.”¹¹⁷ Brezhnev and the Soviets would not accept an unequal treaty, and he vowed “we won’t let you” have an advantage.¹¹⁸

Equality won out, however, as the two sides reached an agreement and met in the middle on the outstanding ABM issue. The Americans had previously advocated for 1,500 kilometers

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 833.

¹¹¹ “350. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 848.

¹¹² Ibid., 849.

¹¹³ “351. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 854.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 855.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 858.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 859

between the two Soviet ABM sites but the Soviets would only accept 1,200 kilometers.¹¹⁹ The distance was necessary to prevent the two sites being linked in a nationwide system. They compromised and agreed on 1,300 kilometers.¹²⁰ This agreement allowed to two sides to finalize the ABM Treaty. They delayed the offensive agreements by simply agreeing to freeze offensive arms. The 1972 Interim Agreement allowed each side to finish its weapons in production but froze their offensive weapon total.

The two sides completed constructive talks that decreased international tension and promoted peace. The Soviet government avoided a further escalation of the arms race and the US government secured its short-term goals. The agreements on offensive and defensive weapons diffused each side's need to produce more weapons than the other. The two sides entered into a period of *détente* and they enjoyed the most favorable period of relations in the postwar period. The peaceful result fulfilled the Leninist Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union. Soviet leadership accomplished pragmatic goals while accomplishing their Leninist policies.

From the start of negotiations, Soviet officials used propagandistic language and reported on unrest in the United States as the press did. After showing the deep belief and commitment to their own propaganda, the Soviet leadership fueled the newspapers' content. The principle issue of negotiation—equality—became the item that grabbed headlines and fueled editorials. Further, Chapter 2 shows the leadership's beliefs on the internal US position entered the public narrative as well. The belief in ideology, the similar methods of analysis, and the ability to influence content reveal an active, powerful relationship existed between the Central Committee and its propaganda apparatuses.

¹¹⁹ “350. Memorandum of Conversation,” 850.

¹²⁰ “370. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 953.

CHAPTER 2 “*PRAVDA* TELLS THE TRUTH”

If not for Leon Trotsky, *Pravda* may have never come to Russia. The Ukrainian Menshevik group in charge of the paper installed Trotsky as an editor to help the moribund paper in 1908. “*Pravda* was completely run down, and its publishers hoped that Trotsky could breathe new life into it.”¹²¹ The group later disbanded and Trotsky was “*Pravda’s* sole master.”¹²² Trotsky accrued debt, sold possessions, and accepted loans from foreign socialist groups to keep the paper running.¹²³ By 1909 Trotsky had secured funding and support from the Russian Central Committee on the condition of their close and direct involvement. The relationship between leading Bolsheviks and the paper became stronger over time until it became the “Organ of the Central Committee” after the October Revolution. To have the leaders of the October Revolution at the center of the newspaper’s history was no coincidence, apocryphal or not. It was a harbinger of the close relationship between the Soviet leadership and its propaganda apparatuses.

The negotiations conducted from 1969-1972 and public debate on ABM gave the Soviet press a great deal of material to cover. Coverage focused on internal US politics, the development of American ABM systems, and the great contrast between the two powers in relation to offensive and defensive arms. The newspapers gathered US news reports, observed civilian organizations, and quoted congressmen in order to support its portrayal of the United States. In articles on its foreign policy, Soviet leadership outlined the merits of its foreign policy, one that was in stark contrast to US foreign policy. In editorials on the United States, the newspapers illustrated how US actions were immoral and against the global good. The timing of

¹²¹ Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky 1879-1921*, (New York: Verso, 2003) 158.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 159.

the coverage was important because of negotiations occurring at the same time. The CPSU sought to shape the narrative to influence both domestic and international readers.

Pravda and *Izvestiia* covered the ABM issue to champion to Soviet citizens the state position on ABM and its desired self-portrait—that the Soviet Union would stand defiantly for peace against its constitutive other, the United States. This projected image was one of ideology. The Party promulgated an ideological position on ABM as it moved to accomplish realist ends. The themes of this narrative were consistent and established a clear division between the USSR and the United States. The USSR was unified in its foreign policy and purpose; the United States had internal divisions and dissent regarding foreign policy and ABM. The USSR was for the promotion of peace and international security; the United States destabilized security and stimulated the arms race with its ABM development. US actions were reprehensible but they could only achieve good through Soviet cooperation. The Soviet government used the newspapers to portray itself as a country of peace in contrast to a politically divided, warmongering United States which destabilized international peace with its own ABM development. After the signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Soviet press claimed it as a victory for Soviet foreign policy that other nations and internal US actors could not deny. The need to justify Soviet cooperation with the United States came from the foreign notion that a communist country ought not to cooperate with a capitalist country. Soviet leadership disseminated a new foreign policy through the newspapers to justify cooperation. The newspapers constructed and maintained their narrative on ABM before and during negotiations before publishing parts of the diplomatic narrative.

“A New Round in the Arms Race:” The Soviet View of ABM Before Negotiations

At a time when the Soviet military worked to close the gap in strategic nuclear weapons, *Pravda* claimed that the new Soviet nuclear weapons for defensive purposes were made in response to the US nuclear monopoly.¹²⁴ At the outset of its coverage of ABM in 1966, *Pravda* established a new history of nuclear weapons that suited the Soviet narrative. After the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan it enjoyed a short period of nuclear monopoly, followed by a longer period of nuclear superiority whose effects were best seen during the Cuban Missile Crisis. “But the Americans were mistaken!”¹²⁵ The USSR developed its own nuclear weapons for defensive purposes in order to deprive the United States of its strategic invulnerability. Having done so, the USSR was in favor of curbing the arms race because of the mass destruction and inherent danger in nuclear weapons. The USSR desired to work with other likeminded—that is, peaceful—countries to liquidate nuclear weapons but met “the stubborn resistance of the imperialist forces.”¹²⁶ The USSR vowed to continue its struggle for peace and it certainly continued the themes illustrated in this article.

This type of language and the notion of US invulnerability were evident in prior Soviet action. Khrushchev wrote in his memoir that it was important for the United States to see “what it feels like to have her own land and her own people threatened.”¹²⁷ Not until the late 1960s did Moscow achieve nuclear parity after which Washington could not dictate terms from a superior nuclear position. The threat of missiles in Turkey was detrimental to Soviet security and the Soviet military took steps to rebalance the situation. In this view, one can see Soviet action as reactionary or defensive in nature and in accordance to its doctrine. “Defense is moral, offense is

¹²⁴ M. L’vov, “Iadernye problemy i bezopasnost’ narodov,” *Pravda*, May 25, 1966.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Nikita Khrushchev, trans. Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 494.

immoral,” Alexei Kosygin said when asked to discontinue the Soviet ABM system.¹²⁸ The nation that operated in reaction to aggressors was the moral nation. According to the newspapers, the Soviet state acted morally when it bolstered its strategic deterrent against the forces of imperialism. Other US technical developments—for the defense of its own nation, no less—signaled further aggressive and destabilizing measures.

On the issue of strategic arms and ABM the Soviet newspapers mirrored CPSU officials. The Soviet government for years had proclaimed its interest in curbing the arms race even in the face of imperialist forces.¹²⁹ In 1967 then-Secretary of Defense McNamara announced that the United States would build an ABM system. The newspapers decried the announcement as a “New Round in the Arms Race.”¹³⁰ The ABM program would mean great material cost for the USSR and run counter to its policies in favor of curbing the arms race and promoting peace and the Soviet Union was not alone in condemning ABM as a destabilizing issue. It was the “opinion of many countries” that an agreement on ABM would benefit peace and security.¹³¹ But the United States and the military-industrial complex were in the way of an agreement. Only by reforming its militaristic ways could the negotiations with the USSR on ABM proceed. The negotiations “would answer the interests of both countries and the problem of strengthening general peace.”¹³²

When the United States moved forward with its ABM program in 1967, *Pravda* began to report directly on American ABM policy. US Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara announced the construction of an ABM system costing \$5 billion. According to the author, Iu.

¹²⁸ Powaski, 165.

¹²⁹ L’vov, “Iadernye problemy i bezopasnost’ narodov.”

¹³⁰ Petrov, “Novyi tolchok gonke vooruzhenii.”

¹³¹ V. Viktorov, “Nekotorye itogi i perspektivy k peregovoram ob ogranichenii strategicheskikh vooruzheniĭ” *Pravda*, July 7, 1971.

¹³² “Put’ k razoruzheniiu.”

Petrov, this was a waste of money.¹³³ In this instance the invisible hand driving US policy was the military-industrial complex. The amount of money involved meant that the program would go forward due to the momentum of such a project and not because of McNamara's decision making. Further, this was a large investment into an arms program that raised Soviet tensions. The development of a US ABM system was not a good end in itself.

This article did not mention Soviet ABM systems or their morality. Rather, the article looked at Washington's position on ABM.¹³⁴ The development of strategic weapons by the USSR was a good end in itself. American development of similar weapons only destabilized the international situation. The roles were reversed as the Soviet newspapers argued that ABM development could lead to a further expansion of the arms race. The article also made no mention of the Soviet ABM system already deployed. The narrative need only be that the United States was developing ABM systems and it was their development that caused damage to international security. The Party's policy was just and the opposite of US foreign policy, dominated by the military-industrial complex and the need for capitalist expansion.

In the Soviet papers, the Party had a clear and unanimous message regarding the elements of its foreign policy—theirs was a Leninist foreign policy of peaceful coexistence. An article from Leonid Brezhnev featured in the November 4, 1967 edition of *Pravda* outlined to a public audience the “Leninist Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union.”¹³⁵ It was an international policy of peace because the USSR constantly kept countries from war.¹³⁶ This was the “first time in history” that there was a government “policy of defending the freedom and independence of

¹³³ Iu. Petrov, “Novyi tolchok gonke vooruzhenii,” *Pravda*, September 24, 1967.

¹³⁴ Powaski, 165.

¹³⁵ Leonid I. Brezhnev, “Leninskaia vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo soiuza,” *Pravda*, November 4, 1967.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

people and peace on earth—unlike the imperialists.”¹³⁷ The article invoked Lenin often as it dictated a policy of solidarity among socialist countries and the potential for peace towards imperialists as the USSR built itself up. In February 1969, Soviet leadership sent a note to Nixon telling him that it was “known” that the Soviet Union would follow a “policy of peace.”¹³⁸ Indeed, the note merely had to remind Nixon of these positions for it was already “known.” The note mirrored Brezhnev’s report on the Leninist Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union.¹³⁹ The Leninist Foreign Policy was “a policy of peace.”¹⁴⁰ Later in the year, *Pravda* published an open letter to workers of the Foreign Ministry.¹⁴¹ These *Pravda* articles openly discussed visions of foreign policy and one of which was specifically addressed to the workers of a Soviet ministry. The Soviet transparency on its foreign-policy positions shows that Soviet policy makers intended to influence foreign notions of Soviet policy abroad as part of its need to express Leninist values in foreign policy.

The open letter revealed language that reappeared in both the diplomatic and private discourse with the United States. “Strengthening the principles of peaceful coexistence”¹⁴² were one of the most important tasks of Soviet Diplomacy. This open letter at the end of 1967, as SALT negotiations drew near, shows the USSR trying to frame perceptions and disseminating its desired representation. Moscow donned the persona of peace-loving nation and instructed its foreign affairs workers to do the same.

“Big Rocket Debates:” The Soviet Projection of the ABM Issue in the United States

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ “Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 11.

¹³⁹ Brezhnev, “Leninskaia vneshniaia politika Sovetskogo soiuz.”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Central Committee, Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, Soviet of Ministers, “Rabotnikam Ministerstva inostrannykh del SSSR i sovetskikh diplomaticheskikh predstavitel’stv za rubezhom,” *Pravda*, December 30, 1967.

¹⁴² Ibid.

As Richard Nixon entered the White House, he and Henry Kissinger began negotiations in earnest with their Soviet counterparts. Kissinger and Nixon pursued both long- and short-term interests in negotiating arms deals. The negotiations popularized the ABM issue and made it a topic for media in both countries. *Pravda* published several articles on debates over ABM in the United States to propagate the thesis that internal actors freely criticized, divided, and directed US ABM policy. There were divisions within the US Senate regarding ABM policy. The public too was not in favor of ABM deployment. All the while, the military-industrial complex drove policy with its influence in government. Such was the internal situation of US ABM policy as *Pravda* portrayed it.

Like Brezhnev at the Moscow summit, *Pravda* cited American newspapers to support its narrative.¹⁴³ A *Pravda* article reported that Democrats in Congress grew concerned over President Nixon's policies on ABM, only a few months into office.¹⁴⁴ The article goes on to cite the *New York Times*, civilian organizations, and prominent senators who all believed that the ABM policies solely served the military-industrial complex. Senators Edward Kennedy, Al Gore, and others deplored the sacrifice of the interests of humanity for the military-industrial complex and worry of the far reaching consequences for peace.¹⁴⁵ The article includes mention of a telegram from the National Academy of Sciences to President Nixon in which it warned of an escalation of the arms race. The article cited a wide range of public and government actors to fulfill the public narrative's purpose to portray a divided US internal position. The article does not entertain opposing viewpoints and does not use direct quotes. *Pravda* depicted only one view and puts its own words and phrases into the mouths of US policy makers. This practice

¹⁴³ "351. Memorandum of Conversation" in *Soviet-American Relations*, 858.

¹⁴⁴ TASS, "Amerikantsy obespokoeny," *Pravda*, March 16, 1969.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

extended to further articles throughout the year as *Pravda* showed a divided US public and a government operating under various political actors. The papers sought the “truth” on US ABM policy and covered many different topics to construct its consistent narrative.

In 1969 *Izvestiia* prophesized that the 1970s would be an era of “Big Rocket Debates.”¹⁴⁶ On the surface, the debates were confrontations over the efficacy and cost of ABM systems. However, “the unique aspect of these debates” were their “behind the scenes nature.”¹⁴⁷ The cause of the secretive nature was the support for ABM, which the newspapers consistently defined as limited to the military-industrial complex. “Big Rocket Debates” depicted the public dissent to bolster the narrative of association. The newspapers consistently associated American ABM with public or government dissent to instill this same association in the reader. If *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* linked American ABM with dissent and anger, then perhaps the reader would do the same. The Carnegie Foundation and other think tanks published reports that opposed ABM, one of which was featured prominently in the article.¹⁴⁸ These reports were “evidence” of the “many American specialists” who were concerned about the ABM issue. The article was emblematic of the Soviet coverage of the ABM issue within the United States. It supported the narrative of association showing the dissent in civil society and continued to assert that the only support for ABM came from the military-industrial complex.

“Generals Make Policy” read the headline of another article that denounced the immense and ambiguous cost of ABM systems paid “on orders and under the greedy gaze of big business.”¹⁴⁹ Lobbyists and the invisible hand of the military-industrial complex moved the policy forward in the face of great criticism of both its consequences and cost. The article cited

¹⁴⁶ Iu. Arbatov, “Bolshie raketnye debaty,” *Izvestiia*, No., 89, 1969.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ N. Kurdiunov, “Generalny delaiut politiku,”

senators, officers in the military, and published journals as filling out the chorus of those who argue against the blatant militarism.¹⁵⁰ Militarism influenced and, in this instance, controlled US foreign policy by defying logic to construct an ABM system. Another article whose headline read “Pentagon Policy under Fire from Critics” reported on a student protest at Harvard University against the arms race and militarism.¹⁵¹ *Pravda* would not miss opportunities to show a fractured US position and continued to publish articles to substantiate that claim. The author, N. Kurdiunov, sought to answer his readers’ questions in an article later in the year.¹⁵²

Amidst the heated discussion that Safeguard—Nixon’s new designation for the US ABM system—generated in the United States on the eve of a vote in the Senate on the ABM system, Kurdiunov asked “Who Advocates for Safeguard?”¹⁵³ To support Safeguard meant advocating for a program that used precious national resources to only escalate the arms race, said prominent political, scientific, and public figures.¹⁵⁴ In this light, why would anyone support such a program? Kurdiunov argued that pressure from military lobbyists and advertising made the race for votes tight. The *New York Times* reported on an advertisement that supported Safeguard funding. Many of the signatories had connections to the military-industrial complex.¹⁵⁵ The president of Chase Bank, Motorola executives, and corporate lawyers for firms relying on defense projects all advocated for Safeguard. The invisible hand that directed ABM policy made it “once again...clearly apparent who zealously [supported] Safeguard, who pushes the country down the path of a new and ruinous round of the arms race in the realm of unresolved, acute, and

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ TASS, “Politika Pentagona pod ognem kritiki,” *Pravda*, April 16, 1969.

¹⁵² Kurdiunov, “Kto ratuet za «Seifgard»?”

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

internal problems.”¹⁵⁶ These issues never left the Soviet public discourse and would later show themselves as part of the private.

Kurdiumov delivered another article later in August that touched on popular opposition to ABM and the mixed motives of the US government.¹⁵⁷ Even though the legislation passed by one vote, *Pravda* reported the Senate “bless[ed] reinforcement of the arms race” after having passed such a decision.¹⁵⁸ Kurdiumov provided a lengthy quote from the *New York Times* to show popular opposition to the vote. Selected quotes from senators critical of the system asked colleagues to follow a path of reason in this matter and promised hope for security.¹⁵⁹ It could not have been an accident to quote from an opposition senator, in this instance Sen. John Cooper, who used some of the same language as the Soviet newspapers had in prior articles. The Soviet public narrative could find no better reinforcement than a US senator. The senator’s words breathed truth into Soviet portrayals—division among US policy makers and need for greater security.

Pravda jumped at Senator William Proxmire’s investigative work that substantiated claims regarding the power of the military-industrial complex.¹⁶⁰ Proxmire was one of the many in the general public who were concerned with the militarization of the country’s economy and the growing influence of the military-industrial complex. Proxmire decided to investigate. What he found was a link between the Pentagon and defense industries. While Thomas Morris, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Material Readiness, served at the Pentagon, the contracts awarded to Litton Industries grew by several hundreds of millions of

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Kurdiumov, “SShA: v ugodu voenno-promyshlennomu kompleksu,” *Pravda*, August 8, 1969.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ TASS, “Obshchestvennost’ SShA protiv politiki Pentagona,” *Pravda*, May 5, 1969.

dollars. After Morris left the Pentagon, he went on to become vice president of Litton.¹⁶¹ Proxmire voiced a concern as to how the contracts for Litton Industries came about and worried about their potential continued influence on US defense contracts. This was the narrative *Pravda* created. It presented the story in a straight forward manner to allow the audience to make the connection towards corruption, collusion, and the great influence of the military-industrial complex.

Why did an internal review among public officials in the United States make the front page of *Pravda*? When viewed as a continuation or extension of the Soviet narrative—that the US policy yielded to the all-powerful military-industrial complex—the article serves as a smoking gun, confirming one’s suspicion. It was part of a larger Soviet narrative but it showed an American politician asking the same questions as *Pravda*. The article was short and lacks analysis of US military contracts or Pentagon proceedings. It did not corroborate Proxmire’s evidence with any other senators or reports and it did not debate Morris’ possible qualifications for his new job. Indeed, it did not state that Morris was involved with collusion because neither did Proxmire. *Pravda* merely restated an internal review by one US senator towards a colleague at the Pentagon. *Pravda* editors placed the article on the front page because it was one part of a distinct narrative that it had developed over years. It did not need myriad facts or quotes from sources in the know. The article needed only to restate the correlating facts and readers who followed the ABM issue would see the implications because it was an obvious continuation. It was a short article and a drop in the bucket in regards to articles linking the Pentagon to the will of the military-industrial complex. That *Pravda* continuously chose to fill the bucket shows its determination to uphold the narrative.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

An article in *Izvestiia* nearly a year later mirrored Kurdiumov's article on a divided Senate.¹⁶² Legislation "directed by the arms race" and for more ABM appropriations, passed by a slim margin. There were some congressmen who opposed ABM and introduced legislation pushing for its dissolution. *Izvestiia* reported that Nixon vetoed these bills. Further, the paper noted that Nixon did not support a housing bill because it was too expensive but supported an ABM system costing billions of dollars.¹⁶³ The Senate vote was what many "American observers" agreed that this was "another victory for the military-industrial complex."¹⁶⁴ The article used militaristic terms to characterize the issue. There were clear opposing forces, one of whom ultimately suffered defeat. The ABM issue became a battle and the article gave little hope for ABM opponents. It reported on several defeated anti-ABM bills to show the inevitability of the military-industrial complex's victory.

"A Path to Disarmament:" Promoting Soviet Foreign Policy during Negotiations

By late 1971, Soviet and American diplomats had agreed in principle during SALT negotiations to an agreement on the limitation of ABM. As they hammered out the details of an agreement, *Pravda* expanded on the proposals of the 24th Party Congress of the CPSU in an article published on August 28, 1971, on "one of the most important international problems of our time."¹⁶⁵ "Not one day has gone by in the post-war period where the imperialist circles have not perpetuated the arms race," ignoring the immense material cost of the arms race and the threat it poses to humanity.¹⁶⁶ In following its program of peace, the USSR has engaged in "constructive" negotiations with the US government. Total disarmament was the goal of Soviet

¹⁶² Iu. Barsukov, "Oppozitsiia terpit porazhenie," *Izvestiia*, No., 191, 1970.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ "Put' k razoruzheniiu," *Pravda*, August 28, 1971.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

foreign policy and the negotiations with the United States brought a “world without war” closer to reality.¹⁶⁷

The Soviet Union was working towards an “agreement” with the United States which would be “the initial step towards disarmament.”¹⁶⁸ During a meeting with Kissinger in February, 1971, Dobrynin expressed a similar path to disarmament.¹⁶⁹ Dobrynin said that an ABM agreement would be “a significant factor in curbing” the arms race.¹⁷⁰ The exact phrase of “curbing the arms race” appeared many times in the Soviet press including the headline of an article published after the ABM Treaty in June, 1971.¹⁷¹ This instance during negotiations was not a coincidence but reveals the phrase’s origins and the leadership’s approval and belief in it. Further, Dobrynin said this phrase several months before the article “A Path towards Disarmament” came out which mentioned improving negotiations that could yield results. Dobrynin shared a draft letter from the Soviet government on March 12, 1971 that also called for a “curbing” the arms race.¹⁷²

Why engage with the capitalist aggressor? Why publish a policy of peace and establish a public image if not to give the audience the tools needed to rationalize the situation in a way that suited the Soviet narrative. The Soviet government needed to justify its negotiations and agreements with the United States because they ran contrary to a traditional Marxist view of Soviet policy. With the effort given to establish the United States as the constitutive other, the entity that Soviet values defined as being the opposite, the USSR adjusted the narrative on ABM

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Dobrynin, “121. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 289.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ O. Grinev and V. Pavlov, “Vazhnyi shag k obuzdaniiu gonki vooruzhenii,” *Pravda*, June 22, 1972.

¹⁷² Dobrynin, “130. Memorandum of Conversation” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 307.

after the treaty to include justification and the benefits to the USSR for dealing with the warmongering other.

In an article published at the beginning of 1972, as an agreement on the arms negotiations was very close, *Pravda* called the arms race “one of the most difficult and complex international problems.”¹⁷³ The article again reinforced the differences between the United States and the Soviet Union. Boeing, General Electric, Lockheed and others were so invested in perpetuating militarism that they used their wealth and lobbyists to influence policy and the ABM policy was no different. The Pentagon spent \$1.3 billion on Safeguard annually for its creation and deployment. However, the government paid contractors from some of the companies mentioned \$5.2 billion dollars.¹⁷⁴ This discrepancy highlighted the endemic problems of the militaristic United States, relying on the arms race “to strengthen their position in the international arena and at the same time prevent peaceful development in the USSR and other socialist countries.”¹⁷⁵

The Soviet government needed to justify its cooperation with the United States. The narrative was that the USSR stood for peace and the United States was divided internally while the military-industrial complex directed its militaristic policy. Other articles in 1972 regarding the ABM treaty and relations with the United States would highlight the benefits of relations. The Soviet leadership shifted the narrative after the ABM Treaty to show that the Soviet government made positive strides for peace in spite of the United States. Unlike Nixon, whom the Soviet leadership accused of double talk in February, 1972, the Soviet government would have a consistent narrative that it kept to in public and in private.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ V. Larionov, “Opasnaia liniia,” *Pravda*, January 15, 1972.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ 264. Note From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon” in *Soviet-American Relations*, 594-595.

Soviet Victory

In the days after both parties signed the treaty, *Pravda* published an article with letters from readers—factory workers, Party members, and a doctor of historical sciences—that contained lines taken directly from *Pravda*. Soviet citizens cheered the document: “Thank you to the Party,” “A triumph of reason,” and word for word from the headlines of *Pravda*, “In the interests of all peoples.”¹⁷⁷ Each letter contained such language and closely mirrored the Soviet message on ABM and arms control. The Soviet people approved of its government’s work in the same language that it had disseminated for years. The process of establishing a specific narrative, one with its own language and methods, worked and attention turned to US-Soviet relations.

Only when the United States came to the table to negotiate curbing the arms race did US-Soviet relations improve substantially. As negotiations continued successfully in 1971, *Pravda* used a softer tone to describe the United States. “The results of the negotiations in Moscow of Soviet directors with President of the United States Nixon had a profound impact on US-Soviet relations.”¹⁷⁸ The article outlines the peaceful policies of the USSR and avoided the recurring narrative on US action in the arms race. It acknowledged the link between offensive and defensive arms, noting that the development of one precedes the advancement of the other.¹⁷⁹ An increase in defensive weapons development leads other countries to develop better offensive capabilities to overwhelm the strategic defensive weapons. Because the Soviet military had established nuclear parity with the US, both sides needed a treaty in order to avoid further escalation of the arms race.

¹⁷⁷ “Odobrenie sovetского naroda,” *Pravda*, May 30, 1972.

¹⁷⁸ O. Grinev and V. Pavlov.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Pravda held that US actions were inherently militaristic and destabilizing but in this joint US-Soviet venture, the treaty was a great help to humanity. The article does not denounce US action in the same manner as prior articles but rather shows the benefits of Soviet cooperation and the universal praise of the treaty. French, American, and Czech newspapers, the East German legislature, Indian Prime Minister Indira Ghandi, and US senators, all expressed their support for the ABM Treaty and SALT accord.¹⁸⁰ All supporters unanimously agree that the talks were a positive step to promoting international peace and security. The agreement was not a panacea but the first necessary step in arms reductions.

The article was the first in which the newspapers portrayed the United States as promoting international peace and security rather than eroding it. It took greater Soviet involvement to do so. The creation of the Soviet involvement was *détente*, a relaxation in the tensions of the Cold War. In the Soviet public narrative, the relaxation of tensions—which were in the interests of humanity—began when the United States reached out to the USSR for an agreement. That the United States was the warmongering nation whose military-industrial complex controlled policy was never in doubt. However, the constructive talks in Moscow showed that they could achieve salvation through cooperation with the USSR. The evil, imperialist, capitalist actions of the past did not matter, only the future of constructive talks and cooperation that would ease international tensions. Soviet policy was the greatest end in itself and though the treaty meant cooperating with the warmongering United States it still fulfilled the tenets of the promulgated version of foreign policy.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

The treaty showed the “great international authority of the Soviet Union” and the “significance of the program of peace taken from the 24th Party Congress.”¹⁸¹ The foreign policy was in line with the wishes of the proletariat and sought to improve the conditions for the expansion of communism and the curbing of imperialism. Moscow began to play a larger role in geopolitics when it participated in talks on nuclear-weapon test protocols. Continuing the program of peace, Brezhnev and Nixon signed the ABM treaty and the interim agreement in 1972, “documents of paramount importance.”¹⁸² The Soviet Union and the United States have affirmed with the treaty their goal to reduce the danger of nuclear war through their own action, that they would strive for more negotiations, and that they would adhere to legally binding acts to recognize each other’s security.¹⁸³ This showed the success of the Soviet Union’s principles and it was a blow to militaristic Cold War dogmas.

Above all, the Soviet government and the newspapers stressed the balanced nature of the treaty and that negotiations were the best way to improve relations.¹⁸⁴ The talks helped to normalize relations by opening dialogue between the two sides. It was very important that neither side would gain an advantage over the other and it was a triumph that the treaty was fair. The end result was a treaty that helped weaken the chances of nuclear war and answered the interests of the Soviet people, American people, and “all humanity.”¹⁸⁵ This was the Leninist Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union in action and it helped strengthen Soviet power in the peace-loving, socialist world.

¹⁸¹ “Printsipial’nost’ i deĭstvennost’ sovetskoi vneshnei politiki,” *Pravda*, June 6, 1972.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ “Ob itogakh sovetsko-amerikanskikh peregovorov,” *Pravda*, June 2, 1972.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

The above articles were part of series that praised the treaty in June 1972. The new narrative after negotiations was that the USSR emerged victorious from the ABM treaty. Entering negotiations, the USSR was practicing its policy of peace and the United States continued to destabilize international security with its weapons programs that were driven by the military-industrial complex. The result of negotiations was a treaty that limited each side's ABM development and deployment. The Soviet military had already deployed an ABM system while the United States had spent billions on its own missile defense systems before deployment. *Pravda* touted the treaty as more than just a victory of negotiation but also as a policy victory.

The language of the articles was evidence that the Party saw the treaty as a triumph of its Leninist Foreign Policy. A key factor in past articles for the USSR in defining itself and its foreign policy was how it portrayed the United States. The articles after the treaty, however, did not contain the language that was present in other articles on US policy. These articles contained the positive language that *Pravda* used to describe Soviet policy: the treaty benefited humanity by establishing closer diplomatic relations and eliminating the destabilizing force of ABM; it was in the interests of all peace-loving peoples; and it was an important step towards curbing the arms race. With the treaty, the United States had done something to warrant a positive reaction, something in the interests of international peace and security. The Soviet government had succeeded in accomplishing its stated foreign-policy goals and denying aspects of the portrayed US foreign policy. The treaty was not a victory for Boeing, Lockheed, and corrupt senators—it was a victory for all peoples, an important step towards curbing the arms race. The language of the international response to the treaty further supported a Soviet policy victory.

The newspapers also justified its government's policy in the article by highlighting the international response to the treaty. The international response served to validate Soviet

policy—between the two signatory nations only one received praise in the very same language that the newspapers used to outline Soviet policy. Papers abroad called the treaty an important step in deterring nuclear war and a “victory for peace-loving individuals.”¹⁸⁶ The East German legislature said that the treaty could bring the world closer to total disarmament. In the United States many in Congress and the news praised the treaty as a positive step. Notable congressman from both sides of the aisle, Kennedy, J. W. Fulbright, and Speaker of the House Carl Albert, gave their support.¹⁸⁷ The *New York Times* wrote that this could mean an end to the arms race. According to *Pravda* even “well-known representative of [Mutually Assured Destruction] Republican Senator Barry Goldwater, a victim in 1964 to a crushing defeat in the presidential election,” grudgingly supported the agreement.¹⁸⁸ One Congressman said after ratification, “This [was] the most important agreement that we’ve ever concluded with a foreign power.”¹⁸⁹ Noted supporters of the military-industrial complex could do nothing but support the agreement because it would be “irresponsible” to reject it.¹⁹⁰

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet published a declaration on the treaty as a success on many fronts.¹⁹¹ Had an agreement not been reached, it would have meant a costly continuation of the arms race, offensively and defensively. The treaty in no way hindered the defense of the Soviet Union. It represented the “equality” and “mutual respect” of both sides and their interests.¹⁹² The agreement accomplished this while “political actors in the USA that do not want to believe in the existing realities and would want to reverse the improving US-Soviet

¹⁸⁶ Grinev and Pavlov.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ TASS, “Soglashenie odobreno,” *Pravda*, September 16, 1972.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ TASS, “Vazhnyi vklad v ukreplenie mira i bezopasnosti,” *Pravda*, September 30, 1972.

¹⁹² Ibid.

relations” struggled against it.¹⁹³ Members of the Presidium praised the treaty as a “step towards realizing the program of peace from the 24th Party Congress” and a step towards implementing “our Party’s foreign policy.”¹⁹⁴

The treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States represented the fulfillment of Soviet foreign policy. It helped to temper the arms race, ease international tensions, and promote peace by limiting strategic offensive and defensive weapons. The papers had the task of showing the cooperation with a capitalist country or allowing a foreign treaty to dictate limitations on offensive arms as means to an end. The good end in itself was the Party’s policy and its leadership’s belief.

The Principle of Equality in the Press

The principle of equality (*printsip ravenstva*) became the dominant theme of the public narrative on the treaty. The treaty promoted peace, security, and a “normalization of US-Soviet relations.”¹⁹⁵ It weakened the chance of nuclear war but also improved relations by using diplomatic methods. The negotiations showed that force cannot decide international matters but “they can and ought to be resolved through negotiations on the basis of adherence to the principle of equality.”¹⁹⁶ The treaty was, according to one headline, “An Important Step towards Curbing the Arms Race.”¹⁹⁷ That *Pravda* article went on to claim that “relations with the USSR can only be constructive on the basis of adherence to the principle of equal security and the exclusion of unilateral military advantages.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ “Ob itogakh sovetsko-amerikanskikh peregovorov.”

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ O. Grinev and V. Pavlov.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

The article, like Dobrynin, stressed the importance of equality in relations and in any agreement. The article placed the issue in historical context, noting that the United States bullied the USSR with its nuclear superiority in the post-war period.¹⁹⁹ Now that the USSR had nuclear parity and was building an ABM system it required an acknowledgement of equality. Dobrynin fought for the sentences on equality to remain in the joint public letter. The article wrote that the agreements in Moscow built “towards recognition of the principle of both sides’ equality and that neither will receive unilateral military advantages.”²⁰⁰

The press used many of the same tactics as before in its coverage of the treaty after its signing. Like its coverage on other topics, *Pravda* published tertiary support for the treaty both foreign²⁰¹ and domestic.²⁰² The foreign press in Washington, Prague, and Berlin all support the treaty. “An important step towards disarmament—this characterizes the press [in East Germany]” and the Czech press hailed the treaty as “a practical realization of the program of peace adopted at the XXIV Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.”²⁰³ Citizens cheered for the “Victory of Reason” and said “We thank the Party.”²⁰⁴ *Pravda* also quoted US senators who gave the treaty a good appraisal. Senator Alan Cranston said that the treaty was “the most important agreement we’ve ever concluded with a foreign power.”²⁰⁵

The public narrative spent time to justify and praise the Soviet Union for its actions leading to the treaty. The treaty was a triumph for the foreign policy of the USSR and by

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ “Vazhnyi akt,” *Pravda*, October 1, 1972.

²⁰² “Osushchestvliiaia leninskie printsipy,” *Pravda*, June 2, 1972.

²⁰³ “Vazhnyi akt.”

²⁰⁴ “Osushchestvliiaia leninskie printsipy.”

²⁰⁵ “Soglashenie odobreno,” *Pravda*, September 16, 1972.

extension the peace of all peoples.²⁰⁶ The recent agreements and events showed “again and again the great international authority of the Soviet Union and more deeply reveal the significance of the policy of peace.”²⁰⁷ The article invokes Lenin and Marx to illustrate its policies.

In the Presidium’s decree on the ABM Treaty, the Party connects on themes in the public and diplomatic narratives and shows the relationship between the leadership and its press.²⁰⁸ Echoing its propaganda throughout the issue, the decree held the treaty as a positive influence in familiar terms. The treaty was a “big step towards curbing the arms race,” “realization of the program of peace,” and the “implementation of the general line of our Party’s foreign policy.”²⁰⁹ The decree, however, did not view the treaty as an everlasting panacea. There were still “political actors in the United States that did not want to believe in the existing realities and would want to reverse the improving US-Soviet relations.”²¹⁰ The decree also spoke of the treaty’s equality. The treaty represented “equality of security of the USSR and the United States,” the “mutual respect of the legitimate interests of both sides,” and “the principles of giving neither side an advantage.”²¹¹

In one decree the Politburo showed its deep relationship between the diplomatic and public narratives. The decree touches on the themes of the old and new public narrative. It reiterates its policy of peace and praises the new treaty as an integral piece of that policy. Before leaving the topic of peace, the decree ensured its audience that it would not abandon its policy in the face of “political actors” in the United States who tried to undermine policy. Finally, the

²⁰⁶ “Printsipial’nost’ i deistvennost’ sovetskoi vneshnei politiki,”

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ “Ukaz Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo soveta SSSR,” *Pravda*, September 30, 1972.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

decree recognized the equality of the treaty and acclaimed it as one of the most important aspects of the treaty. It was the embodiment of the leadership's relationship to the public narrative—they created it.

Conclusions

Through the entirety of the press coverage, the newspapers established a clear narrative on the ABM issue that culminated with a policy victory for the Soviet Union. The issue began at the end of the post-war period characterized by US hegemony and nuclear superiority. The Soviet defensive reaction was to build its own nuclear force to defend itself against the imperialists. The nuclear buildup was defensive in nature but it preceded a subsequent American arms increase both offensively and defensively. The result was an arms race between the two countries, one fraught with great material costs that increased the threat of nuclear war and destabilized international security.

According to the Soviet newspapers, Soviet policy did not contribute to the arms race. Soviet foreign policy was grounded in the Leninist principles of peaceful coexistence and focused later on the program of peace from the 24th Party Congress. Soviet foreign policy promoted peace and only built nuclear weapons for defensive purposes. The military-industrial complex drove US foreign policy and perpetuated programs like ABM to destabilize international peace and security. In the face of the imperialist aggression, the USSR instructed its diplomats to promote peace and began negotiations with the intention of promoting peace. Soviet diplomats started negotiations with a divided superpower.

US policy makers, newspapers, and the invisible hand of the military-industrial complex affected ABM policy. Congressmen openly questioned the President's ABM policy and whether

it would be economically feasible or tactically and strategically viable. Students protested the escalating arms race and scientists and other intellectuals debated its merits. All the while, the military-industrial complex steered policy to produce more weapon systems and contracts for its constituent industries. Congressmen investigated one another to find links to industrial corruption. These problems in hand, the USSR and the United States were able to reach an agreement on ABM. The resulting treaty represented a continuation of Soviet internal and foreign policy.

The Soviet government needed to justify its cooperation and dealings with the capitalist-imperialist United States. The notion of global revolution and many tenets of communism prohibited close cooperation with capitalist countries—the very ideological divide created tenuous relations. Communist ideology conflicted with Soviet action. To combat negative views of the USSR, the press promulgated a public narrative beneficial to the Party's image. It was David standing tall against the capitalist Goliath, armed only with the support of peace-loving peoples. And when the two opposing countries cooperated, the outcome met the new policy goals of the USSR. The press narrative of the United States was one of a warmongering, divided, capitalist country. In ideological terms, negotiations with capitalists did not follow the promotion of global socialism and revolution. The treaty, then, followed Soviet policy and represented another matter in which the state subverted ideological goals for national interests. To show support and justify the treaty, the papers referenced press commentary from all corners of the world, foreign leaders and civilian organizations, even US policy makers supported the treaty. That these supporters used *Pravda's* own language showed the universal nature of Soviet policy.

The treaty meant a chance at redemption for the United States. US policy did not help other peoples nor promote peace until it began earnest cooperation with the USSR on curbing the arms race. After the treaty, the language of articles representing US policy became positive. It no longer increased the threat of nuclear war but rather diminished it in part thanks to the treaty and the help of the USSR. The USSR was present to guide the United States to more peaceful policies. Since the two countries then began to cooperate, the newspapers took a kinder approach when discussing its nominative partner in peace.

The press proclaimed the treaty as a policy victory for the Soviet Union. It proved the prominent international authority of the USSR. It dealt with the United States on an equal footing and made a treaty that gave no advantage to either side. Only the USSR, implied the press, was on such a footing strategically to make such a treaty with the United States. The treaty was Soviet policy in action. Engaging in the treaty fulfilled the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence. Further, the treaty was derived from Soviet foreign policy. It established limits on offensive and defensive arms—measures in line with the Party's program of peace. It was a policy victory because it more closely adhered to Soviet foreign policy and not the militaristic policy of the USA. The Soviet Union had established itself as an international authority with a foreign policy of peace that the international community supported.

The Soviet leadership used the papers to establish a distinct narrative on US ABM policy, US-Soviet relations, and the success of Soviet foreign policy. *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* cited government contracts and links between policy makers and industry to show to role of the military-industrial complex in government. Articles whose sole purpose was to show disagreement among US leadership appeared on front pages. The press stuck to its message and used the same language in different articles often. The newspapers needed to establish the USA

in such a light because it required a constitutive other that negatively defined the Soviet Union, showing everything that the USSR was not. The press illustrated a narrative that proved Soviet national interests were greater than ideological imperatives. It proclaimed the treaty a victory for Soviet policy, curbing the arms race in its peaceful cooperation with the United States.

The ABM negotiations (1969-1972) influenced press coverage of ABM. As negotiations began the narrative shifted to show internal US divisions on ABM policy. One who read the Soviet narrative would see a weak and divided country approaching the negotiating table. When negotiations finished with an agreement, malicious language on US policy disappeared and in its place was the language of the Party's program of peace. Literally and figuratively in the press coverage, Soviet policy eclipsed US policy in its triumph.

CONCLUSION

The symbiotic relationship between the diplomatic and public narratives shows the very close relationship between Soviet leadership and the means of propaganda. Soviet officials covered the same themes as Soviet propaganda. He wrote on dissent in the US position to create a narrative of association as the papers did the same, following his lead. Dobrynin and the public narrative also influenced the Soviet leadership to action. The leadership's note to Nixon regarding his anti-Soviet rhetoric was natural reaction to the combined public narrative of Dobrynin and the press. Dobrynin and the Soviet leadership used propagandistic language when talking to their US counterparts. Different Party members at times expressed word for word the same phrase. The diplomatic narrative would also influence the content of the public narrative. The equality inherent within the treaty became a focal point of the public narrative after the treaty's signing. What was a dominant issue in negotiations became a dominant theme of the public narrative.

The ABM issue represents a close adherence to the Soviet Union's stated ideological goals. The Soviet press promulgated many times the Party's Leninist Foreign Policy of peace. By agreeing with the United States on the ABM Treaty, the Soviet government fulfilled its stated policy. Both sides acknowledged that ABM systems were destabilizing and led to reactive measures by the other side; the public narrative is littered with references from Americans and Soviets on ABM's destabilizing nature. By securing the treaty, the USSR achieved a foreign policy victory over the United States that achieved its ideological goals and protected its national interests. In this instance, lessening the chance of nuclear war was a reasonable interest for the USSR or any nation. The treaty then answers in more clear terms the ideological goals of Soviet foreign policy.

The Soviet leadership's connection to the means of propaganda and its presence in the diplomatic narrative supports a qualified idealist thesis of Soviet foreign policy. Support for the idealist thesis stems from active ideology in foreign policy. Proponents of idealism seek to show continuity from the October Revolution onwards as means of linking past ideology to present events. On the issue of ABM, the Soviet leadership did so themselves, promulgating the Leninist Foreign Policy of peace. The newspapers claimed that the treaty fulfilled this policy and created a relaxation of tensions with the United States. National interests certainly played a role in negotiations; the fear of nuclear war and capitalist encirclement was evident. However, these were universal fears that any rational state would consider. Soviet moves supporting the realist thesis in negotiations were limited to details within the actual agreement. The decision and all overtures towards the agreement itself were consistently made with ideology in mind. This close relationship between ideology and the move towards an ABM agreement support a qualified idealist thesis of Soviet foreign policy.

There remains a great deal that one can learn from the ABM issue in its historical context. One sees the influence Soviet leadership on propaganda; the success of the Leninist Foreign Policy of peace; and the instrumentality of propaganda in the Soviet diplomatic narrative. Though the ABM Treaty did not end the Cold War, it showed the depth of the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union for spheres of influence around the globe. The ABM Treaty briefly settled the issue and détente brought some modicum of calm to US-Soviet relations but the Cold War lasted nearly two decades more. ABM would make headlines again with President Reagan's announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative in 1983 and the arms race as a whole restarted with vigor. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, and a short few years after the communist experiment ended in 1991. However, the specter of ABM has yet to recede.

Blasting off from the *USS Lake Erie* in a cloud of fire, the United States' latest ABM missile intercepted its dummy target in a test over the Pacific Ocean on May 9, 2012.²¹² The United States unilaterally withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2001 and soon moved to establish ABM sites in former Warsaw Pact countries. The Russian Federation fears that those sites or newer seaborne systems diminish its nuclear deterrent. In an article published by the *New York Times*, the Russian representative to North Atlantic Treaty Organization called the alliance's current ABM plan for Europe a "threat."²¹³ Russian officials are denouncing US ABM developments in the press again. Russia and the United States appear set to renew hostilities over this issue—they have not learned from the past. They are set to repeat it.

²¹² "Aegis Ballistic Missile System," Missile Defense Agency, accessed July 19, 2012, http://www.mda.mil/system/aegis_status.html.

²¹³ Korchunov, Nikolai, "You Say Defense, We See Threat," *New York Times*, June 6, 2012, Accessed July 19, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/07/opinion/you-say-defense-we-see-threat.html>.

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ABSTRACT***PRAVDA TOLD THE TRUTH: ABM IN THE SOVIET PRESS AND US-RUSSIAN RELATIONS, 1966-1972***

by

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The destabilizing nature of anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems made it incumbent upon the United States and the Soviet Union to meet and diffuse tensions. Before ABM negotiations began in 1969, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* established a clear public narrative on the topic. According to this narrative, the Soviet Union adhered to its Leninist Foreign Policy and struggled for peace against the warmongering, divided United States. During negotiations, Soviet diplomats used the same language as the newspapers. They asserted that the Soviet Union wanted peaceful coexistence with the United States, in accordance with its Leninist Foreign Policy. They also stressed the need for equality in the treaty. After the two sides agreed to the ABM Treaty on May 26, 1972, the Soviet newspapers emphasized the equality inherent within the treaty. The strong relationship between Soviet leadership and its propaganda apparatuses shows the leadership's strong belief in ideology and its presence in foreign policy. The Soviet government pursued an agreement on ABM to fulfill both ideological and realist aims.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I was raised in the Detroit suburb of Bloomfield Hills. At a young age I gained an immense desire to learn and discover new information. History became my favorite topic because it helps to explain so much in the world. My interest in history accelerated in high school when I began to take formal classes to feed my insatiable appetite for history. I was not the best high school student but the work done in my AP European History course set the groundwork for my future in history. My passion for the subject was irrevocably sealed. I then began my studies at Eastern Michigan University. Knowing that I would work best by working on the subjects I love most, I quickly enrolled as a history major. I graduated from there in 2010 with an added minor in philosophy. To further my study for history I applied for graduate study at Wayne State University and was overjoyed to learn of my acceptance. I chose Russian history because of my family's ancestral link to the country and also because one needs to understand Russian history to understand the world today. My quick study of the Russian language in the summer prior to my enrollment and during my first year at Wayne State helped immensely in my studies. I settled on the topic of anti-ballistic missile defense because, like the Russia itself, ABM is still very topical. Through my over two years of study at Wayne State I have had the pleasure of working with a great advisor, Dr. Aaron B. Retish. He pushed me to be a better student and historian than I even thought possible. My wonderful friends and family have also contributed greatly to this work—mostly, ensuring that I stayed on task and especially helping me when I doubted myself. I hope to use my degree and the skills learned to study Russia or another country in more detail at a federal or private policy center.