

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

*Presents*

The Presidency in the Nuclear Age

October 12, 2009

Panel Three:

*The Cold War and*

*The Nuclear Arms Race*

**CAROLINE KENNEDY:** Good afternoon. On behalf of the John F. Kennedy Library, the Kennedy Library Foundation, and members of my family -- I'm Caroline, by the way -- I want to thank all of you for coming today. [applause] For scholars and students, Presidential Libraries hold the memory of our nation. They are unique repositories of our country's history. In helping to plan this institution, my mother described her hopes that it would be "a vital center of education and exchange and thought which will grow and change with the times." So it's an honor for the Kennedy Library to partner with the 12 other Presidential Libraries and the National Archives to host this timely symposium on the Presidency in the Nuclear Age.

The last time we did one of these on Vietnam, there were eerie parallels to current events, and I think the same is true today, which makes this conference all the more important and interesting, because we can't help but notice the parallels with past conflicts when we read the news of recent months. Just a week ago, there were two satellite photos on the front page of the *New York Times* which showed the development of a hidden nuclear site in Iran. The first depicts a building under construction. That was from January. And the second was photographed last month, which reveals a fully built structure fortified to withstand potential attack. And obviously those of you who were here this morning and others who remember 1962 can't help but be reminded of the photographs of the U2 satellite planes that were presented to President Kennedy as proof of the construction of Soviet nuclear missile sites in Cuba.

The question then, as it is now, is not whether nuclear weapons and the materials needed to build them are being developed, it's really how through the use of diplomacy and international law and all of our efforts, we can prevent these materials and weapons from getting into the wrong hands and ever being used against innocent civilians.

Throughout his career, my father believed in the power of history to guide us in finding the answers to challenges such as these. He encouraged members of his Cabinet to read Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* to prevent the kind of misjudgment that led to World War I in his day. He wrote *Profiles in Courage* to share the inspiring stories of eight U.S. senators who acted on principle and in the national interest and encouraged modern day citizens to take the same kinds of risks. And in his speeches he often alluded to lessons from the past. "History tells us," he reminded a German audience on the eve of his speech in Berlin, "that disunity and relaxation are the great internal dangers of any alliance. Thucydides reported that the Peloponnesians and their allies were mighty in battle, but handicapped by their policymaking body in which each presses its own ends, which generally results in no action at all." President Kennedy believed in taking action. He warned against complacency and encouraged the free world to confront the threats posed by our adversaries through the art of statecraft. "We must be united not only by danger and necessity, but by hope and purpose as well," he said.

Our purpose as we gather here today is to assemble historians and presidential advisors, scholars and diplomats, to analyze past presidential efforts to limit the spread and use of nuclear weapons and consider what lessons they offer to the perils of our current challenges. I know how much my father relied on the advice and counsel of Ted Sorensen on these matters, and we are so fortunate to have him, along with one of President Kennedy's most trusted national security advisors, Carl Kaysen, both here with us today. [applause] And I know I speak on behalf of everyone in this audience in expressing my appreciation to them, and all our speakers, for their willingness to participate in these proceedings.

I also want to thank Sharon Fawcett, the Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries, the Foundation for the National Archives, and all of the Presidential Libraries for their support of this conference. I think these Libraries spread across our country are incredible resources for citizens to really learn about and take part in history in their communities and across our country. And so I'd love to support all of our Presidential Libraries and thank them all for being our partner here today.

Clifton Truman Daniel is here representing his grandfather's Library, and it's always a pleasure for us to be associated with him and the Truman Institute. We are especially grateful to President George Herbert Walker Bush for officially convening us this morning, and President Bill Clinton, whose remarks will precede the last panel.

As it was described in the previous discussion, President Kennedy's experience during the Cuban Missile Crisis inspired him to move beyond the political and military structures he inherited and developed what he called a new strategy for peace. In the last year of his presidency, he made concerted efforts to strengthen international alliances and promote nuclear disarmament. Perhaps his proudest achievement was the first nuclear test ban treaty, a ceremonial copy of which is on display right outside this room.

Before the next panel begins, we will watch excerpts from a conversation between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Harvard University professor, Graham Allison. I want to thank Graham Allison for traveling to New York to conduct this special interview so it could be part of our conference proceedings. And again, I want to thank all of you for coming and participating and I hope you'll come back many times in the future. Thank you. [applause]

[VIA VIDEO]

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** I'm Graham Allison, a professor at Harvard. It's my great honor to introduce and interview a long-time professor, friend, colleague, former Secretary of State, former National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger. So thank you, Henry, for taking the time.

**HENRY KISSINGER:** Great pleasure to be here with you and a great pleasure to do this for the Kennedy Library since an important part of my life was associated with the family.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Thank you. So what I'm going to do is ask three or four questions about nuclear weapons and presidents and their advisors' attempts to grapple with them. And basically just put them out and let you talk, because I think the opportunity is to hear from you. In the White House years, you tell a story, which I think is fascinating; it's the beginning of the Nixon Administration, and you say amidst all the rest that's going on, "My staff and I with the President's strong support undertook a reexamination of military doctrine. The first problem was to redefine the strategy for general nuclear war. According to the doctrine of assured destruction, which had guided the previous administration, we deterred the Soviet attack by maintaining offensive forces capable of achieving a particular level of civilian deaths and industrial damage. It was all very well to threaten mutual suicide for the purpose of deterrence, particularly in the case of a direct threat to national survival. But no president could make such a threat credible, except by conducting a diplomacy that suggested a high irrationality."

How could the U.S. hold its allies together as the credibility of that strategy eroded? And how would we deal with this issue if it came time, as you say, if deterrence failed and the President was finally faced with the decision to retaliate, who would take the moral responsibility for recommending a strategy based on mass extermination of civilians? And I know this is the one you've wrestled with all your life. But in thinking about it now in retrospect, what would you recommend and how would it make sense?

**HENRY KISSINGER:** I have no answer. I have found no answer to it, because there is no answer to it. The question that tormented me most when I was in government and was one of those who would truly be asked, was what I would say if the two presidents I served were to tell me they'd come to the end of their diplomacy and they had no other weapons except nuclear weapons to resist. And I never gave myself an explicit answer,

but I would have been, at a minimum, almost totally reluctant and almost ... I cannot visualize that I would have said, "Let us implement the plan that might kill tens of millions of people in days."

On the other hand, in crisis, we had to maneuver as if we were, and mean it, increasing readiness in order to maintain the credibility of the threat. And there were two occasions when we went on alert, but a very limited alert, and the description of it by so-called investigative journalists are ridiculous. But there was a heightened readiness of conventional forces and that implied a certain limited readiness of nuclear forces. But our adversary was in the same position. And so both sides stopped well short of nuclear war. But in the contemporary period, when they are not highly technologically advanced countries capable of developing nuclear weapons, they may be technologically advanced enough to produce nuclear weapons but not all the control systems, nor the warning systems. Nor do they necessarily have, or probably certainly do not have, the same moral restraints. The further spread of nuclear weapons, in my view, produces a situation where nuclear weapons will be used some time, and then the world will live in a different situation all together.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Let me pick up from that one because when you had been the preeminent student of international order -- and my question really is to do with how fragile may the global nuclear order be today -- if you remember back in '63, Kennedy warned that on the current trajectory, he said maybe by the mid '70s, you would have 20 nuclear weapon states. And he said that would be catastrophic because it's just as you say, nuclear weapons would be used. That led to a diplomatic surge of activity that eventually produced the nonproliferation treaty and where we now have 9 ½ or 8 ½ nuclear weapon states rather than the 20 or 25 he was talking about.

In April, in *Newsweek* you wrote a very interesting piece in which you talk about the connection between nuclear weapons and world order. And you say, "Proliferation is the most immediate illustration of the relationship between world order and diplomacy. If North Korea and Iran succeed in establishing nuclear arsenals in the face of the stated

opposition of all major powers in the U.N. Security Council and outside of it, the prospects for international order will be severely damaged. In a world of multiplying nuclear weapon states, it would be unreasonable to expect that those arsenals will never be used or will never fall into the hands of rogue organizations.” So you say the next couple of years are really the time where this global nuclear order will stand or fall?

**HENRY KISSINGER:** Let’s take the two candidates for nuclear weapons: first, North Korea. Here is a country that has next to no foreign trade, no resources that anyone wants, no really great industrial capacity. Its powerful neighbors, Japan, Russia, the United States, and South Korea, well we're not neighbors ...

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** And China.

**HENRY KISSINGER:** And China, we oppose their program. If in the face of all of this they can emerge with a nuclear capability, as they seem to be doing, and if they can violate previous agreements with impunity and get new negotiations out of it, then the prospects of world order are very limited. Because why should not other countries follow the same road? And we have seen in Syria, the North Koreans actually were building a plant on their own model.

Now, Iran it’s even more complicated because North Korea does not directly threaten any other country with its capacity. Potentially it does, but Iran is in the middle of the world in which it directly, explicitly threatens Israel. But also the Sunni states in the region are not likely to sit passively while Iran, a Shiite, traditional ideological enemy, acquires a nuclear arsenal. And when you have the motivations of the Middle East added to nuclear weapons, restraint is an improbable result. So if Iran and North Korea sustain their nuclear ambitions, it will prove first that the international order and the multilateral system of negotiations is not working and cannot work.

Secondly, so that, therefore, there's no restraint on other states developing nuclear weapons. And furthermore, the use of nuclear weapons somewhere along the line

becomes much more probable, and that, even if it is not on our territory -- of course, if it's in our territory it will create a catastrophic reversal of perception. But even if we observe, say 100,000 people being killed in hours, which is one bomb, I think the impact of population will be that they will not want to be exposed to this. So you get tremendous new pressures for preemptive actions, some kind of imposed denuclearization of the world and an extremely substantially new approach to international order.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** One of the questions somebody was asking me the other day is could Kim Jong-il, having this history of defying everybody and getting paid and blackmailing and extorting, could he imagine he could just sell one of these ten bombs to Osama bin-Laden and get away with it. And even when you think of that, you think, "Of course he couldn't think that." And then you say, "Could he imagine he could sell to Syria a Yongbyon-style plutonium producing reactor that's 10,000 times bigger than this one little bomb and get away with it?"

**HENRY KISSINGER:** Well, he did that.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** And he seemed to do it. So I would have told you he would never imagine he could do the Syrian thing.

**HENRY KISSINGER:** Well, the North Korean regime is a strange regime and they are probably more out of tune with what is happening elsewhere than almost any country in the world. And their need for foreign currency is so great that you could imagine that they'd do something just to sustain themselves. But certainly as the number of nuclear weapons states increases either through their country's decisions or through what the Pakistanis present was a private enterprise, or genuinely through private enterprise of some kind, of unauthorized activities, the further spread of nuclear weapons seems to me inevitable, or steps where some country owns the delivery system and buys the warheads, so all kinds of ...

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Maybe the Saudis, yes.

**HENRY KISSINGER:** Whatever country.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Could be, yeah. The final question: I mean, here you look back on many, many years of wrestling with the nuclear issue. And now if you look forward, your proposition that: one, on the current trajectory things are going quite badly. So unless there's some bending of those trim lines, it's quite plausible.

**HENRY KISSINGER:** The negotiations for Iran haven't started. But it's very hard for me to believe that the Iranians will be less subtle than the Koreans, probably more so. And the international environment on the whole is more favorable to them than it is to North Korea. So unless there is a sudden reversal of attitudes in Iran, I would expect the negotiations to be protracted and at best delayed proliferation by a very short period. And then we have the problem that we've been discussing.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** That you've been discussing. So for the people at the Kennedy Library Symposium, you can't stop on so pessimistic a note.

**HENRY KISSINGER:** No, you need to come up with some great ideas.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** What could you say that would be more optimistic about the prospects for a president and nuclear weapons?

**HENRY KISSINGER:** Look, I got started on this, which will pain some of my Democratic friends, through Arthur Schlesinger, who handed me a communication he had received from Tom Finland (?) about nuclear strategy. And I wrote him a letter expressing my views, which he then sent to *Foreign Affairs*, not I, and which got me into writing about nuclear matters at all.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** So that's in the mid '50s?

**HENRY KISSINGER:** That was the mid '50s. It was 50 years ago. So I would appeal to this group of a new generation. We have left you this problem. I know what the problem is. I know it requires a determined policy to deal with, but I'm not saying that I have it all worked out. And maybe you can come to conclusions or start research or start thinking that will lead us toward a direction where nuclear weapons do not dominate our thinking about foreign policy. That is a key requirement.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Thank you very much, Dr. Kissinger.

**HENRY KISSINGER:** All the best.

[END OF VIDEO]

**MARVIN KALB:** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Marvin Kalb. I used to be a reporter and I want to say just at the very beginning that it's my pleasure to have been asked by the Kennedy Library to return here once again. I've spent a lot of time here always to my benefit. I've learned a great deal. And this time, this panel is going to pick up where the other two left off. But our responsibility is to discuss this issue between the Nixon Administration and the Reagan Administration. In other words, between SALT I, Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty 1972 Moscow, until Reykjavik 1986, and at Reykjavik, both Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev were actually discussing something that Kissinger has just finished with: the idea that we ought to come to a time, if possible, when we can do away with nuclear weapons. And Kissinger was saying as a tool in diplomacy that you could think about diplomacy in other ways.

Graham Allison in the earlier panel made the point, and I just wanted to pick up on that, that as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis and then the American University speech, '62, '63, I got the impression that he was saying that both sides were moving towards a more sensible control, the effort toward a more sensible control of nuclear weapons. Now, we have to remember that in 1964, October, Khrushchev was kicked out of power because there were people in the politburo -- Eisenhower might have called them the Soviet

version of the military industrial complex -- who did not like the idea of any movement in this direction and were offended as Soviet Union, in their eyes the great Soviet Union, had lost during the Cuban Missile Crisis. No question about that. And it's interesting that if you begin to check on defense spending in both the Soviet Union and in the United States through the '60s, you'll find Russia pumping a great deal of money into strategic weapons; the United States towards the end of the '60s not putting as much money in because President Johnson wanted to have both his Great Society and the continuation of the war in Vietnam, and Vietnam was beginning to cost a great deal of money. So we get to 1972, and we have what SALT I called strategic parity between the two sides.

Now, I'm here with to my immediate left, Tom Graham, Special Representative for the President on Arms Control during the Clinton Administration; to my immediate right, Ken Adelman, Director of U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament during the Reagan Administration; Nick Thompson, the author of this new and quite wonderful book, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan and the History of the Cold War*; and you have already met Dick Rhodes over here, the Pulitzer Prize winning author, he knows everything about this subject.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Can I say one thing?

**MARVIN KALB:** Tom?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** I would like the record to show that also I was Ken Adelman's lawyer when he was in the ...

**MARVIN KALB:** You know, and Ken needed a lawyer. [laughter] Okay, Tom, let us start with you. Tell us what it was like. Was the decision to go for SALT I the direct result of the idea of strategic parity, or was it that one side or the other saw an advantage that the other was getting and through a treaty could try to control that spread?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** I once asked, in 1972, a prominent Soviet official, what would have happened to the Soviet ICBM program if there had been no interim agreement. And he said that we would have continued building ICBMs until our generals said we had enough. I think the United States was very much interested in stopping the Soviet increase in the number of their ICBMs and ICBM launchers. We did want an agreement that would halt the continuing, and very considerable, buildup in Soviet offense because if it wasn't stopped, we'd have to respond to it. And so certainly on the U.S. side there was an interest. And the Soviets traditionally are always interested in a deal with the United States, at least in principle, because it puts them on the same level as us.

**MARVIN KALB:** Now Nick Thompson, do you have a feeling that there was altruism on both sides? Both sides were seeking ways to control the spread of these dreadful weapons so we could all live in peace and harmony?

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** There were definitely some people on both sides who believed that we should stop the spread of these dreadful weapons and live in peace and harmony. And actually, on the inside I think most people were trying to gain maximum advantage for their own side. My grandfather, Paul Nitze, liked to argue that what you really need to measure is you need to measure throw weight and you need to reduce to equal levels of throw weight. Now, it just so happened that throw weight is the metric by which the Soviet Union had the largest advantage. So it's like an apple farmer and a watermelon farmer and the apple farmer says, "Well, let's tax on weight." It's the way to arrange the arms talks in order to help your side the most.

Now, that's a good negotiating position and it's a good place to start. But he wasn't doing it entirely out of altruism. He wanted to find a situation that would be stable, and to him stability meant one where the United States has the maximum advantage, the maximal rational position that you can get to because that will be most stable. Where we have more weapons, where we're the least threatened by them, that's the position that is best for us and that is also best for the world. And I think that was the starting point of the

U.S. negotiating team and they would maintain that position throughout the talks at Reykjavik.

**MARVIN KALB:** Ken, explain to us what was the position of leading Republican thinkers in the '70s leading up to the Reagan Administration where you were. What was the thinking among these people as to the advantages for the United States of actually entering into these agreements which would restrict our ability to build up against a perceived Soviet threat?

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Let me just say that I thought the two panels this morning were just superb and this has been just a terrific conference, one of the best I've ever been to. And the subject is an important and engrossing subject.

I guess I'm a conservative Republican, and I believe that arms control should, like all public policy, should be kind of honest about it. And there's a big difference between intention and results, okay? And it's wonderful to have wonderful intentions in the world, but it is awfully nice to recognize concrete results when they come about. And in the '70s when you were looking at the SALT I and the SALT II, the intentions were wonderful. Let's do something about nuclear weapons. Just like President John F. Kennedy wanted to do something about nuclear weapons, and that something that President Kennedy wanted to do something about was to have a comprehensive test ban treaty. It ended up as an atmospheric test ban treaty that really wasn't so much of a nuclear issue, it was an environmental issue. Why? Because you got to put all tests underground and it increased the number of tests that both sides did afterwards. So you can say, well, it was a wonderful treaty, it was wonderful for the environment. I don't think it did much for the nuclear buildup.

My objection to SALT I and SALT II were that there were limits on nuclear weapons that were far above what the Soviet Union and the United States were building at the time. So if you were restricting me from high jumping 6'2", I could live with that because I don't high jump 6'2", I don't even do 5'2". And so it was no sweat off my back. It gave people

in the West who lived in free societies the illusion that there was something that was going on that was going to be helpful to them where the limits were so high that they really weren't any limit at all.

Let me end by saying, and your very good question, Marvin, on this, end by saying that it is important to concentrate on what are results in arms control. And to tell you the truth, that wonderful exhibit on the history of the presidency and nuclear weapons, the subject of our conference right here, has all kinds of great exhibits. It includes papers of Jimmy Carter, what he said on SALT II. There is no mention there of the only treaty that has eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons, which was the INF Treaty. There is no picture of Ronald Reagan signing the INF Treaty. There is no mention in the thing of what date it was or that it was at all. And so we have the only single treaty in arms control that has accomplished something real besides the nonproliferation treaty, which I think was wonderful. And it is not in the history of nuclear arms and the presidency, it's not even mentioned. Now, that's not fair.

**MARVIN KALB:** We have two people who'd like to comment. Hang on just one second. Tom, please?

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** It's wonderful intentions, and no results.

**MARVIN KALB:** Hang on a second. Tom?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Ken, you have to start somewhere. You can't just, in these negotiations, you can't just start with where you want it to come out. The purpose of SALT I and SALT II was to try to stop the momentum. Admittedly, the limits were high, that's where they started, and then in the SALT I and SALT II. And then when we moved on to START, we were gradually able to ratchet it down. But I think the SALT had to come first.

**MARVIN KALB:** Dick, Ken used the word “illusion.” And I'm wondering right now, I'd like to hear from you a philosophical point of view. You've been at this for a long time. Is there an element of illusion in the pursuit of the control of nuclear weapons when we look around and people are still trying to get them.

**RICHARD RHODES:** Let me just mention a couple of things in the context of this period of time.

**MARVIN KALB:** Please.

**RICHARD RHODES:** You all recall, I'm sure, the famous line of the Soviet negotiator after the Cuban Missile Crisis who said to our negotiator, it may have been Nitze as a matter of fact, “We will make sure you will never be able to do this to us again.” He meant, of course, stand them down over this conflict between the two sides at that time. The result of that was that the Soviet Union began building up its arsenal. That's why that growth followed afterwards until by the end of Jimmy Carter's era, there really was parity, whatever that means.

But I want to emphasize through all of this discussion in terms of illusion and reality something Robert Oppenheimer said very early on. He said something like this, “Our 20,000<sup>th</sup> warhead isn't going to matter much compared to their 5,000<sup>th</sup> in the larger scheme of things.” So when you're talking about buildups and we're ahead, and so forth, that's the illusion. The illusion is that once you have a certain number of nuclear weapons, more will somehow give you an advantage -- of course, provided that they're secure, that there's a way to prevent them from being taken out, and so forth. But the rest was a kind of, in my reading, a kind of high Mandarin mathematical game of angels dancing on the head of pins about who has more in throw weights, and so forth. If you have a few, as our military said to our presidents more than once, you have more than enough. And after that, it's politics. And in the case of the Cold War, it was very much domestic politics in this country as much as international politics in the world that led to these issues back and forth about what we should build and what we shouldn't build.

**MARVIN KALB:** And two points we've already seen earlier today, that it was the use of two atomic bombs that introduced the atomic age and introduced this whole problem that we're discussing right now, how do you control these ...

**RICHARD RHODES:** Two miniscule atomic bombs, two tactical nuclear weapons by modern terms.

**MARVIN KALB:** By modern standards, exactly. Tom?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** And the United States during the Cold War built 72,000 nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union 55,000 nuclear weapons. That's probably more than we needed.

**MARVIN KALB:** Is that right?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Well, you know, there's an interesting measure that's come up as a result of the work first on the atmospheric effects of nuclear weapons and more recently in the general look at global warming. The same computer models that have made it possible to look at global warming have made it possible to go back and look at the question of nuclear winter. And the results are that it would be even worse than was predicted. In one particular study that I find terrifying the scientists look at what would happen if India and Pakistan exchanged 50 Hiroshima-scale atomic bombs each. Now, that's about 1 ½ megatons total yield. But because they would inevitably be used on cities, which have lots of kindling, the effect would have spread around the world from even such a small regional nuclear war and lowered the Earth's average temperature by one to two degrees, which sounds like nothing, but it represents something like what happened during the global meltdown during the Middle Ages when crops failed in the summertime and millions of people starved. So even a small regional nuclear war is more than enough to bring about this baleful change in our environment.

**MARVIN KALB:** You know, it's interesting, too, that we ought not to forget that in the Soviet Union there were similar debates and similar arguments that were taking place. There was a group in the Kremlin that believed in what is called proletarian internationalism. And there was another group, peaceful coexistence. Both believed that communism would prevail in the end, but both were thinking about different tactics, which led to different strategies. And the first group was much more adventuresome in the '70s at projecting Soviet power in Africa and trying to do it when the United States collapsed in Vietnam in 1975. They regarded that as proof that communism was going to succeed all over the world. So you have that kind of conflict on both sides dealing with something, the idea of the Mandarin Chinese, the number of weapons always seemed to me sort of crazy. There was an unreality about it all.

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** One point to follow up. We also know from recently opened Soviet archives that the military industrial complex in the Soviet Union was even more powerful than in the United States. So even if the United States had stopped, even if the United States had said, "We're not going to do this," it's not clear the Soviet Union could have stopped.

**MARVIN KALB:** Exactly.

**RICHARD RHODES:** Well, then it's clear that, in fact, their factories were working on the principle of what they called over-fulfillment of the quota where you're supposed to have 110 percent next year and that they were doing that in terms of building up their nuclear arsenals. So they were just cranking them out as rapidly as possible.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Also, we were well into the area of having far more weapons than we had conceivable targets.

**MARVIN KALB:** Ken?

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Yeah, two points. One is you mentioned the dawn of the nuclear age. I was very lucky in 1963 while at Grinnell College to spend an hour with Harry Truman talking about dropping the bomb and his involvement in that. I took a morning constitutional, or what he called his morning walk, with him at 7:00.

**MARVIN KALB:** Did you keep up with him?

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Yeah, it was wonderful, a hundred paces a minute I remember. And so we were talking about that and he was of the view that, number one, George Marshall had enormous influence on his thinking, and Marshall wanted to proceed and win the war in the Pacific. And number two, that he had gotten memos from the Joint Chiefs saying that 500,000 Americans would die in the invasion of Japan, and he as President of the United States was not going to be responsible for 500,000 American deaths that he could prevent. And I said, “Oh my God, it must have been a hard decision for you?” And I can't remember exactly what he said, but the impression was it wasn't a hard decision; it was pretty clear, and that he slept very well that night. I'm sure he wasn't revealing anything to me as a college kid at that time, but it really was fascinating to get a view into the dawn of the nuclear age on that.

Point number two, I would say, and Richard you've done wonderful work, we loved your books, I love your books, on the nuclear issue. A lot of these scenarios that you paint on the nuclear winter and the whole Herman Kahn exchange and everything, it got very theological very quickly and really lost any kind of touch of what would happen in the real world. No, it really did and it was kind of goofy, to tell you the truth. And for many years, I would go out to Omaha for the SAC briefing on strategic arms and what we would do in a nuclear exchange, and there would be just hundreds and thousands of exchanges back and forth. And I kept asking the SAC commander, and they kept changing, what about one or two options for a president? And the idea was that there was no one or two options for the president that they could conceive of, which seemed to me kind of ridiculous. Which also seemed to me to lead into what Ronald Reagan really was hot about, which was the Strategic Defense Initiative. In other words, to give a president

another option besides the option of A, doing nothing, or B, going after a bunch of civilians in the Soviet Union that did no harm to the United States at all and wiping out some cities, a third option of protecting the country against an incoming ballistic missile, and I thought it was a wonderful idea.

**MARVIN KALB:** And we're going to talk about the SDI very soon. But we're jumping a president and we cannot be disrespectful to President Carter. Because among the many things that he did, the point, I think, is that he was a one term President and he's gotten a bad rap from historians and I think an awful lot of reporters as well. But in his one term in office, he did do a number of very remarkable things in foreign policy. One of them was to come up with the SALT II agreement. Never ratified, but the SALT II agreement was signed, and it was in Vienna with President Brezhnev and we'll get a look at that right now, if somebody would roll down the curtain.

[VIDEO]

**MARVIN KALB:** I've always been enormously impressed by the number of times Presidents in similar situations to President Carter say things that are so obvious. These agreements can, in fact, help and they can do wonderful things. And yet, with SALT II it was never passed. It was never approved by the U.S. Senate. And so the Presidents can strike their deals but they have to be mindful of the political support that they have back at home. Nick, were there other issues involved in why Carter could not get that through the Senate?

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** Well, as Paul Nitze's grandson, I have a familiar responsibility for the failure of SALT II. He was probably more responsible than any other civilian for stopping that treaty. His argument was SALT II will freeze into place a situation where the Soviets are stronger than the Americans. If we freeze into place that situation, they'll be tempted either to attack us or to use their advantage for leverage in, say, Berlin or Angola. That was the argument, and there have been lots of debates, including people here, about whether that was true or not.

So he goes, testifies in front of the Senate 12 times. He forms a committee for the present danger; he writes all these books. And then he also does something interesting at the very end. In August of '79, he sort of helps to authorize the CIA to leak some slightly bogus information about a brigade of Soviet soldiers in Cuba, which according to one of the lead negotiators in SALT II, is the banana peel on which the Senate negotiations tripped.

**MARVIN KALB:** Did your grandfather leak that?

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** He didn't leak it, but the CIA official came to him and said, "I have this information. People sort of know about it." My grandfather is at a breakfast table in his house, he said, "Ah, that's old. It's not really true." And then paused for a second and said, "You know what? Maybe we should tell people about that again." And a couple of days later, it appears in a senator from Florida ...

**RICHARD RHODES:** Jones.

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** Right. Brings it up and everything breaks out. Getting to one of Tom's points from earlier, I interviewed a man named General Ditinov (?), who was the equivalent of the Deputy Secretary of Defense in Moscow. And we're sitting down at a table in Moscow and he said, "You know, if SALT II had passed, we wouldn't have gone into Afghanistan." He said, "Maybe arms treaties are somewhat superficial. You're blocking in limits that are irrational. Who cares? You have enough weapons to destroy the world. But actually they do do something; there is something to be said for signing these agreements and shaking hands." And his argument was now there's evidence that no one in the Soviet Union actually ever officially authorized the invasion of Afghanistan, so you can't really be sure that this man is correct, but let's assume he's correct. There's a pretty strong indicator there in his argument that these treaties do matter.

Now, whether it's good or bad, looking in five years, SALT II is defeated. Five years later, that looks sort of like a bad thing. The Soviets went into Afghanistan. Five years later, that looks sort of like a bad thing. Fifteen years later where it looked like that had brought down the Soviet Union, that kind of looked like a good thing. Twenty-five years later where Afghanistan has turned into what it is and some of the people we funded have turned into our major enemies, maybe that wasn't such a good thing. So it just shows how these agreements, when you play them out into the future, they have very, very complicated chains of effects.

**MARVIN KALB:** And, Tom, please go ahead?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** I was on the, if you'll forgive me, Nick, I was on the opposite side of your grandfather on that one.

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** More than one person was there.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** And I thought that the SALT II treaty did do some significant things and that it stopped things where they were and then brought them down about 10 percent. That it could have been improved, of course, but it was a step which led us eventually to start an INF and start I and II, and so forth. I firmly believe that what defeated the SALT II treaty was the Carter Administration's, in my opinion, mishandling of the Cuban issue whereas somehow the 1,700 Russian troops in Cuba were converted into a central threat to American national security and the President goes on national television and says, "Don't worry, at least not too much." And just things started to go downhill after that. Then you had the Iranian crisis where we didn't look so good either. But many Soviets did tell us, rightly or wrongly, mainly it was just a fabrication, but that high ranking Soviets said that, "We concluded in Moscow after your less than effective handling of the Cuban issue that you were no longer interested in SALT II. And, therefore, why not go into Afghanistan? We had nothing to lose."

**MARVIN KALB:** You think there was a connection between Afghanistan and SALT II?

**RICHARD RHODES:** You know, that's something I really haven't looked at. Afghanistan was such a curious event, so seemingly inappropriate, anomalous. Carter was convinced that they were on their way to the Mediterranean and issued a strong statement that if they got out of Afghanistan, "We'd nuke you." I mean, he really went that far.

**MARVIN KALB:** Get them to the Persian Gulf before they get to the Mediterranean.

**RICHARD RHODES:** Oh, there you are.

**MARVIN KALB:** There was that feeling, certainly, among any number of people, and not just Republicans, Ken, who felt that the Russians were, in the late '70s, emboldened to move aggressively in different parts of the world.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** That wasn't an impression, that was right.

**MARVIN KALB:** And they were. And as I said before, they had been moving into Africa and they were very happy with the result of the Vietnam War and they felt that Afghanistan was there. But if you talk to Russians, they don't talk to you about SALT II on this issue, they talk to you about something closer to home. For them, it was that their leader, Brezhnev, had a doctrine. That once a government was socialist, it would remain socialist with the help of the Soviet Union. And the government in Afghanistan at that time, by the way, imposed by the Russians, was socialist. And so they felt that they had to go in to protect them. I'm only making the point that it was not really nuclear weapons that propelled the Russians into Afghanistan, but something closer to home; namely ideological fidelity, really. But you've been itching, and I don't want to hold you back any longer. [laughter]

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** I've been itching over several things. Number one is I don't like the moral equivalence between the United States and the Soviet Union, and we're all in this together. I certainly don't like the whole attitude that the Carter Administration or President Carter had in Vienna that basically where he said after the pardon, and I thought we were going to get to it in the television, that "President Brezhnev and I dream the same dreams and have the same aspirations for the world," which is absolutely false.

**MARVIN KALB:** I mean, Presidents do look into souls and see all sorts of things.  
[laughter]

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Well, they should, they should. It's a very silly approach to foreign policy.

**RICHARD RHODES:** I don't think Brezhnev's dreams had anything to do with the policy.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Yeah, it may not have anything to do. I am saying one of the, I think, contributions of the Reagan Administration, and I think it was a contribution of the John F. Kennedy Administration, too, to tell you the truth, was that they saw the Soviet Union in realistic terms. Not that they dreamed the same dreams and had the same aspirations of the world, but they had a different basic philosophy of whether the state predominates over the individual or the individual determines the fate of the state and elects his and her own leaders and that we the people preside in a political system. And I think that the two realistic presidents, among others, of the post-war era were John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.

And I think that was awfully important, especially in the '80s when Reagan by and large de-legitimized the Soviet Union, which was a tremendous difference between what President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger had done where they said, "There are two super powers. We have to work out all these things because both of us have a lot of power and we have to deal with them." Reagan always wanted negotiations, and I was

grateful for it because I was there in a very minor role trying to help him do that negotiation. But he always saw it not as these moral equivalents in any sense. He saw it as a legitimate, freely elected government by the West, and an illegitimate totalitarian dictatorship on the Soviet side. And he started to say as early as 1982 that communists and the Soviet Union would end up in the ash heap of history. That was de-legitimizing. I think that with SDI and the evil empire were enormously important on really ending the Soviet Union and the threat we say we have today. And I think that contribution is a contribution many times what any kind of contribution in arms control, except for the INF treaty and the nonproliferation treaty, those were two real marks in the arms control. But otherwise, it was all kind of talk, it was all good intentions, it was all that you were really going to show how much you really, really did care. And I am all for caring, and, you know ...

**MARVIN KALB:** I'm glad to hear that, that's good.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** I reached out in my sensitive cares, my sensitive inside. But the fact is that as leaders of countries with a lot of responsibility, we should do more than just care, we should have real results. And the real results I'm thinking of, time now is stop the spread of nuclear weapons right now, not going to show how much we care by talking about a zero nuclear option, which is just total pie in the sky and a big waste of time, if you ask me. But in a way to really talk about the specific problems with specific results in charge. Because otherwise, it's just all fluff, and I can't stand fluff in government.

**MARVIN KALB:** Okay.

**RICHARD RHODES:** That conceded, I think I've always pondered what the world would think of this democracy of ours if we had managed to kill 65 million people on one of our Curtis LeMay excursions across Europe and Russia and China. What exactly would democracy mean under those circumstances? My point is this: allowing for the differences between the sides, allowing for the worst possible Soviet intentions, the real

danger was, and is, nuclear weapons themselves. Not the moral issue of who's right and who's wrong, in my judgment. I think that's where the Reagan Administration went wrong, by basically, and even more so the second Bush Administration, with the idea that somehow it's okay to have nuclear weapons if you're the good guys, but it's not okay to have nuclear weapons if you're the bad guys. [applause]

**MARVIN KALB:** Hang on, you had your shot.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** I just disagree.

**MARVIN KALB:** Tom, you wanted to contribute.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Well, first, just to follow up on what Dick just said, I do think it's bad policy to say good guys can have nuclear weapons and bad guys can't because good guys change and become bad guys. The perfect example of that is that there was a lot of people advocating that we should engage in controlled proliferation back in the late '70s and see to it that our friends, the good guys, got nuclear weapons and kept them from the bad guys. And two of our friends that should get these weapons, it was thought then, were Iran and Yugoslavia. Wouldn't that have been a great idea? And so it is the weapons themselves.

**MARVIN KALB:** Who came up with those ideas?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Well, a famous *Washington Post* columnist was one of them. His name begins with H.

**MARVIN KALB:** Who do you have in mind?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Well ...

**MARVIN KALB:** Come on, who do you have in mind?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** I can't remember his full name. He's the man in the wheelchair. What's his name?

**MARVIN KALB:** Charles Krauthammer.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Krauthammer, yes. It wasn't H.

**MARVIN KALB:** And Charles is the one you say who came up with the idea of ...?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Well, I wouldn't say he came up with, but he was one of the people.

**MARVIN KALB:** Who was pushing the idea?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Who recommended this as a possible ...

**RICHARD RHODES:** Well, George W. Bush as well. You know, he opened the way to India becoming a part of the whole program without joining the nonproliferation treaty, so he had that idea as well.

**MARVIN KALB:** Talking about Bush II.

**RICHARD RHODES:** Bush II, yes.

**MARVIN KALB:** Tom, finish your point.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** What I wanted to address was some of the things that Ken said. I don't think it ever was the intent that arms control negotiations or limitations on arms would bring down the Soviet Union. Not that people were against bringing down the Soviet Union, it is just that it was thought that what's really important here is to control

these weapons so we don't destroy each other and bring them gradually under control. The only arms control negotiation in which I was involved that I thought maybe did have that, at least partially as an objective, was the conventional armed forces in Europe treaty, direct negotiation between the Warsaw Pact. And that is when the East fell apart and the Soviet Union dissolved as the aftermath of that negotiation. But that was different. These nuclear negotiations, the purpose was to establish stability. And I will concede absolutely that President Reagan did a lot to bring the Cold War to an end and to bring down the Soviet Union. I wouldn't dispute that at all. I just don't think arms control had anything to do with it, nor was it intended that it did.

**MARVIN KALB:** I would dispute that. I'm not sure that the Reagan Administration was principally responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** I said a lot, a lot.

**MARVIN KALB:** A lot or however you want to define a lot, Mr. Diplomat. No, I mean seriously. What principally brought the Soviet Union down was, in my judgment, was that it was a rotten system and it would ultimately collapse.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Not that way.

**MARVIN KALB:** Oh yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Nick, did you want to contribute?

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** I want to, in a way, sort of come ... Tom's point was that arms control wasn't designed to bring down the Soviet Union. Your point is that the Soviet Union was a rotten system that was going to collapse. I think you can actually make the argument that American foreign policy is defined by any one word during the Cold War, is defined by containment. And the idea of containment, as framed by George Kennan when he came up with the idea, was that the Soviet Union is a rotten system and we should be confident in our ability that if we can draw this out, if we can prevent the Soviet Union from expanding, if we can just contain them, eventually we will prevail.

And he said, in his famous X article, he said the Soviet Union could overnight go from one of the most powerful nations in the world to one of the most piteously weak. And this is a very important idea, even for today. And remember that if you have confidence in America, you don't necessarily need to destroy the enemies, you just need to contain the enemies. Now, what exactly that means in foreign policy debates today, we could have long, long conversations about. But it's a very important idea, and I think it's one from the Cold War that we should not forget.

**MARVIN KALB:** Tom?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** One second. The nexus between a rotten system and arms control, I think, is most graphically displayed by the SALT I treaty, and I think many people believe that's a good treaty. Certainly, a big effort right now is going into finding a replacement for it when it expires. But if George Bush the first hadn't taken the position that he wanted to sign that treaty before he started his Maine vacation, we never would have had that treaty. He agreed with Gorbachev that he was going to sign it on July 31<sup>st</sup>, and go on vacation August 1<sup>st</sup>. And the coups took place on August 9<sup>th</sup>. If the START treaty had been delayed until the fall, there never would have been a START treaty or limitations on strategic options because the Soviet Union, being rotten, was falling apart. So there is a relationship.

**MARVIN KALB:** We have to move on to the next phase. I know you have something to say.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** You've got to let Ken ... Give him ...

**MARVIN KALB:** Ken, I want to give you at least ...

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Thirty seconds.

**MARVIN KALB:** Thirty seconds.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Okay.

**MARVIN KALB:** Forty.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Forty-five.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** I feel like Davy Crockett at the Alamo.

**MARVIN KALB:** Don't joke about it, you're losing time.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** I feel like Davy Crockett at the Alamo, swinging Betsy around.

**MARVIN KALB:** You've just blown 20 seconds. [laughter]

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Taking on just not my panel members ...

**MARVIN KALB:** Twenty-five.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** ... but the moderator as well I have to take on.

**MARVIN KALB:** You blew it. Let's move on. [laughter]

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Let me tell you, Richard, I think, is mostly wrong because the problem is I understand nuclear weapons, but the problem is who has the nuclear weapons. We don't worry about Britain and France having nuclear weapons. There is a difference between a scalpel, a knife in the hand of a surgeon as opposed to the hand of a mugger in the alley. And, therefore, the problem is not primarily nuclear weapons, the problem is primarily who has it. I think in Tom Graham I disagree ... Let me just go

around. This is equal treatment on that. Tom, you say that arms control was not bringing about the nirvana. But every president who gets around an arms control agreement talks about the nirvana, and it is impossible to separate the two on that.

Our moderator I'll take on ...

**MARVIN KALB:** Esteemed.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Esteemed moderator, on that because he's giving me this extra time, for which I'm very grateful. And it's not true that the Soviet Union collapsed because it's a rotten system that was bound to collapse. It is true it was a rotten system that collapsed, okay? But lots of rotten systems around the world don't collapse. Lots of rotten systems around the world keep building up their military, especially because that's the one thing they do very well on that. And we just saw Henry Kissinger up in the sky here talking about North Korea. That is a rotten system, that is far more rotten than the Soviet Union. They are doing fine on building nuclear weapons, thank you very much, and they are not collapsing, unfortunately to me, and they have not for those years. So that analogy, that oh my God, it was so rotten it had to collapse, is just wrong, Marvin, with all due respect.

**MARVIN KALB:** Ken ...

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Nick, let me turn to you.

**MARVIN KALB:** No, no, no. You're finished. You're finished. I mean, you're not only wrong, you're finished.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** I just wanted to leave no friends on the panel.

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** We'll go through the audience when ...

**MARVIN KALB:** Down, Fido, down, down. [laughter] We talked earlier about the possibility that great leaders are actually thinking, and Dick, you had mentioned that, and Kissinger alluded to it, sort of, the idea that we can end nuclear weapons, that we don't need them anymore, that we can somehow live in a world without them. And that idea actually came up at Reykjavik, at the Reykjavik summit between Reagan and Gorbachev. And if the screen would come down once again, we will have a look at these two leaders either before or after or during their discussion of this issue.

[VIDEO]

**MARVIN KALB:** I don't know about you, but I just heard President Ronald Reagan speak in the schmaltziest way about a communist leader, about looking at his eyes and the soul and all that bologna.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** You have to explain that.

**MARVIN KALB:** No, I don't even want the explanation. But I tell you something that's quite interesting ...

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Why don't you all think what I would have said had I been given a chance.

**MARVIN KALB:** You got the chance, you blew it. I would like to get at this issue because you spoke about this earlier, Dick. Are we engaging in something that is totally an illusion to believe, even though George Schultz believes it and Henry Kissinger and Max Kampelman. These are very responsible ...

**RICHARD RHODES:** Indeed.

**MARVIN KALB:** And they are saying in the most serious way now that we've got to move toward an absolute zero end to nuclear weapons. I mean, it's a great idea, but why should I take it, I'm being a cynic here, why should I take that seriously?

**RICHARD RHODES:** This group came together for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reykjavik summit, Schultz and Sid Drell, a physicist at Stanford, talked about it and then elaborated it into quite a large group of people involved. They saw it as what followed from Reykjavik. And from their perspective, as people who were there, what followed was the hope on the part of both Reagan and Gorbachev, however blue sky it may have seemed to Ken, that it might be possible to eliminate nuclear weapons. Gorbachev had an argument that he called common security, which is basically the idea that you can only be safe if your enemy is safe, not if your enemy is unsafe. He got it from Billy Brontz (?), who got it indirectly from Niels Bohr, all the way back to the Second World War. That's what Gorbachev was discussing at Reykjavik with Reagan.

Reagan's dream was the technological solution, not common security, but SDI and they faltered at that point. It's kind of a tragic moment; I've actually read the play about it, which is getting readings around the country these days. It was such an interesting, dramatic moment.

Twenty years later, Schultz and this group of people included eventually Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, Bill Perry and others, felt that the time was right and they had a particular advantage over all of the peace-oriented people over the years who have tried to move to zero. They were insiders or had been insiders. It wasn't possible for people to say to them, from the perspective of government, "If you knew what I knew, but you can't because it's secret, then you would know that these things aren't practical." They have been moving quietly, but I think effectively, in the years since 2007 when they started this process, late 2006, toward discussing this and moving this with leadership around the world. And I think they've made quite a bit of progress, most of all in convincing President Obama, when he was a candidate, that he should sign on for this movement.

So recently when Obama spoke at the United Nations, the four horsemen, as they're now called, were sitting in the front row. There is something moving now, and I think it gives great hope. It partly derives from the fear that arose with 9/11 that it now becomes possible to conceive of sub national entities that could produce a nuclear weapon or steal a nuclear weapon and use it for terrorist purposes and would not be deterrable. So that's another aspect of the story. But times have indeed changed.

**MARVIN KALB:** Tom, you're a professional diplomat and you've been involved in this sort of negotiation for a lot of time. Do you believe that it is realistic for people to spend hours, weeks and months pursuing an end to all nuclear weapons.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Well, we're all required to do so as parties to the nuclear nonproliferation treaties.

**MARVIN KALB:** To go down to zero as part of the deal?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** As part of the deal, ultimately. And the question is what does ultimately mean? What Schultz, and I'm part of that group ...

**RICHARD RHODES:** I should not have left Mr. Graham out; he's been very much a part of that group.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** I was in part of it from the beginning. And as Dick was suggesting toward the end of his comments, the original motivation was, some variation of we can't go on like this. It's too dangerous. We have to find some way out, recognizing it's extremely difficult. And the Schultz group is not saying we should negotiate for zero tomorrow or next week or next year. It's saying that we should try to actually implement what we're already obligated to do over a very long period of time, find a solution to nuclear weapons. And beginning with some first steps like securing fissile material, achieving ratification of the test ban treaty, and so forth.

And Sam Nunn, one of the participants, frequently refers to this as zero nuclear weapons as the top of a high mountain. We can't even see the top yet, but we've been going down the mountain rather than up. Let's start going up.

**MARVIN KALB:** We've only got about eight more minutes for this panel and I'd like to get some questions in from the audience. And one of them, which I'll direct to Nick immediately, is President Obama just received the Nobel Peace Prize. *Time* magazine has suggested that the nuclear weapon itself should have been the prize for keeping the peace for the last 60 years. Any validity in your mind to that?

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** Of course, there's some validity for that. I mean, there's no question that one of the reasons there wasn't ever a ground conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was because of nuclear weapons. So, yes, there's validity in that. I think that there's a useful anecdote about my grandfather Nitze which connects back to this and to that as well. During the Cold War he was utterly convinced that America's arsenal need to be not as large as possible, but calibrated to minimize a risk of a Soviet strike. The Cold War ended, and he completely flipped. And his view at the end of his life -- when he was 92, he wrote an op ed in the *New York Times* and said, "Look, the Cold War is over. We need to move to zero." And so he was very much on the side of Graham here. And I think there's a very strong case you can make that nuclear weapons, though we ran a horrible risk during the Cold War, did keep the Cold War calm. Now, the situation is entirely different and we should work towards zero.

**MARVIN KALB:** This is a serious question, Tom. Are any young people involved in this pursuit, or is it just people sort of towards the twilight of their lives who want to move toward big and virtuous things?

**RICHARD RHODES:** I beg your pardon?

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** That's the right answer. Trust Dick to ...

**MARVIN KALB:** Thank you, Tom.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** Trust Dick to come up with the right answer.

**MARVIN KALB:** Ken, here's a question that was designed for you. Would you address the political influence of the corporate powers of our country in the delay of the decrease of all weaponry, nuclear or otherwise?

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** I think the simple answer is no. What is the question again?

**MARVIN KALB:** No, I think what the writer is getting at here is can you ascribe to the military industrial complex, the big corporate interests of the U.S., as the reason why we have not decisively cut our weaponry back? And you've already answered that.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** The answer is no, and it's wrong to say we have not decisively cut our weapons back and it's wrong, Tom, with all due respect, to say that we've been going down the mountain. The number of nuclear weapons, strategic nuclear weapons that the United States has now, are far, far less than anything I would have imagined taking office in the Reagan Administration in 1981, and then in the arms control business of '83. I couldn't conceive that we would be at as low a level as we are today. So let's not have this totally wrong idea that it mounts and mounts and mounts and we're getting bigger and bigger, that's just wrong.

And secondly, I would say if you're asking me is the number of nuclear weapons we have and Russia has today too large, I would say yes. We should reduce it all the time. There are serious issues we have to deal with on nuclear weapons. There is the spread of nuclear weapons, there's permissive action links. Tom, you've been wonderful on fissile material spread. There's about a list of 12 things. To spend a lot of time, a lot of effort, talking about zero on this is, I think, diverting yourself from the real issues that have to be done, the serious work, and to show you really care. I mean really care, really, really

care about it. And that, I think, is just wrong. I think it's a tremendous disservice. If I were in charge of the National Institute of Health or the Cancer Institute, and I went around and I said, "Let's have a big conference on how we can eliminate cancer, just remove all cancer," and do this time and time again, everybody would say to me, "Excuse me, Ken, why are you having all these expensive conferences on removing cancer? Why don't you just have researchers start doing research to eliminate, to get rid of cancer, all right? Or do the best you can on that." I see no reason at all to spend a lot of time and high executive intelligence on something that is just talking about how wonderful it would be in a world without nuclear weapons. Yes, it would. Wonderful without cancer, wonderful without tooth decay ...

**MARVIN KALB:** Got you.

**KENNETH ADELMAN:** Wonderful without all these, you know, everything.

**MARVIN KALB:** Nick, you wanted to say something.

**RICHARD RHODES:** I get ten seconds.

**MARVIN KALB:** But you'll all get a chance. Nick, go ahead.

**NICHOLAS THOMPSON:** Very quickly, the question is whether corporate interests are why we can't get to zero. Of course it's not, and it's an extremely complicated problem because as soon as we reduce, the value to other countries of having nuclear weapons increases, so you have to deal with that. If we had zero, then the value of having one for somebody else is much higher. So that's a hard, hard problem.

Another thing, getting to the bits that we have to decommission and the permissive action links, one thing that we've been arguing about all morning and we talked about later is the Soviet Union in the mid '80s actually built a doomsday machine, a device that would allow it to measure whether the United States had launched a missile that hit the Soviet

Union. If it did, there were a set of steps, four steps, that could eventually bypass command authority and allow it to launch an automatic retaliatory strike. That system hasn't even been decommissioned. I mean, there are a lot of steps that we need to get to. We need to get rid of things like that well before we can get down to zero.

**MARVIN KALB:** Tom, you go first.

**THOMAS GRAHAM:** It's not me that says we're going down the mountain, it's Sam Nunn that says we're going down the mountain. I was just citing him. And he wasn't referring to the number of weapons. Without question, the number of weapons has been vastly reduced. He was referring to proliferation and the threat of weapons worldwide. And the Schultz movement is not a movement that just talks incessantly about zero every day, all day. It's a movement about how do we get on the road towards zero, such as controlling fissile material with zero as a far distant goal. Not that different from what we're obligated to do under the nonproliferation treaty.

**RICHARD RHODES:** So to that, I would just point out what someone, I think it may have been Nitze in his op ed piece, which said that trying to deal with nuclear weapons in the real world, which is what Ken's talking about, is in fact indistinguishable from moving towards zero. So those who feel that zero is an impossible goal, which I would add includes Sam Nunn and I think Bill Perry -- at least Perry told me he had not yet, in years of thinking about it, been able to figure out how you do that -- those who don't feel that that's a reasonable goal but think it's something pie in the sky, can still commit to the other principles that are involved of getting the CTBT ratified, getting control of fissile materials around the world, reasonable reductions in coordination with Russia.

To which I would then add my last point of the nuclear weapons abroad in the world. Somewhere more than 90 percent are in the hands of the United States and Russia. So the question of getting to zero is mostly about us and our counterpart on the other side of the Earth.

**MARVIN KALB:** I think we might bear in mind, too, that many of the people, many of the leaders of this Schultz group, would be defined politically as middle of the road or even to the right of middle of the road -- conservative Democrats and Republicans, George Schultz at the very top would be the number one example of what it is that I'm trying to say.

But our time is up; the turning of the clock is such that we have to move on. Thanks, panel, and thanks to you all very much. [applause]

END OF SESSION