INTERSECTING ARGUMENT & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: AN ARGUMENT CRITICISM OF THE STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

by

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(Under the Direction of Edward Panetta)

ABSTRACT

In March 1983, President Ronald Reagan delivered the "Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security," announcing that the United States would begin development of a space-based missile defense system (the Strategic Defense Initiative) that would render nuclear weapons obsolete. Widely derided as an impossibility from the outset, to speak of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) is to invoke the image of a haphazard executive whose ill-conceived faith in technological salvation heralded the beginning of a final, dangerous phase of interstate competition. Complicating that view, this thesis argues that the SDI, as public argument with technical ramifications, fundamentally changed the rhetorical terrain of the Cold War, creating the conditions under which the Soviet collapse at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit became possible.

INDEX WORDS: Ronald Reagan, Cold War, Soviet Union, rhetoric, argument criticism, presidential rhetoric, Yuri Andropov, arms control rhetoric, nuclear weapons rhetoric, public argument, Reykjavik Summit, Geneva Summit, rhetorical history

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DEDICATION

Andelain I hold and mold within my fragile spell,
While world's ruin ruins wood and wold.
Sap and bough are grief and grim to me, engrievement fell,
And petals fall without relief.
Astricken by my power's dearth,
I hold the glaive of Law against the Earth.

Andelain I cherish dear within my mortal breast;
And faithful I withhold Despiser's wish.
But faithless is my ache for dreams and slumbering and rest,
And burdens make my courage break.
The Sunbane mocks my best reply,
And all about and in me beauties die.

Andelain! I strive with need and loss, and ascertain
That the Despiser's might can rend and rive.
Each falter of my ancient heart is all the evil's gain;
And it appalls without relent.
I cannot spread my power more,
Though teary visions come of wail and gore.

Oh, Andelain! forgive! For I am doomed to fail this war.
I cannot bear to see you die-- and live,
Foredoomed to bitterness and all the gray Despiser's lore.
But while I can I heed the call
Of green and tree; and for their worth,
I hold the glaive of Law against the Earth.

Stephen R. Donaldson, *The Wounded Land* (1980)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis conducts an argument criticism of the March 1983 "Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security,"[1] demonstrating that both the speech by President Reagan and the ensuing response by Soviet General Secretary Andropov had a framing effect on subsequent U.S.-Soviet arms control initiatives. In particular, this project establishes that the 1983 "Address to the Nation," as public argument with technical ramifications, impacted the way in which governments circulated public discourse surrounding arms control. Drawing a through-line from its immediate reception to the 1985 Geneva Summit and the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, the study discusses the influence of the speech on the negotiating strategies of both the United States and the Soviet Union, concluding that the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) was a significant contributing factor to both the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

To introduce the project, this chapter is organized as follows. First, one discusses the substantive exigency for the project, outlining the contemporary import of nuclear policy and arms control as subjects of public deliberation. Second, having discussed the contemporary significance of the study, this chapter reviews both the history of the SDI, as well as its immediate political context: The Cold War. Third, this study juxtaposes a literature review of rhetorical scholarship concerning SDI against a broader criticism of current literature on spheres of argument. Fourth, developing that critique, this chapter outlines the significance of the thesis,

[1] Alternately cited as "Address to the Nation."

as well as its theoretical significance for scholars of argument. Finally, this chapter concludes by discussing the organizational structure of the remainder of the thesis.

Contemporary Exigency

The United States of America, and consequently the liberal world order, stands at a crossroads. The naïve triumphalism of the Unipolar Moment[2] has faded, history (despite claims to the contrary) has returned, and American leadership, its once-firm foundation, has begun to crack under its own weight. As "external challenges come from the ambition of dissatisfied large and medium-size powers to overturn the existing strategic order," thereby testing the resolve of the American polity, support for a global role has wavered, fading towards a politics of 'America First' (Kagan 2017). Indeed, the election of President Donald Trump signals a turn inward, a populist politics that prioritizes the homeland at precisely the moment when the challenge of those dissatisfied with American leadership demands a more global view. Whether one seeks to sustain American unipolarity, or to disengage from the role of global hegemon, the inopportunely forked paths that lie ahead give rise to the necessity of choice: It is a time for choosing.

While the multi-faceted nature of American leadership demands that either path will lie along many dimensions, two areas ought to be of particular interest. In the nuclear realm, long-held domestic concerns by both analysts and the American public writ-large over the value of an aging (i.e. deteriorating) nuclear arsenal have reached a boiling point concurrent with modernization initiatives by strategic rivals, suggesting that nuclear weapons (and consequently arms control) have taken on a significance not matched since twilight of the Cold War. Indeed,

[2] The period following the end of the Cold War where the United States was the unchallenged superpower. Unipolar (one pole) is when the international system is dominated by one country, as opposed to the bipolar (two poles) competition of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. For further explanation of the term, see Krauthammer (1990).

inheriting the dilemma faced by his predecessors, President Trump has repeatedly signaled a strong interest in maintaining nuclear superiority: "We're never going to fall behind any country even if it's a friendly country, we're never going to fall behind on nuclear power" (Smith-Spark 2017). However, despite the growing importance of strategic armaments, the high cost of modernization (estimated at a trillion dollars over ten years) suggests that robust debate regarding the purpose, composition, and deployment of American nuclear forces will accompany the decade(s)-long initiative (Glanz and Sanger 2017).

Juxtaposed against the growing significance of offensive strategic arsenals, the continued development of nuclear weapons by North Korea raises the profile of defensive systems designed to neutralize such weapons. For example, the July 2017 test of the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Aerial Defense) system deployed by American forces in South Korea sought to reassure allies of the United States, yet nevertheless provides fuel for critics concerned that such defenses undermine the offensive reality of nuclear deterrence (Berlinger and Callahan 2017). Indeed, it ought to come as no surprise that, following the 2001 American withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, condemnation came swiftly from the same rivals (i.e. Russia and China) that now call into question the enduring viability of American leadership (Neilan 2001). Deployment of missile defense by the United States in years since has only drawn more pointed criticism, eliciting Chinese fears of encirclement and dire warnings by Russia of the possibility of nuclear war (Kramer 2016; Taylor 2017). However, given the arguable necessity of defensive systems to guard against the potential threat posed by rogue states, and the international profile of American strategic defense, debate over the proper role and deployment (if any) of BMD[3] has become, and will continue (for the foreseeable future) to be, necessary.

[3] Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD).

This strategic dilemma, both offensive and defensive, constitutes the exigency for the current study. In particular, given the role of rhetorical scholarship in aiding publics to craft their own futures, this work seeks to assist contemporary citizens (and the politicians who serve them) by returning to a historic moment of similar strategic tension: the twilight of the Cold War. Moreover, given that both missile defense and nuclear policy lie firmly within the war powers of the Commander-in-Chief, and the power of the presidency to define the discursive terrain of the political moment, a focus on presidential rhetoric is not only warranted, but necessary (Zarefsky 2004). Indeed, as public support is critical to the success (or failure) of the populist agenda of President Trump, such scholarship ought to be understood as a direct, political intervention (Horowitz 2017).

Thus, this project undertakes an argument criticism of the "Address to the Nation," the March 1983 proposal of the SDI by President Ronald Reagan, returning to a period that (arguably) parallels the present, a historical moment defined by the bilateral tension of the Cold War, by the dual dilemma of missile defense and build-up of strategic arms. Indeed, as the rise of Russia and China increasingly defines the international stage, the dilemmas faced by the United States (e.g. arms control, nuclear modernization, and tension amongst great powers) bear striking resemblance to the challenges brought to the fore by American competition with the Soviet Union during the twilight of the Cold War. Positioning the "Address to the Nation" as public argument with technical ramifications, this project analyzes both the immediate persuasive function of the text as understood by the Soviet elite, and its enduring influence on the negotiating strategy employed by General Secretary Gorbachev at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, concluding that the SDI (as a primarily *rhetorical* phenomenon) was a significant contributing

factor to the subsequent arms control agreements, and easing of tension, that characterized the end of the Cold War.

History

The election of Ronald Reagan, and the ensuing American military build-up, the largest peacetime expansion in American history, brought about a final, dangerous phase of the Cold War. From psychological operations (PSYOP), a covert campaign whose aim was to undermine the psychology of the Politburo through covert U.S. military penetration of the Soviet periphery, to the growing threat of an American first-strike, the Soviet Union found itself under increasing pressure to respond to an expansive threat (Rosen 2014). The hallmark of such pressure, a Soviet intelligence operation codenamed RYAN,[4] which not only placed the KGB on permanent war-time footing but tasked the agency with monitoring the signs of the supposedly imminent threat of an American first-strike, reveals that "the Soviets' anxieties in 1983 weren't just a propaganda ploy, and weren't artificially packaged for internal [i.e. military] consumption. The country's leaders actually saw an air of immediate menace around even the smallest US actions" (Rosen 2014).

In March 1983, Ronald Reagan delivered yet another provocation, announcing the development of SDI, a space-based missile defense system that threatened to end the bilateral strategic competition in an American victory. Derisively termed 'Star Wars' for its proposed use of space-based laser interceptors, the system represented technological and strategic ambition of such magnitude that it bordered on science fiction. For critics, not only was a perfect defense technically infeasible, but the mere suggestion that such a program hinged on the viability of space-based laser interceptors bordered on absurdity (Schlesinger 1985; Brooks 1986).

[4] Abbreviation for Raketno-Yadernoe Napadenie, a Russian phrase for nuclear attack.

Moreover, even if such a system was feasible (which none conceded), a deployment of SDI would surely violate the ABM Treaty, undermining an already fragile nuclear equilibrium between the United States and the Soviet Union (Drell et al. 1984).

Despite these critiques, partisans of the initiative nevertheless defended the SDI. For example, Perle (1985) argued that even a moderately effective strategic defense would enhance deterrence by increasing the survivability of the American arsenal, while positioning SDI as merely a research program permissible under the ABM Treaty. Similarly, other defenders of the administration contended that through a broader interpretation of the ABM Treaty, the action of the Reagan administration did not violate the agreement (Sofaer 1986). Finally, though the most devoted of partisans defended the technical feasibility of the SDI, their assertions are belied by the record of history.[5] Following the end of the Cold War, the SDI program was terminated ten years after its initial proposal, having failed to produce a working prototype despite a decade of development and billions in government resources.

While the ultimate fate of the program, and its technical failure, lend significant weight to the arguments posed by critics, such a conclusion would be premature. The paradox of the SDI is that, despite its technical infeasibility, a fact obvious both in retrospect and to all but the most partisan of contemporary observers, a number of conservative analysts have attributed considerable importance to the initiative, praising the program as "the trump card in that President's end game versus the Soviet Union" (Reed and Bush 118). For example, defending the political efficacy of the hardline policies of the Reagan administration, Patman (1999) argues

[5] For example, four years after the initiative was announced, a memo by the Heritage Foundation proclaimed that "[t]he momentum of SDI research is greater than originally anticipated. What once seemed probable now seems certain. What one was possible now is probable. And what was once was thought impossible is now within reach. Clearly, advances in strategic defense technologies justify a strong vote of confidence in SDI" (Holmes 1987).

that a sustained American military build-up, coupled with an ideological offensive against the Kremlin, amplified an extant economic and political crisis within the Soviet Union, and "thus accelerated existing long-term pressures for foreign policy change from a possibility into an urgent necessity for significant elements within the Soviet ruling elite" (601). In particular, "the SDI announcement of March 1983 emerged as the most decisive factor in accelerating pressures for a revision of Soviet foreign policy," as the Soviet leadership measured the dismal prospect of success in a sustained technological competition between American industry and a faltering Soviet economy. As KGB General Nikolai Leonov explained: "[The SDI] underlined still more our technological backwardness. It underlined the need for an immediate review of our place in world technological progress" (qtd. in Patman 596). Similarly, KGB General Sergei Kondrashev identified the SDI as "the issue that influenced the situation in the country to such an extent that it made the necessity of seeking an understanding with the West very acute" (qtd. in Patman 596-597). Indeed, despite the technical ambition, and therefore the expected failure, of the initiative, the Soviet Union could not risk the successful deployment of SDI, as the country lacked both the economic and technical foundation to effectively counter the program.

This study explores and explains the apparent disconnect between the technical infeasibility of the Strategic Defense Initiative and its apparent strategic efficacy. In particular, this project argues that the Strategic Defense Initiative "symbolized a declaration of intent by Reagan to achieve strategic superiority over the USSR and undermine its claim to superpower status. It gave the Soviet Union a powerful incentive… to curb the arms race" (Patman 597). As such, criticism of the SDI not as an actually extant defensive system, but as a form of persuasion (i.e. argument), ought to be of prime interest for argument scholars.

Literature Review

To assess the rhetoric of SDI, one must place the initiative within its proper theoretical context. To that end, this section reviews previous rhetorical scholarship concerning SDI against the backdrop of argument criticism and the theory of spheres of argument advanced by Goodnight.

Goodnight (1982) outlines three spheres of argument:[6] personal, public, and technical. In the personal sphere, individuals engage in dialogue in a limited, private setting. Expanding this dialogue, the public sphere takes argument outside a limited, private context, and concerns the process of resolving controversy through public deliberation. Finally, the technical sphere concerns argument by those with specialized knowledge that adheres to highly structured standards of evaluation. Farrell and Goodnight (1981) argue that the demarcation between the technical and public spheres is best defined as a difference of argumentative logic, in which technical reason ("modes of inferences that are characteristic of specialized forums, wherein discourse is coded to fit functional demands of particular information fields and evaluated according to an array of state-of-the-art techniques") is positioned opposite social reason (which "employs inferences that are prompted through the pressing contingencies of ordinary life, wherein the claims of advocates are affiliated with the interests of related others and grounded in the generalizable convictions of a competent audience") (273).

Explicating the state of the theory three decades after its original proposal, Rowland (2012) argues that, while its original theoretical context (argument field theory) has largely withered, spheres of argument remains an important theoretical perspective. To explain this

[6] While Ch. 2 will advance the theoretical framework of this project, argumentation (for the purposes of this thesis) is defined as "the practice of justifying claims under conditions of uncertainty. It establishes not what is 'objectively' true but what a person should consider to be true. It involves proferring and testing claims against the scrutiny of others" (Zarefsky 2008, p. 632).

enduring contribution, the author isolates three theoretical benefits of spheres of argument theory. Of particular interest for this project, the author argues that, by highlighting the political importance of public deliberation, spheres of argument allow scholars to more clearly understand the denigration of the practice at the hands of the technical sphere. Returning to Farrell and Goodnight (1981), technical and social reasoning ought to perform separate, yet complementary functions. However, as their critique of the Three Mile Island crisis reveals, an enduring concern for the field has been that technical reasoning not only hinders public deliberation but has actively usurped the role of social reasoning (273).

Therefore, Goodnight (1982) positions itself as an exploration of the status of deliberative rhetoric and its implications for democratic governance. In particular, the author concerns himself with the argumentative intersections between the technical and public spheres, and the consequences of those intersections for deliberative discourse: "[A]rgument practices arising from the personal and technical spheres presently substitutes the semblance of deliberative discourse for actual deliberation, thereby diminishing public life" (2012, 199).[7] As Zarefsky (2012) argues, this usurpation of deliberation in the public sphere at the hands of argument in the technical sphere has been a key focus for subsequent scholarship. For example, Boyd (2002) analyzes 'regulatory controversy' and its relationship to public deliberation, concluding that the technical aspects of government regulation have become insular to the point they operate largely outside the scope of public discourse. In a foreign policy context, Depoe (1988) demonstrates that objections to American intervention abroad (e.g. Vietnam) grounded in technical reasoning

[7] Goodnight (2012) is a reprint of the original 1982 article. For direct quotations, the author will use Goodnight (2012) due to ease of access. As such, page numbers will reflect Goodnight (2012), not the original article, Goodnight (1982).

offer an incomplete (and therefore unsuccessful) critique of foreign policy, as such arguments often fail to question the underlying goal(s) of the United States.

As Goodnight (1997) identifies, the scope of literature on spheres of argument has drastically expanded following the end of the Cold War. However, while the scope of such scholarship may have increased, the primacy of deliberative rhetoric and the public sphere remains. For example, following Holsti (1996) and Goodnight (1998), scholars have expanded the scope of the theory to the arena of foreign policy, but the role of domestic public consensus as the legitimating force undergirding such policies remains the key focus. Indeed, while the end of the Cold War has changed the interpretive framework governing foreign policy controversy, the proliferation of communication technology and the development of post-Cold War institutions have accentuated the role of public deliberation as a legitimating force for foreign policy (Goodnight 1998).

Of particular importance for this study, scholars, following the concerns of Rowland (1986), have complicated the original demarcation made by Goodnight between the public sphere as an arena for deliberation and technical argument as the denigration of that praxis. However, despite theorizing a more nuanced relationship between the public and technical spheres, the primacy of public deliberation as a site of inquiry for critics of argument has endured due to the strong linkage between argument and the history of deliberative rhetoric, with the technical sphere discussed only insofar as its role in complicating public deliberation is acknowledged. For example, Schiappa (2012) illustrates the gap between public deliberation on a controversy, and the strict, technical standards of evaluation employed in the technical sphere, concluding that the questions each sphere seeks to answer via argument are vastly different. In the realm of climate change, scholars have identified the intersection between public and

technical argument, and isolated the utility of applying standards of expertise and evidence traditionally reserved for the technical sphere to combat climate denialism (Mosley-Jensen 2010; Paliewicz 2012).

It ought to be no surprise then, that rhetorical scholarship on the SDI has largely concerned itself with negative intersections between technical government policy and democratic dissent in the public sphere. Mirroring the general thrust of rhetorical criticism surrounding nuclear issues, scholars have adopted a critical lens that sought to "demonstrate how the forms of the current nuclear discussion are being shaped by literary or critical assumptions whose implications are often, perhaps systematically, distorted" (qtd. in Taylor 1998, 300). For example, Goodnight (1983) and Taylor (2007) argue that the Strategic Defense Initiative worked to undermine public deliberation on strategic modernization by appropriating the rhetorical position of anti-nuclear critics (e.g. the Freeze movement) and linking hope for a future free of nuclear weapons with a call for strategic modernization. Similarly, Mitchell (2000) argues at length that the technical foundation of the SDI was misrepresented by the Reagan administration to empower economic and defense interests through continued modernization. Finally, Bjork (1992), drawing on Burkean dramatism, argues that the SDI, through a symbolic containment of the threat of nuclear war, undermined public deliberation by creating a rhetorical distance between the consequences of foreign policy and public consciousness.

In addition, while critics have acknowledged the technical elements of both the "Address to the Nation" and the SDI more broadly, analysis of these elements has been privileged only insofar as they directly implicate deliberation in the public sphere. For example, Zagacki (1989) and Grossman (1988), drawing on the tension between the citizen and the expert, illustrate that the Strategic Defense Initiative sought to bring technical elements into the public sphere, thereby

exploiting the tension between the technical and public spheres of argument to quell dissent. Similarly, identifying the SDI as an intersection between public and technical argument, Rushing (1986) argues that the "Address to the Nation" "encapsulates technical reasoning within a myth which creates the illusion of both preserving science and transcending its transgressions," with the ultimate implication of rendering human beings "spectators at a play they do not author" (415, 430).

Thus, a conclusion ought to be drawn regarding the current literature on both the theory of spheres of argument and the Strategic Defense Initiative. Following the pessimism that was foundational to the tradition of nuclear criticism, current scholarship was largely limited by the political and democratic exigencies of the Cold War. As a response to the heightened tensions of the Reagan era, critics sought to reveal the deleterious public implications of the SDI, hoping to open up space for arms controls measures. Indeed, given the period of strategic instability and increasing militarization that characterized the twilight of the Cold War, such an approach is understandable when considering the position of the contemporary critic. As such, the value of this study finds itself understanding the 1983 "Address to the Nation" as polysemic, public argument that employed both social and technical reason, argument which interfaces with the technical sphere both in its initial reception by technical domestic and international audiences and its role in framing the way in which governments circulated public discourse surrounding arms control.

As a result, argument criticism of the SDI, despite complicating the relationship between technical argument and public discourse, privileges the public sphere as a site for deliberation, with undue implications for technical argument. In particular, argument is political only insofar as it locates itself in the public sphere and employs social reason, *not* to the extent that its

production and reception implicates the deliberative process. Even in a foreign policy context, argument has been reduced to being generative of the domestic consensus that undergirds and legitimates such policy. While such an approach might have been understandable for a critic of the time, scholars of argument now have the opportunity to look back and evaluate the rhetoric of the SDI independent of the its immediate nuclear exigency.

The implication of this conclusion for argument scholarship on the Strategic Defense Initiative is two-fold. First, even though the technical elements of the SDI have been acknowledged by scholars, analysis of the technical ramifications of those elements has been subordinated to their function as public argument. Second, following Goodnight (1982), scholars have confined the scope of analysis of deliberative rhetoric to the public sphere, ignoring the role of technical and public argument in both constituting and shaping public discourse; indeed, the deliberative dimensions of any given rhetoric vastly exceed its use of social reason. For the Strategic Defense Initiative, this has resulted in a paradoxical situation whereby rhetorical analysis of a foreign policy initiative has confined itself to the domestic implications of the program.[8]

Argument criticism of the Strategic Defense Initiative, then, faces a dual dilemma. While scholars of argument have sought to focus on public deliberation and controversy, the technical elements of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" have been understood not as public argument with technical ramifications, but instead have been paradigmatically rendered subordinate to, and interpreted through the lens of, social reason in the public sphere. The current project aims to resolve this dilemma by examining the co-constitutive relationship between the public and

[8] For a singular exception to this trend, and a discussion of the positive relationship between the SDI and Reagan-era diplomacy, see Howell (2003, 2008). However, following Brzezinski (1992), this diplomatic explanation of the SDI is incomplete absent a discussion of the hardline policies of the Reagan administration, which current rhetorical scholarship on the SDI leaves unexplored.

technical spheres through an argument criticism of the 'Star Wars' speech. In this sense, the 1983 "Address to the Nation" becomes polysemic, in that it employs both technical and social reason, melding the two in an effort to reach both the Soviet elite (a technical audience) and the domestic American polity (a public audience). Adopting this thesis, that public argument interfaces with the technical sphere, thereby influencing public deliberation, analysis of the influence of SDI on the negotiating strategies employed by the United States and Soviet Union at the 1985 Geneva Summit and the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, positions arms control not a purely technical arena, but as an opportunity for the circulation of both technical and public argument to reciprocally implicate each other. Thus, through an argument criticism of the SDI, this project aims to move beyond the roots of the field (i.e. the public sphere), and explore the relationship between technical argument, public deliberation, nuclear weapons, and international relations.

Significance & Theoretical Contribution

The significance and theoretical contributions of the study are four-fold. First, previous scholarship on the SDI has been overwhelmingly critical, with President Reagan portrayed as less an adroit strategist whose hardline policies brought the Soviet Union to the brink, but, rather, as a moral crusader who managed to bear witness to the inevitable collapse of the U.S.S.R. from internal dynamics.[9] Reacting to the widespread proliferation of this position, conservative critics have accused academics and liberal analysts of rewriting history, of fostering a 'Reagan Revisionism' whose arguments bear striking resemblance to official Soviet doctrine, a doctrine in which the feckless aggression of the United States critically undermined Soviet efforts to achieve peace (Krauthammer 2004; Pipes 1995; Weigel 1993). Highlighting the strategic

[9] For example, Matlock (2010) argues at length that the United States did not 'win' the Cold War; instead, General Secretary Gorbachev brought the conflict to an end through a mutually beneficial, negotiated settlement that was aided not by the activism of the Reagan presidency, but by the subsequent (relative) passivity of the George H.W. Bush administration.

benefits of the SDI, this study seeks to provide a counterpoint to the overwhelmingly negative scholarly response to Reagan-era nuclear policy.

Second, mirroring the theoretical demarcations of Goodnight (1982), in which the technical sphere is denigrated as the anti-deliberative counterpoint to the public sphere, rhetorical criticism of the SDI has largely concerned itself with the negative intersections between technical government policy and domestic political opposition. This project, by analyzing the technical implications of political argument in the public sphere, not only provides a welcome addition to past scholarship, but provides a theoretical contribution to argumentation theory, in that it positions 'technical reason' as playing a foundationally constitutive role in international relations.

Third, this thesis seeks to highlight the enduring potential of nuclear criticism. As Taylor (1998) notes, the approach was all but abandoned ten years after its founding in April 1984, collapsing under the weight of its own pessimism after having "internalized problematic elements of Cold War discourse, including a presumption of permanent crisis that offered little sense of hope, cycles, or tactics" (301). While the application of the Derridean thesis to the public sphere may have fallen victim to its political impotency, the foundational claim that nuclear weapons, as objects of intense simulation, offer a unique subject for rhetorical criticism may nevertheless be productive for critics of argument. By positioning textuality as a foundational aspect of nuclear weapons, the proposed study will attend to nuclear criticism in the technical sphere, positioning rhetoric as critical to understanding the strategic relationships between nuclear powers.

Finally, following the call of Jamieson and Cappella (1996) for interdisciplinary work between the field(s) of rhetoric and political science, this study contributes to "a more

sophisticated understanding of the relationship between messages and political effects" through a rhetorical analysis of the "Address to the Nation" and its implications for Cold War-era strategic competition, a subject that has traditionally been the province of scholars of realpolitik (16).

Outline of Remaining Chapters

Tracing the influence of the "Address to the Nation" on the rhetorical terrain of the Cold War, this work proceeds in four parts. Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework necessary to understand the SDI as a primarily *rhetorical* phenomenon, with a focus on the relationship between presidential rhetoric, spheres of argument, and international relations. Chapter Three undertakes an argument criticism of the "Address to the Nation," analyzing both the polysemic nature of the text and its persuasive function as technical argument for the Soviet elite. Establishing the enduring, historical influence of the text, Chapter Four draws a through-line between the immediate Soviet response to the "Address to the Nation" and the rhetorical strategy employed by General Secretary Gorbachev at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, with an aim towards understanding how such a 'watershed' moment became possible. Chapter Five concludes the project, juxtaposing the historical analysis of the study against the exigencies of the contemporary moment while offering potential directions for future scholarship.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Outlining the paradox between the strategic efficacy of the initiative and its status as a non-extant defensive system, Chapter I argued for study of the Strategic Defense Initiative as a primarily *rhetorical* phenomenon. Advancing such a course of study, Chapter II both advances a theoretical framework under which such an understanding becomes possible and explicates the dual methodology (argument criticism and rhetorical history) of the project. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three sections. First, this chapter situates the 1983 "Address to the Nation" within the broader framework of presidential rhetoric, while providing a theoretical foundation for understanding the technical ramifications of the SDI. Second, drawing on the pragmatic standard of argument evaluation outlined by Rowland (1990), this chapter discusses both the methodological importance of argument criticism, as well as its specific application to the Cold War context. To conclude, answering the call by Scott (1990) for a rhetorical history of the Cold War, this chapter explicates the importance of such a method while advancing a rhetorical understanding of arms control summitry.

Theory: Presidential Rhetoric & Technical Argument

Let rhetoric be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.[10] Applied to the specific concern of this study (presidential rhetoric), Windt

[10] This variation on the classic Aristotelian definition of rhetoric was inspired by the work of Lundberg (2013). In *Letting Rhetoric Be: On Rhetoric and Rhetoricity*, the author argues that a more correct translation of this key phrase from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* implies not a definite demarcation of the limits of rhetorical art (e.g. rhetoric *is*), but rather a provisional definition that denotes a starting point for inquiry. In this sense, rhetoricity emerges out of the complementary, yet necessarily incomplete, understanding of intertextuality fostered by a variety of different rhetorical approaches.

(1992) identifies two dimensions of the rhetorical art that ought to be of interest: contingency and audience. In the realm of contingency, individuals must make choices under conditions of uncertainty; as a means by which the rhetor may affect that process of decision making via persuasion, rhetoric ought to be understood as a symbolic intervention in a particular situation to either preserve the status quo or effectuate change by altering (or supporting) the choice of an individual or polity via the suasory power of a message. In highlighting the importance of audience, rhetoric is positioned an art whose persuasive efficacy is not only tailored to the specifics of a given audience but does not exist independent of the particular context within which an audience may be persuaded.

Speaking of the contemporary role of the Executive Branch, Neustadt (1976) famously argued that the power of the presidency is the power to persuade.[11] Contrasting the narrow scope of power delineated to the Executive Branch by the Constitution, with the contemporary (post-FDR) public demand for the president to play a leadership role in a legislative context, the author concludes that presidents have turned to persuasion as a means to effectuate political change. Thus, the presidency labors to achieve a particular legislative agenda by pressuring members of Congress (via public opinion), a pressure that becomes possible as an outcome of the persuasive power of rhetoric. Therefore, as Windt (1992) identifies, scholars of presidential rhetoric are concerned with both the political and social context of rhetorical events, the persuasive appeals of a rhetorical act, and the effect of such persuasion upon the legislative agenda, the administration, and its critics (xxiii).

Expanding upon this premise, Goodnight (2002) outlines a theory of rhetorical leadership in which not only is presidential power the power to persuade, but also "the power to appear to

[11] A complete history of Ronald Reagan and the presidency is beyond the scope of this study; for a historical overview, and an analysis of the communicative background of Reagan, see Mervin (1990).

need to be persuaded" (204). This corollary complicates the effects-based model advanced by Neustadt (1976), in that the presidency does not merely leverage rhetorical appeals towards an unresponsive public; rather, the author acknowledges the co-constitutive two-way street in which the presidency serves as a key focal point of public deliberation writ-large, and, in so doing, constructs the framework within which such deliberation takes place.

The rhetorical leadership of the presidency, therefore, manifests itself in both the rhetorical framework within which public deliberation takes place, and the relationship between the legislative agenda and the strategic rhetoric that constructs such a framework. In this sense, the presidency takes on the role of interpreter-in-chief, a role in which the rhetorical framing of a political event by the president determines the rhetorical framework whereby public discussion of that event takes place:

> Whatever other powers and roles presidents have, it is clear that they function as "interpreters in chief" for the U.S. public. As politics beomes more and more of a "word game" where "political events… are largely creations of the language used to describe them," the president's role becomes increasingly important. As the focal point of the national government and the representative of the only branch of government able to speak with one voice, the president's interpretation of events often becomes (for better or worse) the definitive interpretation. (Stuckey 1990, p. 2)

As an application of this 'interpretive' thesis, Ryfe (2005) argues that these rhetorical frames are often leveraged strategically to garner public support for the legislative agenda advanced by a given president:

> As Robert Entman has defined it, framing is the process of "select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] the more salient in a communicating text." Seeking to control the policymaking process, presidents select attributes of issues that put their views in the best light. Their success does not depend upon changing the policy preferences of others. Rather, it hinges on their capacity to set the political agenda---- to determine which issues are discussed and in what way… A frame works by activating, or priming, some of these ideas, feelings, and values rather than others. Using syntax, themes, metaphors, scripts, and other building blocks of images and talk, modern presidents craft messages intended to control the policymaking agenda. (95)

Whereas such an understanding of the rhetorical leadership, and interpretive power, of the presidency may be commonplace for rhetorical scholars, such a view is complicated when one considers the role of the president as Commander-in-Chief.

A key theoretical argument undergirding this project is that the rhetorical leadership of the presidency is not confined to the domestic legislative agenda; rather, the confluence between this interpretive role and the Commander-in-Chief powers of the presidency expand the scope of such leadership to the realm of international affairs and foreign policy. As the representative of the United States on the world stage, the president engages in persuasive appeals in order to change the political calculus of other actors (e.g. national governments), and such appeals co-constitutively create the rhetorical framework within which bilateral and multilateral international dialogues take place. Whereas this rhetorical leadership manifest itself in a variety of different ways as the Executive comports itself on the international stage, the particular dimension of interest to this study is that of the intersection between nuclear weapons, strategic powers, and foreign policy.

In this sense, the 1983 "Address to the Nation" becomes a polysemic persuasive appeal in which social reason and technical reason are concurrently leveraged to not only control the framework within which the domestic American polity debated military modernization, but to devalue the strategic arsenal of the adversary by changing the discursive framework within which the simulated textuality of such weapons were evaluated. Before substantiating the latter portion of this thesis, the foreign policy focus of this project must be further substantiated. Indeed, the relationship between democracy, public deliberation, and the power of the presidency have been an enduring concern for scholars of presidential rhetoric. Viewed in this light, the focus on the international persuasive efficacy of the Executive branch could be critiqued as an

abrogation of a focus on the 'public' as a cornerstone of rhetorical practice in favor of the technical sphere.

There are two problems with such a criticism. First, as was previously articulated, the delineation between the technical and public spheres of argument is not one of location; rather, the difference between such rhetorics is the extent to which persuasive appeals rely upon technical or social reason. Applied to the particular context of the presidency, in which the Executive Branch plays a leadership role in both domestic and foreign policy, yet must maintain public support in both realms, critics ought to understand presidential rhetoric as polysemic, melding both technical and public reason, seeking to articulate and effectuate policy on the international stage while concurrently maintaining support for such actions amongst the domestic polity. Second, following Zarefsky (1989), this thesis understands public address to be not a mode, but a function of discourse: "It seems self-evident that any rhetorical act is 'addressed' and hence evokes a 'public.' What we study when we study public address, then, is really rhetorical practice in all its manifestations" (15-16). Thus, to the extent that the 1983 "Address to the Nation" persuasively leveraged argument towards the 'public' of Soviet decision makers, criticism of the text may be understood as public address work seeking to explicate and expand the notion of a public at the heart of such scholarship (Zarefsky 1989, p. 26).

To return to the intersection of presidential rhetoric, technical reason, and strategic relations amongst nuclear powers, the remainder of this section will substantiate a rhetorical theory within which strategic armaments may be understood as primarily *textual* phenomena whose simulated potentiality may be leverage (or devalued) rhetorically.

Tracing the evolution of modern warfare against the backdrop of the development of modern cinema, Virilio (1989) argues that industrialized warfare supplanted the actuality of

events on the ground with the hegemony of representation. In this sense, the World War I-era bomber, replete with a sighting camera, "prefigured a symptomatic shift in target-location and a growing derealization of military engagement. For in industrialized warfare, where the representation of events outstripped the presentation of facts, the image was starting to gain sway" (Virilio 1). The proliferation of technology in the contemporary era has only furthered this logistics of military perception; far removed from the actuality of combat, the modern commander has lost an embodied relationship to the real in favor of the mediated representation of visual technology (e.g. satellite imaging):

> Thus, the last power left to the director, as to the army officer, is not so much to imagine as to foresee, simulate, and memorize simulations. Having lost material space, the bunkered commander of total war suffers a loss of real time, a sudden cutting-off of any involvement in the ordinary world. Like the new opaque cockpits which prevent fighter pilots from looking outside, because 'seeing is dangerous', war and its technologies have gradually eliminated theatrical and pictorial effects in processing the battle image, and total war followed by deterrence have tended to cancel the scenario effect itself in a permanent technological ambience devoid of any substratum. (Virilio 82-83)

As such, the proliferation of cinematic technology, combined with the sheer destructive power of contemporary weaponry, have led to an era of total war in which the purity of the battle image has supplanted the messy actuality of combat itself.

Of particular interest to this project is the relationship between deterrence and simulation. The 'bunkered commander' forced to foresee, simulate, and memorize simulations bears striking resemblance to those involved in planning and actuating the deployment of nuclear weapons. Indeed, as Derrida (1984) argues, strategic armaments are primarily textual in nature precisely because they are primarily simulated (not used), and that simulated textuality is leveraged rhetorically in order to deter the adversary: "Nuclear weaponry depends, more than any weaponry in the past, it seems, upon structures of information and communication… But the phenomenon is fabulously textual also to the extent… a nuclear war has not taken place" (23). In

this sense, deterrence becomes a function of persuasion, of the strategically leveraged textuality of nuclear weapons; indeed, the simulated efficacy of nuclear weapons, the rhetorical construction ,and thus anticipation, of nuclear war, becomes the conditions of (im)possibility for the actual event of strategic conflict:

> We use the term "strategy of deterrence" or "strategy of dissuasion"… for the overall official logic of nuclear politics. Dissuasion, or deterrence, means "persuasion." Dissuasion is a negative mode or effect of persuasion…. To dissuade is certainly a form of persuasion, but it involves not only persuading someone to think or believe this or that, but persuading someone that something *must not* be done. We dissuade when we persuade someone that it is dangerous, inopportune or wrong to decide to *do* something. The rhetoric of dissuasion is a performative apparatus that has other performatives as its intended output. The anticipation of nuclear war (dreaded as the fantasy, or phantasm, or a remainderless destruction) installs humanity---- and through all sorts of relays even defines the essence of modern humanity---- in its rhetorical condition. (Derrida 24)

Central to such a simulation is the logic of vision, the military logistic of perception previously articulated. In the strategic era, the destructive potential of nuclear weapons, emblematized by ever more precise technology, ensures that 'to see is to destroy': "This quotation perfectly expresses the new geostrategic situation and partially explains the current round of disarmament. *If what is perceived is already lost*, it becomes necessary to invest in concealment" (Virilio 5).

Thus, deterrence in the era of cinematic technology becomes a duel of competing simulations, in which the strategic efficacy of a nuclear arsenal primarily expresses itself a textual (i.e. rhetorical) element of the weapon itself. Indeed, as the hegemony of representation would suggest, the simulation of strategic conflict has as its foundation perception, in that one must 'see' the arsenal of the adversary in order to effectively counter its strategic force.

Concealment, then, becomes a manner of disrupting the perceptual logic of nuclear simulation, and, as such, of disrupting the simulated value of the arsenal of the adversary. However, this strategy may involve the actual concealment of assets via stealth technology, or, as is the case with BMD, the obviation of the strategic efficacy of the perception of the

adversary. In other words, when one has strategic defense, to see is not destroy. When applied to the particular context of strategic relations and the Cold War, the SDI constituted an 'aesthetics of disappearance' that called into question the foundational logic of nuclear deterrence. To quote Virilio (1989) at length:

> The inversion of the deterrence principle is quite clear: unlike weapons which have to be publicized if they are to have a real deterrent effect, [s]tealth equipment can only function if its existence is clouded with uncertainty. This 'aesthetics' of disappearance' introduces a disturbing element of enigma into relations between the blocs, gradually calling into question the very nature of nuclear deterrence. The core of the Strategic Defense Initiative is not so much, as Reagan claims, the deployment of new weapons in space as the indeterminacy or unfamiliarity of a weapons system whose credibility is no more assured than its visibility. (5)

To substantiate the persuasive manner in which this aesthetic dimension of BMD may be leveraged rhetorically, the remainder of this chapter examines the dual methodology (argument criticism and rhetorical history) employed by the project.

Method I: Argument Criticism

A touchstone of the American experiment, given the centrality of both freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, as well as the rhetorical structure created by a federalist system,[12] aligns closely with a classical rhetorical tradition centered on public deliberation (Goodnight 1990). The ideal of public deliberation inherent to such a tradition, however, finds itself widely acknowledged to be in crisis, critically undermined by the dismal reality of extant, non-ideal public discourse (Rowland 119-121). In the context of argument criticism, the epistemic relativity of the public sphere has called into question even the possibility of argument evaluation, highlighting the infinite regressivity of evaluative standards proffered by scholars. Defending argumentation theory against such criticisms, Rowland (1990) advances a pragmatic

[12] For an analysis of federalism as a rhetorical structure that both channels and constrains public deliberation, see the critique of *The Federalist* levied by Engels (2015).

evaluative standard[13] not as a form of knowledge, but as an outgrowth of the problem-solving function of argument itself:

> [T]he general purpose of all argument is to solve problems. People build arguments as a means of discovering the solution to a problem or in order to convince others that they have already discovered the answer to the problem. Thus general standards for evaluating argument should reflect those characteristics that make it more likely that an argument will solve a problem… People argue to solve problems in the sciences, the law, and many other activities. Thus, all argument shares certain similarities…but there are also important differences among arguments, because of the specific purposes served by argument in different areas. (126-127)

Critics, then, have two aspects of argument to evaluate in a rhetorical domain defined by epistemic relativity: its general problem-solving function and its context-specific purpose. In the first sense, the field-invariant standard of evaluation is fundamentally pragmatic; as with any method, the ultimate test of argument is whether it works, whether the persuasive function of a given message resolves the problem at hand. However, argument does not exist absent exigency, does not occur in isolation from its immediate context. Thus, acknowledging epistemic relativity, Rowland (1990) does not apply to argument an overarching purpose that exceeds its localized practice; rather, the field-dependent evaluative standard takes as given the purpose of argument in a particular context, and seeks to understand whether or not such a purpose is fulfilled by the text.

Applying such a pragmatic standard to the Cold War context, argument critics ought to understand both general exigency faced by the rhetor (the bipolar competition between the United States and the Soviet Union) as well as the specific intervention of a given text. In this

[13] One should acknowledge the long tradition of pragmatic argument evaluation studies in the field, particularly the pragma-dialectic school of argument advanced by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984) and van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2003). Speaking retrospectively of the pragma-dialectic school, Woods (2006) concludes that the value of such an approach finds itself in understanding the logical structure of arguments as they occur in the real-world. Past scholarship has attended to this goal by expanding its focus to codes of conduct, reasonableness/ effectiveness, epistemology and the merging of rhetorical and dialectical approaches to argument (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1988; van Eemeren 2015; van Eemeren and Houtlosser 1999; Biro and Siegel 2006).

sense, an argument scholar of the Cold War becomes a strategist, evaluating the efficacy of an artifact against the backdrop of the rhetorical theatre of superpower politics. As Medhurst (1990) explains:

> To analyze Cold War rhetoric the critic must first become a strategist, seeking to understand the goals being pursued, the historical, political, economic, and military constraints that exist, and the precise situational configuration--- the situation as it currently exists or as it existed at the time a particular decision was made or symbolic action undertaken. By understanding the goals, the constraints, and the configuration of forces that interact to form the situational context—the chess board upon which the game of superpower politics is played--- the critic is in a much stronger position to analyze, interpret, and judge any particular piece of Cold War discourse. (20)

Thus, setting the foundation for the argument criticism of this project, the remainder of this section will situate the rhetoric of the Strategic Defense Initiative within a broader rhetorical understanding of the Cold War.

A War of Words: Rhetoric & The Cold War

While the American people harbored goodwill towards the Soviet Union in the immediate aftermath of World War II, such sentiment soon faded as disenchantment with Soviet intentions and actions became widespread (Scott 3-4). Tensions between the two countries quickly escalated, until the competition between American allies and Soviet satellite nations commonly described as a 'Cold War.' As its ideological character and 'cold' nature would suggest, the touchstone of the Cold war not physical, but *symbolic* conflict.[14] In this sense, an argument analysis of the Cold War is primarily an analysis of competing discursive stratagems, of dueling discourses by both the United States and USSR that worked to realize the strategic goals of each side. In this sense, the tangible dimensions of bipolar conflict between superpowers

[14] This is not to deny the 'hot' flashpoints and proxy conflicts that occurred during the so-called Long Peace. Rather, this project suggests that the framework within which those flashpoints and conflicts took place was rhetorical.

are leveraged rhetorically within the framework[15] of a broader discursive conflict between two disparate ideological systems:

> Cold War, like its "hot" counterpart, is a contest. It is a contest between competing systems as represented, for example, by the Soviet Union and the United States. It is a contest involving tangibles such as geography, markets, spheres of influence, and military alliances, as well as such intangibles as public opinion, attitudes, images, expectations, and beliefs about whatever system is currently in ascendancy. The contest, in other words, is both material and psychological in nature.
>
> The currency of Cold War combat---the tokens used in the contest--- is rhetorical discourse: discourse intentionally designed to achieve a particular goal with one or more specific audience [sic]. (Medhurst 1990, p. 19)

Thus, while scholars of realpolitik might privilege the tangible capabilities of the United States and the Soviet Union, scholars of argument situate such capabilities firmly within the realm of the symbolic. Not only does the ideological conflict between Marxism-Leninism and Western capitalism suggest a rhetorical struggle for legitimacy in the court of international public opinion,[16] but the lack of direct conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union highlights the centrality of argument to the Cold War. In particular, the military strength of either side was never directly used against the other; rather, such an escalation was only ever simulated, highlighting the textuality of both the strategic and conventional forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. Therefore, this project understands the hardline policies of President Reagan as foundationally argumentative in nature, in that they sought to persuade the Soviet Union to de-escalate the arms race through an intervention in the very textuality of the strategic arsenal and conventional capabilities of the adversary. As such, the remainder of this section will discuss

[15] For further discussion of the rhetorical framework of containment, see the analysis of National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) by Young (2008).

[16] For example, Parry-Giles (2000) discusses the militarization of propaganda by the United States as a tool for the Presidents Truman and Eisenhower to fight the Cold War. Similarly, Zarefsky (2002) highlights Republican support for the 'captive nations' resolution during the Eisenhower administration as a method to embolden revolt against the Soviet Union from people behind the Iron Curtain.

both the broader rhetorical offensive levied by the Reagan administration, as well as the particularity of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Following the relative passivity of the Carter administration, the 1980 election of President Reagan shifted both the military and rhetorical posture of the United States (Rowland and Jones 33-36). Not only had then-candidate Reagan pledged to modernize and expand the American military, but such a program was accompanied by a corresponding offensive posture that sought to capitalize on the perceived weakness of the Soviet Union. Of particular importance for this project, however, the Reagan presidency began a rhetorical offensive against the USSR: "Reagan launched a rhetorical attack on the Soviet Union that in some ways resembled his cold war rhetoric of the 1950s and 1960s.[17] In his judgment, the struggle remained a moral one and the Soviet leadership was still evil" (Rowland and Jones 34). Indeed, the moral framing of such argument, of such an offensive played a constitutive role in structuring the political reality of the Cold War: "The arguments a president chooses to emphasize in his rhetoric are important ingredients in the construction of his own political reality… A president's decision whether to moralize or not has political consequences that can affect prospects for effective governance" (Shogan 9).

For Reagan, then, the touchstone of the Cold War was an ideological struggle fought within the realm of rhetoric, enacted through the weapon of argument. Indeed, while the materiality of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union has received much scholarly attention, the conviction of President Reagan against direct use of force was such that

[17] For a historical perspective on the development of the anti-communist rhetoric of Reagan pre-presidency, see Stuckey (1989). The rhetorical offensive of President Reagan finds its roots in his experience as an actor in 'communist' Hollywood and his time as a spokesman for General Electric, time during which he spoke out often against communism.

these military capabilities were only ever meant to empower American ideals. As Rowland and Jones (2010) explain:

> Weapons were important to Reagan's approach but primarily as a way of empowering the ideas… We now know that Reagan's aversion to the use of force went so far that several of his aides doubted that he would order a retaliatory strike against the Soviet Union if they in fact launched a first strike…Rather than arming to fight a war, Reagan supported an arms buildup and a rhetorical attack on totalitarianism as a way of lessening the chance of war. Fundamentally, Reagan believed that the only way to end the cold war, while minimizing the chance of real war, was to win the battle of ideas and help the Soviet bloc evolve toward democracy. (115-116)

As such, the primary tool of the Reagan presidency was argument, the strategic effort to persuade the Soviet Union that continued bipolar competition was both untenable and undesirable. As Martin Anderson, a foreign policy advisor to President Reagan describes: "Reagan was convinced they would act in their own best interests, that the Soviets would always do the right thing if they had to. He believed the trick was in getting them to recognize what was in their best interests and demonstrating clearly to them that they had no other alternatives" (qtd in Rowland and Jones 117). The end of the Cold War, then, was ultimately an acceptance of the persuasive logic of President Reagan, as communicated through the leveraged potentiality of the arms race:

> What has not been recognized previously is that Reagan's view of the arms buildup was fundamentally rhetorical. It was aimed at making clear to the Soviets that they could not win, thus setting the stage for real arms control and real reform. Eventually Gorbachev would accept what Gaddis calls the 'logic' of Reagan's worldview… and the results were treaties eliminating all intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe and substantially cutting strategic nuclear weapons. (Rowland and Jones 118)

Thus, to say that the 1983 "Address to the Nation" changed the rhetorical terrain of the Cold War, such that the Soviet capitulation at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit became possible, is ultimately a commentary on the persuasive efficacy of a text and its reception by a technical audience, the Soviet elite.

Method II: Rhetorical History

To both further support and explore this persuasive efficacy, this project conducts a rhetorical history of Cold War arms control summitry, with a particular focus on the argumentative strategies employed by the United States and the Soviet Union during the 1986 Reykjavik Summit. Two key theoretical assumptions undergird and substantiate the value of such an approach. First, history, as an expression of the narrativity of past events, is fundamentally a rhetorical construction, a narrative whose function is to explain, and in so doing construct, the past. In this view, history "is the selection and combination of material accompanied by explanations that make meaning of the past; that is, the patterns that to some degree we find in and to some degree impose on the relevant materials" (Scott 8). Second, as this rhetorical character of history ought to suggest, this meaning-making is not confined to the scholarly practice of historical inquiry. Rather, a rhetorical history uses the narrative function of rhetoric to both explore and explain the ideological, political, and social contexts that constitute history as such. As Scott (1990) explains:

> Rhetorical history takes rhetoric as its subject matter and perspective. It is akin to intellectual history in that it helps to trace the ideas that motivate people in the sharing of those patterns we call history. It is akin to political history in that the task of rhetoric---inducing cooperation--- and politics are closely interwoven. It is akin to social history in that the patterns of appeal and the temper of interaction are products of the matrix that the lives of people form; rhetoric cannot be well understood apart from these disciplines. (8)

Thus, a rhetorical history of Cold War arms control summitry, with a focus on the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, works to the trace the circulation of the rhetoric of SDI, and to place that circulation within the broader argumentative terrain of the bipolar competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Cold War-era arms control summitry ought to be of interest for critics of argument and scholars of history. First, independent of the framework of the Cold War, arms control

negotiations, and therefore argument, will continue to play a pivotal role in the contemporary international context. Indeed, as the capacity of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons is increasingly challenged by the strategic ambitions of so-called 'rogue' states, and attempts are made to de-escalate the current strategic modernization initiatives of rising powers, the effort to leverage argument as a tool of arms control on the global stage will remain a staple of international arms control regimes.

Second, arms control negotiations, and the resulting rhetorical commitments made by the United States and the Soviet Union, were central to the end of the Cold War. Indeed, as befits the focus of this project, the foundation of several landmark concessions by the Soviet Union were laid during Reagan-era arms control summitry (Vogele 1-2). This is not to overshadow, or underestimate, events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, or the reform programs of General Secretary Gorbachev. Rather, arms control agreements provided a framework within which such events could contribute to not only a cessation of hostilities, but a broader bilateral reconciliation between the United States and the Soviet Union. As Vogele (1994) explains:

> [T]he end of the Cold War is also hard to imagine without these arms control achievements… States (and their leaders) are reluctant to trust their adversaries, even when those adversaries are actively seeking a new and cooperative relationship, and even when the sincerity of particular leaders is largely accepted. Hedging one's bets against future revisionism is always advised. Hence, achieving a firm and presumably binding agreements that specifies rights and obligations often is desirable. (135)

Therefore, arms control summitry, and its resultant bilateral agreements, provided a rhetorical framework within which the United States and the Soviet Union, decades-long adversaries, could work towards the possibility of reconciliation. In this view, the fall of the Berlin Wall was a necessary, yet insufficient, touchstone on the path to the end of the Cold War, because, absent rhetorical commitments that provided a safeguard against future aggression, neither side could move decisively towards a more cooperative posture.

Theory: Argument & Arms Control Summitry

Prior to engaging the particular historical evolution of U.S.-Soviet arms control, culminating in the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, arms control summitry must not only be placed within its proper theoretical context, but the relationship between such negotiations and argument criticism must be established. As such, the remainder of this chapter will outline both the rhetorical form of arms control summitry and the implications of such a form for argument criticism. To conclude the chapter, that framework will then be applied to the specific context of U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations, outlining the argumentative frame that governed such negotiations historically, while demonstrating the fundamental shift in negotiating strategy represented by the 1986 Reykjavik Summit.

The fundamental exigency for arms control lies in the existential threat posed by the possibility of an escalatory conflict between nuclear powers. Thus, reducing the probability of such a conflict through strategic reductions, and ultimately disarmament, remains the primary purpose of arms control agreements: "The goal of arms control, therefore, is to create security arrangements that enhance international peace and stability through lowered nuclear armament levels and strengthened deterrence" (Menos 1986, p. 5). Yet, the process of achieving such agreements, arms control negotiations, is not without considerable difficulty, given that such talks must overcome the enormous ideological and political differences that necessarily exist between adversaries. Indeed, the Cold War context provides an intransigent example of such difficulties, with the ideological, political, and strategic differences between the United States and the Soviet Union serving as serious obstacles to even limits on the growth of the strategic arsenals of both sides (Menos 1990, p. 3).

Therefore, the rhetorical dimension of arms control negotiations is one of persuasion, in that stakeholders must, through an iterative process of discursive exchange, not only craft an accord that all parties are persuaded is in their self-interest, but, in so doing, overcome the substantial, entrenched differences that exist between strategic adversaries. As a particular instantiation of this persuasive function, as a confluence of technical and public rhetorics, arms control summitry may therefore be best understood as a process of courtship, as a method of transcending political and ideological estrangement via persuasion (Goodnight 1992). Drawing on Burkean dramatism, Goodnight (1992) positions the process of identification integral to such a 'courtship' as an outgrowth of the symbolic, suasive dimension of argument itself:

> As persuasion, courtship thrives in the symbolic construction of identification and difference… In the social dramas of courtship, one is never sure whether discourse proceeds more from shared, logical premises than from reciprocal needs, more from realistic necessity than from tantalizing possibility or more from reasoned conclusion than from disguised opportunities and pitfalls. In its forms of appeal, the rhetoric of courtship frequently stylizes social identification. (46)

Positioning arms control summitry as a product of courtship, of persuasion and identification, is not to trivialize the political importance of strategic negotiations between superpowers; rather, such a theoretical framework works to highlight the rhetorical foundation of such summitry. Indeed, as Goodnight (1992) concludes, the public pageantry that enframes arms control summits evokes an aura of romanticism that (re)presents the technical rhetorics employed during negotiations:

> The summit's swirl of characters--- the interaction of Soviet and American politicians, diplomats, generals, intellectuals, protestors (refuseniks), media personages, and stars---- set in motion a pageant whose drama of estrangement and identification surely exceeded the anticipated sum of its parts (47)

Yet this effort to foster identification via argument does not exist in a vacuum; rather, as the degree of estrangement between strategic adversaries ought to suggest, such efforts were

subject to an independent side constraint: legitimacy. In the Habermasian sense, "legitimacy means that there are good arguments for a political order's claim to be recognized as right and just… *Legitimacy means a political order's worthiness to be recognized*[18] (qtd. in Goodnight 1992, p. 47). Thus, a precondition to persuasion, at least in the international political arena, is a recognition of the core values of an adversary, and how its political institutions are employed towards the realization of those normative ends. Indeed, if the endpoint of argument for arms control summitry is identification, one must both understand the persuasive appeals with which the adversary may identify, a product of the effort to acknowledge, rather than pathologize, political and ideological difference. This is not to flatten the normative value of such differences; rather, to paraphrase a great military mind, it is only in the moment that one loves the enemy that one becomes capable of the understanding necessary to destroy them.

Applied to the Cold War context, legitimacy represents a particular dilemma for bilateral arms control negotiations, given the distinctly ideological (i.e. symbolic) foundation of the conflict. As Goodnight (1992) observes, the argumentative terrain in the twilight years of the Cold War was anything but conducive to reciprocal acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the adversary:

> Cold-war rhetoric had eroded the discursive space for reciprocal grants of legitimacy between the United States and the Soviet Union Union, figured as capitalist and Communist systems. The argumentative burden around which gestures of courtship were acted out at the summit [Reykjavik] thus centered upon speaking a language of legitimation that would grant opposing views some "right and just" place for an emerging dialogue between nations. (47)

As a prominent factor in this then-emergent dialogue' the rhetoric of the Reagan administration, as well as the broader conceptual relationship between presidential rhetoric and

[18] Emphasis in original.

arms control summitry, deserves additional scrutiny. From an institutional perspective, the power of the presidency, as outlined by the Constitution of the United States, determine that "on arms control as in all aspects of foreign policy, the president speaks for the nation" (Menos 1990, p. 95). Thus, the metonymic function of the presidency, in which the figure(head) of the presidency both represents, and condensates the will of, the American people, mirrors its argumentative role. Insofar as the presidency, or its representatives, are institutionally vested with the power to represent the United States to foreign powers, to formulate and present the official negotiating position of the nation, presidential rhetoric will inevitably serve to both define and constitute the argumentative framework within which interstate negotiations such as arms control summits take place. Indeed, given the discursive power of formulating a negotiating position, a process whereby substantive strategic and conventional assets are rendered symbolic, in that they become 'bargaining chips' used to both signal and persuade the adversary, the institutional role of the presidency takes on a fundamentally rhetorical tone (Menos 1986, p. 17).

While presidential rhetoric may constitute the argumentative framework within which arms control negotiations take place, the particular rhetorics deployed by the Reagan administration played an additional role. First, returning to the metaphor of summitry as courtship, of which the romanticism of public pageantry is the core, the theatrical background of President Reagan ought not be overlooked. In particular, "Reagan was not unaware of the rhetorical strategies of a romantic hero, and he had experience sharing the stage with another lead; but the situation multiplied constraints and opportunities among varied audiences" (Goodnight 1992, p. 47). Thus, independent of the technical content of the negotiations, the contextual form of arms control summitry, undergirded by public pageantry, was well-served by the aesthetic sensibility of then-President Reagan. Indeed, while the 'romantic hero' on a quest to

preserve America from the Evil Empire, may have been derided as feckless and aggressive, the argumentative function of such a controversial persona was critical to imagining a future beyond the conflictual ideological framework of the Cold War:

> In the end, Reagan was a controversialist, able to deploy symbols to provoke response… His discussions of differences between the United States and the Soviet Union beckoned, yet retarded, a time and discourse beyond the cold war. If his versions of the past and future are not accepted as completely satisfactory, they do reassure some that America is still secure while inviting others to go farther, faster in pursuing realistic change. It is this heady mixture of motives---- this simultaneous identification and difference, union and separation, care and indifference--- that constitutes the legacy of Ronald Regan's courtship of Gorbachev, the Soviet people, and the American public.
> (Goodnight 1992, p. 71)

The courtship of arms control summitry then, is not a naïve process of identification wherein the interests of stakeholders slowly coalesce. Indeed, the controversialist role played by President Reagan, the invocation of difference in order to engender the dialogic resolution of controversy via persuasion, becomes a precondition to courtship, in that only through an understanding of difference, through a grant of legitimacy to the adversary, can identification take place.

Conclusion: The 'Rhetorical Ambush' At Reykjavik

It is against this backdrop, of estrangement and courtship, that the Reykjavik Summit, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, take on particular interest. Indeed, referring to the negotiating strategy employed by General Secretary Gorbachev, Pearce et al. (1992) describe the Reykjavik Summit as a 'rhetorical ambush,' in which long-held Soviet negotiations positions were strategically 'conceded' to control the argumentative framework within which the negotiations took place. Yet, given the magnitude and severity of estrangement between the United States and the Soviet Union, the exigency for the negotiations strategy undergirding such an ambush deserves further consideration. While the remainder of this thesis will trace the

rhetorical impetus for the Soviet ambush at Reykjavik, beginning with the 1983 "Address to the Nation," this chapter will conclude with a brief historical overview of U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations, such that the watershed moment of the Reykjavik Summit, and the negotiations therein, may be appreciated.

Prior to the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, the estrangement between the United States and the Soviet Union manifested itself at the most fundamental level: the purpose of arms control. Indeed, whereas both the United States and the Soviet Union regarded arms control favorably for its potential to de-escalate the build-up of conventional and strategic assets, both sides understood the goal to be accomplished by such negotiations and accords rather differently. Whereas the United States viewed arms control as a means to achieve peace and security through de-escalation and control of the production and use of military assets, the Soviet Union positioned arms control as a touchstone on the path to global conventional and strategic disarmament, a pre-requisite to the safe, worldwide flourishing of socialism (Menos 1986, p. 7-9; Menos 1990, p. 26-28).

To begin with the Soviet approach to arms control, one need look no further than the stated policy of the U.S.S.R. from Lenin to Gorbachev to find additional support for arms control as a means to achieve global disarmament (Menos 1990, p. 27). Indeed, while the Soviet Union bombarded the governments of Western Europe throughout the Cold War with arms control proposals "designed to lessen the nuclear fears of west Europeans," to "charm the war-weary Europeans with a never-ending series of arms reduction proposals, coupled with assertions that the Soviet military threat to Europe no longer exists," the rhetorical appeals made to the peoples outside the scope of the Western alliance reveal the ideology undergirding such a strategy (Menos 1990, p. 27). In particular, pronouncements from Moscow, pronouncements that began

with the Bolshevik Revolution, in support of world disarmament on humanitarian grounds, on the grounds that the arms race diverts an enormous amount of resources that could benefit the global poor, have resonated with international audiences outside of NATO. To then-developing countries throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America, images of a world safe for socialism, of the peace and prosperity made possible by not only tempering, but wholeheartedly abandoning, the arms race, demonstrates the peaceful ideology undergirding Soviet foreign policy, a stark contrast to American arms control policy: "To the hungry and disadvantaged masses there, the message of world disarmament, with all of the images of material goods and prosperity that it conveys, is a lot more attractive than the concept of international security (the U.S. approach)" (Menos 1990, p. 27).

As a counterpoint to Soviet doctrine, to the ideological imperative to make the world safe for socialism, American arms control policy was primarily driven by a deep distrust of the peaceful intentions of the USSR, a distrust borne out of the belief that the global spread of Marxism-Leninism remained a key component of Soviet policy. Indeed, such distrust made strategic and conventional armaments a necessary pre-requisite to world peace and international security. While arms control proposals had the potential to de-escalate the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, such proposals only had value insofar as they sustained the deterrent role played by strategic arms. Thus, in the view of the United States, while either side may differ about the appropriate level of strategic and conventional arms, such arms remained critical to preserving international security through potential offensive threat.

This implicated U.S.-Soviet arms control on two fronts. First, recurrent Soviet adventurism (e.g. Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and Angola) undermined the potential for arms control agreements, as the use of force by the Soviet Union reinforced the principle undergirding

long-standing American military doctrine, that the development and stockpiling of weapons by the United States was necessary to both counter the threat posed by Soviet attack, and to contain the ideological ambitions of the adversary. For example, following the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by the USSR, the Congress of the United States delayed ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a multilateral framework that sought to control the development and spread of nuclear weapons on an international scale. Similarly, the SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) II treaty was withdrawn from Senate consideration by then-President Carter following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Second, distrust of the sincerity of arms control proposals made by the Soviet Union led to the incredible importance afforded verification by the United States, an issue that was an intractable challenge over the course of the Cold War.

As such, pre-Reykjavik U.S.-Soviet arms control was defined by two imperatives. Whereas the Soviet Union viewed global disarmament as a key goal, a necessary pre-requisite to such a state of affairs was the safeguarding, and subsequent global expansion, of Marxism-Leninism, an ideological imperative often backed by the power of Soviet military might. In contrast, the United States, fueled by a deep distrust of Soviet ideology, sought to de-escalate the arms race while simultaneously preserving the deterrent value of the conventional and strategic assets held by either side. Against the backdrop of this apparently intractable level of estrangement, this deep and, abiding disagreement over the fundamentals of arms control, the drastic shift in the negotiating positions of the USSR at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit becomes not merely an oddity, but a monumental rhetorical shift in dire need of explanation.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROAD TO REYKJAVIK: THE 1983 WAR OF WORDS

This chapter undertakes an argument criticism of both the March 1983 "Address to the Nation" and the subsequent Soviet response, a *Pravda* interview with General Secretary Andropov[19][20][21] on U.S. military policy, tracking the initial reception of the SDI amongst an international public, with a focus on the technical audience of the Politburo. While the previous chapter established a theoretical framework under which the Strategic Defense Initiative may be understood as a primarily *rhetorical* phenomenon, such a framework remains insufficient absent an analysis of both the text and its circulation; otherwise, the rhetorical function of a text would remain limited to the moment of its enunciation. To explain further, analysis of the Strategic Defense Initiative and the Soviet response must both account for and exceed, an understanding of each artifact as a temporally bounded moment of speech. Indeed, given the role of the 1983 "Address to the Nation," and the subsequent *Interview with Andropov*, as strategic (i.e. political) interventions in the discursive terrain of the Cold War, the analysis undertaken here can be understood as both an application of and an addition to theoretical framework of the thesis.[22]

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[19] *Pravda* (Russian for 'truth') was the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the USSR, published from 1912 – 1991.

[20] Text of the full interview was not available to the author. Instead, this project will make use of substantial excerpts published by Western media sources (e.g. Bundy et al. 1984). The interview was translated and released to Western audiences by the Soviet press agency Tass.

[21] Subsequently referred to as the *Interview with Andropov*. For the full citation of the original publication, see "Andropov Interviewed on U.S. Military Policy."

[22] In other words, while theory may position the Strategic Defense Initiative as rhetorical, the precise function of that rhetoric remains limited absent a direct analysis of both the 1983 "Address to the Nation" and the 1983 *Interview with Andropov*.

Following that premise, this chapter will be organized into three sub-sections. First, one discusses both the history of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" and the strategic implications of the proposed initiative. Second, this chapter undertakes a rhetorical criticism of the 1983 "Address to the Nation," seeking to explicate the thematic elements of the text such that its reception by the technical audience of Soviet decisionmakers may be better understood. Third, one analyzes the rhetorical campaign waged against the SDI by the Soviet Union, including the March 1983 *Interview with Andropov*.

The Strategic Defense Initiative: History & Analysis

The 1980 election of President Ronald Reagan ushered in a new era of bilateral competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. While the logic of détente had largely reigned supreme following the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the subsequent build-up of conventional and strategic forces by the Soviet Union under General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev (1964 – 1982) led many amongst the American public to demand a more assertive, combative stance against the adversary (Allen 1996). Indeed, the announcement of the Reagan Doctrine, under which the administration pledged to not merely to halt the expansion of communism, but to actively support anti-communist resistance movements in a proactive effort to roll back Soviet influence, signaled the end to what many viewed as a decade of accommodation that left the United States dangerously vulnerable (Tucker 1988; Tucker 1989). Thus began the largest peacetime build-up of American forces in history, not only to achieve dominance over the Soviet Union, but to regain strategic and conventional parity (Steding 144).

Yet a decade of investment by the Soviet Union in expanding its strategic arsenal is no small obstacle to overcome. The sheer inequity between the Soviet land-based ICBM[23] arsenal

[23] Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles.

(numbering ~20,000) and the opposing American land-based forces (~9,000)[24] called into question the survivability (and therefore the deterrent value) of the strategic forces maintained by the United States.[25] By the early years of the Reagan administration, a wide-ranging strategic modernization program had become the cornerstone of the security policy of the United States.[26] Of particular interest to this study, however, is the effort to improve the survivability of American strategic forces through ballistic missile defense (BMD).

By early 1982, President Reagan confronted a dual dilemma. On the one hand, the growing influence of the nuclear freeze movement placed increasing domestic political pressure on the administration to halt the production, development, and testing of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, the capstone of the effort by the administration to achieve a reliable, survivable second-strike capability, the MX missile program,[27] faced challenges both strategic and political. Independent of the necessity of shoring up Congressional support (subsequently resolved by a presidential blue-ribbon commission), the sheer size of the Soviet ICBM arsenal made finding a survivable basing configuration for the MX missile nigh-on impossible (Fitzgerald 191-202). Indeed, whether one sought to survive a Soviet nuclear strike through hardened silos, or to evade such a strike through the shell-game of constantly transferring the MX missiles between different basing sites, the sheer size of the Soviet nuclear arsenal critically undermined the strategic efficacy of the program.

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[24] Arsenal size accurate as of 1986; taken from Adelman (2014).

[25] The deterrent value of a nuclear arsenal is often premised on maintaining second-strike capability (i.e. on having a sufficient number of nuclear weapons survive a surprise attack by a strategic adversary). Absent a survivable arsenal, there is no disincentive to prevent an adversary from employing nuclear weapons in the hope of destroying (i.e. counterforcing) the nuclear arsenal of a country, undermining the principles of MAD (mutually assured destruction).

[26] The full breadth, and implication, of the modernization initiative is beyond the scope of this study. For a broad overview of the program, see Richelson (1983).

[27] The MX missile program (Missile-eXperimental), as envisioned by the Reagan administration, was the attempt to develop a number of highly survivable nuclear weapons that would survive a surprise attack by the Soviet Union, thus retaining the ability of the United States to counterattack in the event of a Soviet first-strike. For a historical overview, and critique, of the MX missile program, see Paine (1981).

The "Address to the Nation," delivered by President Reagan on March 23, 1983 sought to resolve both elements of the dilemma faced by the administration by announcing an initiative to develop, and perhaps deploy, ballistic missile defense, thus making the offensive threat posed by nuclear weapons obsolete. As scholars such as Goodnight (1986) and Taylor (2007) have observed, the announcement of the SDI gave political cover to the administration by wedding the fundamental thesis of the freeze campaign (the danger posed by nuclear weapons) to the offensive expansion of the conventional and strategic forces of the United States. In the nuclear realm, a missile defense initiative was necessary, albeit insufficient, to ensure the survivability of the American strategic arsenal, to resolve the basing configuration issues faced by the MX missile program.

In other words, while neither the SDI nor the MX missile program was a perfect solution to the vulnerability of the American strategic arsenal, the efficacy of each was a product of mutual dependence. For example, a missile defense program would lower the number of missiles that the MX would need to 'survive,' thereby lowering the survivability threshold of the program. Similarly, given that no BMD program could ever be entirely 'leak-proof,' the survivability of the MX missile program would preserve the deterrent value of the American arsenal in the event a Soviet nuclear strike overwhelmed the defensive function of SDI.

While the focus of this study is the text of the Strategic Defense Initiative, and the ensuing circulation of that discourse, an understanding of the strategic implications of SDI is important to understanding either element. At the core of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" lies both a fundamental shift in the strategic doctrine of the United States away from mutually assured destruction (MAD), and therefore a corresponding threat to the Soviet Union. While the SDI may ultimately be simply a text (as its failure to move beyond the laboratory would

suggest), the construction and interpretation of that rhetoric (particularly within the technical sphere) would nevertheless have been filtered through the schema of *realpolitik*[28] that dictated the terms of the Cold War. As such, the remainder of this section will discuss the substantive, strategic implications of the SDI before transitioning to an argument criticism of the March 1983 "Address to the Nation."

In the strategic realm, the SDI threatened to critically undermine the deterrent value of the Soviet strategic arsenal. By refusing to accept the offensive logic of deterrence[29] (and therefore the value of an offensively postured Soviet ICBM force), the SDI represented a doctrinal shift from an offensive to a defensive posture that threatened to make nuclear weapons obsolete. This had two strategic implications for the Soviet Union. First, even a moderately effective missile defense system would enhance the offensive potential of American strategic armaments, giving the United States the capability to intercept residual Soviet nuclear forces following a surprise attack: "[T]he Soviets have repeatedly argued that ballistic missile defense… favors the attacker, because it would be impossible to stop a massive nuclear onslaught yet much easier to blunt a ragged retaliatory strike by the enemy's surviving… nuclear forces" (Lambeth 29).[30] Indeed, the allegation that the SDI was primarily an offensive system was expressed repeatedly by the Soviet Union: "The central allegation has been that SDI is not intended, as advertised merely to ensure U.S., but rather to back up a U.S. war-winning posture aimed at depriving the Soviet Union of any retaliatory capability" (Lambeth v). From the

[28] Realpolitik denotes a system of international relations defined by the practical and pragmatic competition for power by states, as opposed to an ideological or moral understanding of the same. For both an overview, and critique, of realpolitik see Wayman and Diehl (1994).
[29] For President Reagan, the offensive logic of deterrence was one that relied upon that "deterrence of aggression through the promise of retaliation," and thus dealt "with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence" ("Address to the Nation").
[30] Dr. Benjamin S. Lambeth is a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and former Senior Research Associate at the RAND Corporation.

perspective of the USSR, space-based interceptors, whether missiles or lasers, could easily be launched not at inbound Soviet ICBMs, but at land-based targets throughout the Soviet sphere of influence.

Second, the core of the Soviet strategic arsenal towards the end of the Cold War was an offensively postured ICBM force, seeking to maintain deterrence through the threat of either a massive disarming first-strike or an effective residual second-strike capability.[31] However, for the USSR, even a less than effective BMD system would undermine the value of such a posture:

> Even a less than comprehensive U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMD) capability would threaten to undermine Moscow's investment in hard-target ICBM development by increasing the uncertainty that would attend any Soviet attempt to disarm the United States preemptively in a serious confrontation. (Lambeth vi)

Thus, not only did the SDI threaten to enhance the offensive threat posed by the American strategic arsenal, but the program called into question the product of decades of investment, the foundation of Soviet nuclear forces: land-based ICBM forces.

The inevitable Soviet counter, the strategic imperative to mitigate the threat posed by SDI added a secondary dimension to the conflict, that of a technological race to develop either ballistic missile defense or offensive countermeasures. The prospect of such a race, however, spelled potential disaster for the Soviet Union; the decade-long build-up of conventional and military forces under Brezhnev had left the United States vulnerable, yet such an advantage came at great cost.[32] By the beginning of the 1980s, the Soviet Union found itself suffering from

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[31]The core of the Soviet strategy relied upon an expansive land-based ICBM force, which conferred two advantages. First, the Soviet Union sought the option (by virtue of the sheer size of its arsenal) to suddenly attack the United States without warning in the hopes of destroying the American nuclear arsenal and 'winning' the Cold War. Second, the size of the Soviet arsenal sought to deny the United States the reciprocal ability to strike the USSR, as the sheer number of nuclear weapons maintained by the Soviet Union made such a strike highly unlikely to eliminate the totality of the Soviet nuclear arsenal.

[32] This is not to suggest that the economic dimension of the SDI solely implicated the Soviet Union; as Westwick (2010) demonstrates, the prospect of forging international partnerships (e.g. joint trade and research initiatives) during with other NATO countries during the development of SDI expanded the scope of American economic hegemony.

imperial overstretch, whereby the resources necessary to maintain its sphere of influence put that very same influence at risk of collapse (Lundestad 2000; Lambeth and Lewis 1988). While American intelligence estimates routinely placed Soviet defense expenditures between eleven and fifteen percent of gross national product (GNP), the truth fluctuated between thirty and forty percent of GNP (Lundestad 2000). In an ironic twist of fate, the military expenditures meant to safeguard the communist system had inexorably placed the Soviet Union on the path to collapse. For example, the effort to maintain a regime in Afghanistan sympathetic to Soviet interests through military might led to a decade of conflict that strained the already overburdened economy of the USSR, the unsustainability of which was borne out by the 1989 withdrawal of Soviet forces under General Secretary Gorbachev.

Thus, independent of the technological feasibility of the initiative, the strongest threat posed by SDI was classically economic: the dilemma of choice under conditions of scarcity. As Lambeth (1986) explains:

> Perhaps the most important factor that will govern how Moscow reacts to SDI involves the question of resource constraints and the inevitable difficulties that will arise over allocation priorities as the Soviets attempt to grapple with this challenge. After more than two decades of sustained force expansion, the Soviets are now finding themselves saddled with real limits to attainable military growth. Giving the increasing demands on Soviet resources, not only from the economy at large but also within the defense sector. SDI threatens a new round of technological competition that the Soviets almost certainly would prefer to forgo. (viii)

Yet, independent of the Soviet desire to forego such a competition, the strategic exigency posed by the SDI remained. Burdened by substantial resource constraints, yet nevertheless required to respond, the Soviet Union under General Secretary Andropov opted for a less costly countermeasure: rhetoric. As such, the remainder of this chapter analyzes the rhetorical battlefield surrounding the SDI, beginning with an argument criticism of the 1983 “Address to

the Nation" and concluding with the rhetorical campaign waged by the Soviet Union, including the March 1983 *Interview with Andropov*.

Analysis of The Text: The 1983 "Address To The Nation"

Lambeth and Lewis (1988) identify three dimensions of the Soviet understanding of, and concerns regarding, the 1983 "Address to the Nation": governmental legitimacy, nuclear weapons, and economic competitiveness. As such, this sub-section undertakes an argument criticism of the text, discussing each dimension of the Soviet interpretation in turn.

Governmental Legitimacy

While both strategic armaments and economic competitiveness were core components of the bilateral competition of the Cold War, the framework of that competition was one of *realpolitik* enframed by ideology, by competing visions for the apotheosis of human civilization. As Hedin (2004) explains:

> The Soviet Union claimed to represent a politically, culturally, and morally superior modernity--- a new civilization… From this perspective, the most important foreign relation between the former East bloc and the West was neither the arms race nor the technological and economic rivalry, but the struggle for legitimacy--- the clash of civilizations as competing modernities. (166)

In particular, the foundation of party ideology (and therefore Soviet identity) was class struggle, with the Soviet Union positioning itself as the guardian of the proletariat, a guardian seeking to prevent the expansion of both Western influence and capitalism.[33] Thus, to the extent that the 1983 "Address to the Nation" portrayed the USSR not as a peaceful protector of the working class, but as an offensively minded adversary bent on destruction, the text undermined the ideological foundation that legitimized Soviet rule in front of an *international* audience. As

[33] This is not to say that *realpolitik* is irrelevant to understanding the Cold War. Rather, this claim would suggest that *realpolitik* matters insofar as it represents the capability of each side to project power in an effort to fulfill the dictates of its ideological foundation.

President Reagan decried: “For 20 years the Soviet Union has been accumulating enormous military might. They didn’t stop when their forces exceeded all requirements of a legitimate defensive capability. And they haven’t stopped now” (“Address to the Nation”).

The 1983 “Address to the Nation” therefore sought to delegitimize the Soviet system, painting the country not as a peaceful guardian of the proletariat, but as an offensively minded threat to international peace, thereby drawing an extended contrast between the United States and the Soviet Union. Indeed, the rhetor begins with a principled defense of American security policy: “The defense policy of the United States is based on a simple premise: The United States does not start fights. We will never be an aggressor. We maintain our strength in order to deter and defend against aggression – to preserve freedom and peace” (“Address to the Nation”). In contrast to the American posture, a posture synonymous with the defense of freedom and peace, the Soviet Union has developed an offensive military force designed for a first-strike on the United States:

> The final fact is that the Soviet Union is acquiring what can only be considered an offensive military force. They have continued to build far more intercontinental ballistic missiles than they could possibly need simply to deter an attack. Their conventional forces are trained and equipped not so much to defend against an attack as they are to permit sudden, surprise offensives of their own. (“Address to the Nation”)

Thus, having created a binary between the peaceful United States and the offensive threat posed by the Soviet Union, President Reagan further warrants the distinction through contrasting analysis of American and Soviet modernization programs. For example, in the strategic realm, the Soviet Union has (unnecessarily) far outpaced the nuclear programs of the United States, particularly in the realm of ICBMs:

> During the past decade and a half, the Soviets have built up a massive arsenal of new strategic nuclear weapons – weapons that can strike directly at the United States.
>
> As an example, the United States introduced its last new intercontinental ballistic missile, the Minute Man III, in 1969, and we’re not dismantling our even older Titan

> missiles.[34] But what has the Soviet Union done in these intervening years? Well, since 1969 the Soviet Union has built five new classes of ICBMs, and upgraded these eight times. As a result, their missiles are much more powerful and accurate than they were several years ago, and they continue to develop more, while ours are increasingly obsolete. ("Address to the Nation")

Moreover, this massive build-up of strategic armaments (which puts the security of the United States at risk), extends across the nuclear triad. In addition to a disparity in land-based ICBM forces, the Soviet Union risks strategic dominance across the naval and airborne elements of the nuclear triad:

> Over the same period, the Soviet Union built 4 new classes of submarine-launched ballistic missiles and over 60 new missile submarines. We built 2 new types of submarine missiles and actually withdrew 10 submarines from strategic missions. The Soviet Union built over 200 new Backfire bombers, and their brand new Blackjack bomber is now under development. We haven't built a new long-range bomber since our B – 52's were deployed about a quarter of a century ago, and we've already retired several hundred of those because of old age. ("Address to the Nation")

The implications of this portrayal of the Soviet Union as an overly armed aggressor that not only threatens, but has actively destroyed, nuclear parity, are two-fold. First, on an international scale, the Soviet Union has expanded its influence, threatening both the United States and the international system:

> As the Soviets have increased their military power, they've been emboldened to extend that power. They're spreading their military influence in ways that can directly challenge our vital interests and those of our allies. ("Address to the Nation")

Thus, the USSSR, far from being the herald of a Leninist revolution, the champion of an internationally repressed proletariat, becomes the greatest threat to those it claims to protect.

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[34] The Minute Man III, a solid-fueled ICBM designed to provide swift second-strike capability, entered into service in 1970, and currently constitutes the entirety of the land-based segment of the American nuclear triad. In contrast, the Titan II missiles (introduced in 1963) were the last liquid-fueled ICBM deployed by the United States during the Cold War. For more information, see "Titan II" and "Minuteman III" respectively.

Second, this understanding of the Soviet Union as aggressor legitimizes the subsequent announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative. If the USSR has brought the world to the brink of nuclear catastrophe, and every member of the human race stands in the shadow of such a holocaust on a daily basis, then any and every effort to mitigate (or even render obsolete) the threat of strategic armaments becomes justified. Thus, similar to the manner in which the 1983 "Address to the Nation" co-opted the concerns of the freeze movement, the rhetor links strategic modernization to the exigency of the contemporary moment, thereby legitimizing both defensive and offensive measures to counter the growing Soviet threat.

Nuclear Weapons

Having established a binary opposition between the United States, the international protector of peace and freedom, and the Soviet Union, an adversary whose offensive build-up risked destruction, President Reagan transitioned to the subject of nuclear weapons. While the early years of the Reagan administration were characterized by the contrasting rhetorics of 'winning a nuclear war' on the one hand, and the opposition to nuclear weapons propagated by the freeze movement, the 1983 "Address to the Nation" was a fundamental shift (Mehan 1990). Criticizing past decades of American strategic doctrine, President Reagan remarked:

> My predecessors in the Oval Office have appeared before you on other occasions to describe the threat posed by Soviet power and have proposed steps to address that threat. But since the advent of nuclear weapons, those steps have been increasingly directed toward deterrence of aggression through the promise of retaliation… I've become more and more deeply convinced that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence. ("Address to the Nation")

By casting the offensive nature of deterrence not as a tool of stability, but as a destructive logic that injects the existential threat of nuclear war into the everyday lived experience of human beings, the rhetor critically undermines the decades-long foundation of the U.S.-Soviet strategic

relationship. Indeed, the moral framing of such a critique would not have been lost on the Soviet elite, given that such an argument bore strong resemblance to those offered by the USSR decades prior:

> Thus, in his call for a new defense the president asked if it was not better to protect one's citizens than to be able to act only in revenge and retaliation. Reagan's assertion of the moral superiority of defense over retaliation (or offense) was almost precisely the argument made by Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin to President Lyndon Johnson at their meeting in Glassboro, New Jersey, in 1967. At that time, the failure of the Soviet Union to accept the American logic of the offense-defense linkage provided the final motivation for Johnson to initiate the U.S. ABM program. (Vogele 112)

Concurrent with this criticism, however, President Reagan cast arms control (another convention of the U.S.-Soviet relationship) not as a solution, but as a lesser manifestation of the same destructive logic:

> If the Soviet Union will join with us in our efforts to achieve major arms reduction, we will have succeeded in stabilizing the nuclear balance. Nevertheless, it will still be necessary to rely on the specter of retaliation, on mutual threat. And that's a sad commentary on the human condition. Wouldn't it be better to save lives than to avenge them? Are we not capable of demonstrating our peaceful intentions by applying all our abilities and our ingenuity to achieving a truly lasting stability? I think we are. Indeed, we must. ("Address to the Nation")

Thus, having indicted two key conventions of the Cold War (deterrence and arms control) as creating the very catastrophe they were meant to avert, the speaker transitions to the potential of a *defensive* solution to the dilemma, asking a question that would shatter the 1972 ABM Treaty:

> What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliations to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies? ("Address to the Nation")

The threat to the Soviet Union posed by this question cannot be underestimated. In the work of an instant, President Reagan called into question the value of decades of Soviet investment in an offensively postured strategic arsenal, casting into doubt both the superpower

status of the Soviet Union and the ideological foundation of Soviet identity. As Lambeth and Lewis (1988) explain:

> By far the most likely source of Soviet agitation over SDI has to do with high-level concerns that continued progress of the U.S. program may undermine worldwide appreciation of Soviet military prowess… Military power is the sine qua non of the Soviet state. It has singularly bestowed upon the U.S.S.R. its claim to "equivalence" with the United States. Toward that end the Soviets have invested heavily in their strategic nuclear posture over the past two decades. Insofar as SDI aims, in President Reagan's expression, to render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," it threatens--- at least from the Kremlin's vantage point--- to render worthless the very foundation of the U.S.S.R.'s superpower status. (759)

Having determined that the only way to win was not to play the game, President Reagan refused to counter the Soviet strategic build-up through solely offensive measures, augmenting American nuclear and conventional forces with defensive countermeasures designed to critically undermine the foundation of Soviet power. This message was not lost on the Soviet elite; indeed, the announcement of March 1983 sparked a major shift by the USSR towards arms control measures by both indicting the destructive logic of deterrence and calling into question the value of the Soviet arsenal. For example, in the 1983 *Interview with Andropov*, the General Secretary decried the announcement of SDI by the United States as "a bid to disarm the Soviet Union in the face of the U.S. nuclear threat" (qtd. in Bundy et al. 270-271). Similarly, as Alexander Aleksandrovich Bessmertnykh[35] remarked, following the end of the Cold War:

> [O]ne of the major moments when the strategists in the Soviet Union started maybe even to reconsider their positions was when the SDI program was announced in March 1983. For the first weeks, that announcement seemed a bit fantastic. But then it started to come to the minds of the leaders that there might be something very, very dangerous in that… The SDI program had a long-lasting impact on us. Maybe if it had not been for the SDI, then the programs would have gone more slowly and not so intensively. So in a certain way, the SDI pronouncement might have brought us closer to solutions in arms control, because we realized that we were really approaching a very dangerous situation in the strategic counterbalance that we had been living in. (Wohlforth 33)

[35] Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union (1986 – 1987).

Thus, the road to Reykjavik (and the ensuing collapse of the U.S.S.R.) was paved, at least in part, by the strategic shift 1983 "Address to the Nation" and the subsequent Soviet embrace of the necessity of arms control.

Economic Competition

Yet the mere announcement of a shift in the strategic posture of the United States in and of itself is insufficient to explain the intensity of the Soviet response. Indeed, given the decades-long failure by both the United States and the Soviet Union to produce a workable missile defense system, the 1983 "Address to the Nation" ought to have been greeted with such skepticism by the Soviet elite that the initiative had little to no influence on the eventual end of the Cold War. To bridge this credibility gap, concurrent with the critique of both deterrence and the logic of MAD, President Reagan weds the development of the initiative with the strength and ingenuity of American science. Indeed, while such an argument may have been unpersuasive in the decades prior, given the history of scientific achievement by the USSR (e.g. the launch of Sputnik I), by the twilight of the Cold War, the Soviet economy had deteriorated such that the industrial base of the United States represented a clear and present danger to the system of the USSR. Thus, the ethotic appeal of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" is undergirded by both a robust belief in the superiority of American technological development, and the specter of a new phase in the arms race, a phase in which economic superiority becomes a fundamental pre-requisite to military dominance.

Following the critique of deterrence explicated previously, President Reagan transitions to the potential of a future free from the shadow of nuclear annihilation, free from the Soviet strategic threat, a future in which American industry finds itself the focal point:

> After careful consultation with my advisers, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I believe there is a way. Let me share with you a vision of the future which offers hope. It is that

> we embark on a program to counter the awesome Soviet missile threat with measures that are defensive. Let us turn to the very strengths in technology that spawned our great industrial base and that have given us the quality of life we enjoy today. ("Address to the Nation")

That these remarks position domestic industry as the foundation upon which a future free of the Soviet threat rests is of particular import for this study, yet the ending reference to the 'quality of life' enjoyed by American citizens is nevertheless of additional interest. By highlighting the disparity between the standard of living enjoyed by citizens of the Soviet Union with that of their American counterparts, President Reagan questions the legitimacy of the Soviet system, which fancied itself the guardian of the working class. Indeed, by rendering SDI synonymous with the both American industry and quality of life, the rhetor returns to a line of argument present in the 'kitchen debates' of the 1950s, that the superiority of Western capitalism to Marxism-Leninism finds itself in both its industrial power and the high standard of living enjoyed by its subjects.

In addition to this critique of the Soviet system, the rhetor relies on ethotic appeal to substantiate both his own credibility as a speaker, and the legitimacy of his 'vision of the future.' As the reference to consultation with advisers (e.g. the Joint Chiefs of Staff) suggests, the impetus for SDI is not the will of a single individual; rather, President Reagan is merely conveying the reasoned outcome of a process of deliberation, the consensus of a group of experts and, perhaps most importantly, military leaders. Similar to the metonymic function of the presidency, in which the holder of the Oval Office stands for the collective will of the American people, President Reagan speaks as the head of the Executive Branch, a representative that conveys, and in so doing invokes, the legitimacy and credibility of the military leaders and scientific experts over whom his office holds dominion.

Having laid the foundation of a nuclear-free future, the remainder of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" signals both American resolve, and technical capacity, to develop effective missile

defense. Indeed, for the rhetor, the potential technical infeasibility of SDI is far outweighed by the potential benefit of obliterating the potential for nuclear catastrophe:

> I know this is a formidable, technical task, one that may not be accomplished before the end of this century. Yet, current technology has attained a level of sophistication for us to begin this effort. It will take years, probably decades of effort on many fronts. There will be failures and setbacks, just as there will be successes and breakthroughs. And as we proceed, we must remain constant in preserving the nuclear deterrent and maintaining a solid capability for flexible response. But isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war? We know it is. ("Address to the Nation")

The thematic of temporality finds itself at the center of this excerpt. Not only would the timeframe (decades) attributed to the potential development of SDI both mitigate Soviet claims of technical infeasibility and accentuate the depth of American resolve on this matter, but the reference to the 'sophistication' of contemporary technology suggests that such a timeframe may be unnecessary.

Reagan substantiates this claim, that the sophistication of American technology makes the SDI technically feasible, through two additional warrants. First, the speaker highlights the expansion of conventional forces by the United States as an indicator of the efficacy of American technology. If contemporary technology is sufficient to counter the Soviet Union in the conventional realm, President Reagan reasons, then the same must be true in the strategic realm:

> America does possess – now – the technologies to attain very significant improvements in the effectiveness of our conventional, nonnuclear forces. Proceeding boldly with these new technologies, we can significantly reduce any incentive that the Soviet Union may have to threaten attack against the United States or its allies. ("Address to the Nation")

Second, the speaker concludes the discussion of American technology by emphasizing the strategic threat posed by American scientific development:

> I call upon the scientific community in our country, those who gave us nuclear weapons, to turn their great talents now to the cause of mankind and world peace, to give us the mans of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. ("Address to the Nation")

This argument raises the specter of the former strategic dominance of the United States, then inverts its logic to imagine the possibility of a world free of nuclear weapons. The United States, as the first country to effectively develop, and deploy, nuclear weapons, could once again harness its scientific capability to make a similar breakthrough in regard to missile defense. Indeed, that this first-mover status in the nuclear realm gave the United States war-winning capability against the Japanese (thus ending World War II) could not have been lost on the Soviet elite. Concluding through a pairing of American technological superiority with the potential of strategic dominance, the 1983 "Address to the Nation" invited the Soviet Union to imagine utter catastrophe: the prospect of war-winning capability in the hands of the United States.

That this strategy, this rhetorical linkage of the credibility of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" with the technological superiority enjoyed by the United States, was a product not of chance, but of purposeful artifice, is highly likely. Throughout the Reagan presidency, American intelligence became increasingly aware of structural problems with the Soviet economy, advising the administration of the incapacity of the adversary to maintain parity with domestic technological development: "The general consensus was that the Soviets feared US technology, not its economy, and the United States should rely on this for leverage" (Steding 145). For example, President Reagan was advised during a 1984 meeting of the National Security Planning Group (NSPG) of the following by a representative from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): "No amount of capital that the Soviet Union can invest would permit them to compete successfully with the United States in terms of SDI, because of their inability to develop modern computers at the rate at which they are being developed in the United States" (Steding 145).

Thus, it ought to be no surprise that, in private conversations recounted by aides, President Reagan located the economic realm as the core of his anti-Soviet strategy:

> The only way the Soviets will stop their drive for military superiority is when they realize that we are willing to go all out in arms race… If we release the forces of our economy to produce the weapons we need, the Soviets will never be able to keep up. And then, and only then, will they become reasonable and willing to seriously consider reductions in nuclear weapons (Rowland and Jones 117)

That the Soviet elite (especially Gorbachev) were aware of the dismal economic outlook (and therefore technological disadvantage) faced by their country is beyond doubt; that those dire straits influenced the reception of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" by the Soviet Union is similarly beyond reproach. As the fourth chapter explores, the SDI increasingly dominated Soviet strategic doctrine towards the end of the Reagan presidency, such that the initiative dominated the 1986 Reykjavik Summit. Forcing the Soviet Union to acknowledge American technological superiority, and exploiting Soviet fears of that advantage to accentuate the strategic threat posed by SDI, is one of the lasting legacies of the text. Indeed, the economic implications of the Strategic Defense Initiative, independent of its technical feasibility, was one of the primary motivations for a growing Soviet acknowledgment of the necessity of arms control. As Alexander Aleksandrovich Bessmertnykh[36] stated, following the end of the Cold War:

> So when you were talking about SDI and arms control, the economic elements of the necessity to go down with the reductions was sometimes, in my view, the number one preoccupation of Gorbachev, especially when we were preparing ourselves for Reykjavik. That was a very drastic proposal. It was Gorbachev's personal instruction that we should really try once and for all to be very serious about arms control. Let's go very, very deep down. And again, the economic part of it was very, very strong.
>
> When we were talking about SDI, just the thought of getting involved in this SDI arms race, of trying to do something like [what] the United States was going to do with space-based weapons programs, looked like a horror to Gorbachev. So he was trying to avoid that alternative by going for reductions, while trying to persuade the U.S. side not to do it. (Wohlforth 48)

[36] Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union (1986-1987)/ First Deputy Foreign Minister (1988-1989)/ Soviet Ambassador to the United States (1990)

Thus, while the doctrinal shift of the 1983 "Address to the Nation may have posed a strategic threat to the Soviet Union, the potency of that threat was questionable (at best) absent the backing of American technological superiority. The Road to Reykjavik may have been paved by the threat posed by SDI, but confining such a threat to a purely strategic dimension misunderstands the ethotic appeal of the text.

The Empire Strikes Back: Andropov & The *Pravda* Interview

The 1983 "Address to the Nation" therefore melded technical and social reason to resolve the dual dilemma faced by President Reagan, namely the need to engender popular support for nuclear modernization (including SDI) while shifting the framework within which the simulated (i.e. rhetorical) textuality of the strategic relationship between the United States and the USSR functioned. As such, the 1983 "Address to the Nation" posed a uniquely rhetorical challenge for a Soviet leadership determined to undermine support for SDI amongst Western audiences. By positioning the initiative as the product of a moral imperative, a 'vision of the future' on which the ethical value of humanity itself rested, President Reagan reduced the complexity of nuclear deterrence to a more clear-cut question of the ethical value (or lack thereof) of nuclear weapons, a question that operated within the framework of social reason. General Secretary Andropov, then, had the unenviable task of defending the technical logic of deterrence, of defending the seemingly contradictory rationale of achieving peace and stability through mutual threat of annihilation. After all, when compared to the grandiose vision of a world free of the threat of nuclear annihilation, how could the public audience to which President Reagan spoke condone a continued arms race, the stability of which depended on the capacity of either side to destroy the existence of life itself?

Background: *Pravda* and the Rhetorical Campaign

The immediate Soviet response to the announcement of SDI came in the form of an interview with General Secretary Andropov, published by *Pravda*. In an indication that the shift towards defensive countermeasures caught the USSR off-guard, and of the degree of planning which undergirded the Soviet response, the interview was released on March 27, 1983, approximately four days following the "Address to the Nation."[37]

Thus began a broad-spectrum rhetorical campaign, designed make the development and deployment of the Strategic Defense Initiative politically untenable. Just as the SDI itself was rhetorically constituted, spoken into being by the 1983 "Address to the Nation," so too was the battle between the United States and the Soviet United concerning the initiative rhetorical, in that each side sought to influence the hearts and minds of Western audiences to either save (or destroy) the program. Indeed, while the concerns expressed were undoubtedly real,[38] the expression of those concerns by the General Secretary was purposeful and strategic, an attempt to persuade the American public to abort the SDI at the very moment of its conception. As Lambeth (1986) explains:

> The most probable short-term approach toward countering SDI will be a continued effort, already well under way, to drive a stake through the program politically before it gains enough momentum to present a tangible threat. Among the highlights of this campaign has been a determined Soviet attempt to exploit the natural yearning of Americans for arms control… in the hope that the administration's position on SDI will yield under the pressure of public opinion. This… dramatizes the Soviet Union's desire to eliminate SDI on the cheap, if at all possible, by helping to engineer its demise before hard commitments toward offsetting Soviet programs become required. (vi-vii)

[37] While some have attributed this delay to the bureaucratic inefficiency of the Kremlin (e.g. Adelman 110), the broad-spectrum coordination of the subsequent rhetorical campaign suggests a more strategic motivation for the timing of the Soviet response.

[38] For example, speaking after the end of the Cold War Alexander Aleksandrovich Bessmertnykh (Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, 1986-1987) remarked that, "The atmosphere in Moscow was very tense for the first few years of the Reagan administration especially because of the SDI program: it frightened us very much" (Wohlforth 14).

While the immense economic burden to the Soviet Union of funding countermeasures was surely a contributing factor, the tepid desire of the American polity to sustain modernization programs provides additional support for the adoption of such a rhetorical strategy. Indeed, the history of the American military is littered with scrapped programs whose development failed to garner sufficient support across multiple administrations to achieve deployment (Lambeth 42).[39]

While the rhetorical campaign waged by the Soviet Union failed in its immediate goal (development of SDI continued throughout the remainder of the Reagan administration), the sheer outpouring of effort that undergirded the strategy ought to be noted. Not only do the argument through-lines of Soviet rhetoric suggest high-level coordination of the campaign, but the utilization of nearly every avenue of communication to deliver such appeals indicates the sheer magnitude and coordination of such a strategy:

> [T]he various signals emanating from Moscow show every sign of having been carefully orchestrated to play up certain common points. These signals have varied from fairly straightforward articles in quasi-professional forums such as SShA to unrestrained hyperbole from such Party spokesmen as Vadim Zagladin and Valentin Falin. In propounding them, the Soviets have made use of every available communications channel, from the printed media to interviews with Western journalists and the citation of prominent Soviet scientists to add technical credence to Moscow's critique of SDI. (Lambeth 4)

Thus, to conduct an argument criticism of the *Interview with Andropov* is not to analyze a text in isolation; rather, given the delayed response by Andropov, and the subsequent coordination of Soviet messaging across multiple platforms, the critiques levied by the General Secretary are both representative of, and laid the foundation for, the argumentative framework within which the rhetorical campaign against SDI was conducted. As such, the remainder of this chapter will examine the arguments levied by Andropov, with particular focus on the role of technical reason

[39] For example, the B-1 strategic bomber and the MX missile program were particularly slow to come online due to low levels of domestic support. Moreover, other similar initiatives to provide home defense for the American public during the 1950s/ 1960s were soon scrapped.

in informing and structuring the effort on behalf of the Soviet Union to persuade Western audiences to reject SDI.

Critique I: Strategic Stability

The primary critique levied by the *Interview with Andropov* centered on the threat to strategic stability posed by SDI. As befits the framework of the rhetorical campaign levied by the Soviet Union, General Secretary Andropov sought to 'unmask' the moral framing articulated by President Reagan, instead portraying SDI as an outgrowth of American strategic ambitions that threatened nuclear war. Indeed, this rhetoric of 'unmasking,' of reducing the grandiosity of a world free of nuclear weapons to the pragmatic level of the technical logic of deterrence was central to the *Interview with Andropov*. For example, the question asked of the General Secretary that concerned SDI specifically was framed pragmatically, as an explanation of the material implications of the initiative: "President Reagan declared that he had devised a new, defensive conception. What does it boil down to in practice?" (Drell et al. 105).

In response, the General Secretary framed SDI not as a moral question, but as a function of American strategic interests, interests that aligned with other anti-Soviet discourses articulated by President Reagan:

> This is something that deserves a special mention.
>
> After discoursing to his heart's content on a Soviet military threat, President Reagan said that it was time a different approach was adopted to ensuring U.S. strategic interests and announced in this connection the commencement of development of large-scale and effective antiballistic missile defenses. (Drell et al. 105)

Not only does the strategic framing of the initiative stand in opposition to the 'hope for humanity' articulated by President Reagan, but the explanation of SDI as 'large-scale' and 'effective' deserves additional scrutiny.

Whereas a mainline criticism of SDI in American public discourse was that the initiative was 'science-fiction' (hence the derisively-termed 'Star Wars' project), that line of argument was not available to the General Secretary. Not only would Soviet concerns for the efficient and effective use of American resources be so obviously insincere as to be absurd, but, in order to maintain the internal coherence of the Soviet critique of SDI, the effectiveness of the initiative had to be conceded. Indeed, for SDI to be a guise for American acquisition of a first-strike capability (thereby threatening nuclear war), the initiative had to be capable of absorbing what remained of the Soviet nuclear arsenal following an attack by the United States. As General Secretary Andropov articulated:

> On the face of it, laymen may find it even attractive as the President speaks about what seem to be defensive measures. But this may seem to be so only on the face of it and only to those who are not conversant with these matters. In fact the strategic offensive forces of the United States will continue to be developed and upgraded at full tilt and along quite a definite line at that, namely that of acquiring a first nuclear strike capability. Under these conditions the intention to secure itself the possibility of destroying with the help of the ABM defenses the corresponding strategic systems of the other side, that is of rendering it unable of dealing a retaliatory strike, is a bid to disarm the Soviet Union in the face of the U.S. nuclear threat. One must see this clearly in order to appraise correctly the true purport of this "new conception." (Drell et al. 105)

While the connection between SDI and the increasingly offensive posture of the United States Reagan administration served as an obvious counterpoint to the peaceful intentions articulated by the 1983 "Address to the Nation," the criticism of 'laymen' who 'are not conversant in these matters' demonstrates the challenge of defending the technical complexity of deterrence against the comparatively simple ethical justification for SDI.

Indeed, the closing admonition that the audience must see through the overly simplistic worldview of President Reagan to understand the threat by the initiative was repeated throughout the *Interview with Andropov*. For example, speaking of inverse relationship between arms

control and strategic defense, the General Secretary exhorts Western publics to understand the actual, offensive motivation for SDI:

> Today, however, the United States intend to sever this interconnection. Should this conception be converted into reality, this would actually open the floodgates of a runaway race of all type of strategic arms, both offensive and defensive. Such is the real purport, the seamy side, so to say, of Washington's "defensive conception."
>
> (Drell et al. 106)

The reality, then, of the American pursuit of a world free of the threat of nuclear annihilation is not peace, not the realization of the ethical potential of humanity to live free of existential threat, but very real threat of a renewed arms race, with the corresponding growth in the probability of nuclear war.

Critique II: Strategic Defense & The ABM Treaty

A second criticism of SDI levied by the *Interview with Andropov* was that the initiative departed from the agreement of both sides to forego development of strategic defense. In particular, the General Secretary sought to portray the initiative as a primarily offensive program, an indisputable violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty that undermined the de-escalatory potential of arms control. As Andropov argued, speaking at length of both the historic commitment by the United States and the Soviet Union to avoid development of BMD, and the threat to arms control posed by the development of such defenses:

> When the USSR and the USA began discussing the problem of strategic arms, they agreed that there is an inseverable interconnection between strategic offensive and defensive weapons. And it was not by chance that the treaty on limiting strategic offensive arms was signed simultaneously between our countries in 1972.
>
> In other words, the sides recognized the fact, and recorded this in the above documents, that it is only mutual restraint in the field of AMB that will allow progress in limiting and reducing offensive weapons, that is in checking and reversing the strategic arms race as a whole. (Drell et al. 105-106)

Thus, not only does SDI undermine over a decade of doctrinal consensus by the United States and the Soviet Union, but a future free of the threat of nuclear weapons, the ultimate goal and ethical necessity articulated by President Reagan, is critically undermined by the initiative.

This offensive portrayal of SDI allowed the Soviet Union to reclaim the high ground on missile defense and exploit Western divisions on the initiative:

> Much of Moscow's anti-SDI rhetoric has misrepresented the intent of SDI in an attempt to play on U.S. domestic dissension and inflame the worst fears of our European allies. Nevertheless, Moscow's commentary in the wake of President Reagan's SDI speech has sought to occupy the political high ground by proclaiming that since the signing of the ABM Treaty in 1972, the Soviet Union has changed its ways… By putting Washington on the defensive that has a powerful appeal for those in the West inclined to believe it, this refrain has given Moscow an inside track in the propaganda[40] war over SDI. (Lambeth v)

In particular, the portrayal of SDI as an offensive program designed to give the United States war-winning strategic capability allowed Moscow to reclaim the supposed stability of deterrence, to reclaim the logic of Mutual Assured Destruction while casting Washington as a destabilizing aggressor: "Moscow now claims the logic of Mutual Assured Destruction as its own, while accusing *Washington* of seeking a counterforce disarming option and thereby threatening to disrupt the balance that has hitherto prevented nuclear war" (Lambeth 8-9). For an American audience, strongly skeptical of the technical feasibility of the initiative, the destabilizing potential of SDI far outweighed any conceivable benefit of the program. Similarly, to a Western European audience reliant on the United States for its security, the supposed instability engendered by SDI called into question the value of American extended deterrence.

[40] Whereas Soviet concerns regarding SDI may have been viewed as propaganda by contemporary analysts, this thesis is less concerned with casting aspersions on the rhetorical campaign waged by the Soviet Union, and more concerned with

Conclusion

The 1983 "Address to the Nation" and the subsequent response by General Secretary Andropov in *Pravda*, not only constituted the discursive framework within which the rhetorical conflict over SDI was waged, but established the strains of argument to be deployed therein. This framing, in which President Reagan articulated the ethical necessity of a future free from the offensive logic of deterrence, and the Soviet Union defended such a logic on pragmatic and technical grounds, endured until the 1986 Reykjavik Summit. As such, the fourth chapter of this project analyzes the negotiating strategy deployed by the Soviet Union during the summit, with the goal of establishing both the strategic impact, and enduring rhetorical influence, of the 1983 "Address to the Nation."

CHAPTER FOUR

A TALE OF TWO SUMMITS: GENEVA (1985) & REYYKJAVIK (1986)

The 1983 "Address to the Nation," then, had unique implications for Soviet decisionmakers. Raising the prospect of an unsustainable technological race with the United States, and undermining the strategic value of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, both of which threatened the foundation of the international legitimacy of the Soviet Union, the rhetoric of the address made a profound impact on the Politburo. Following the 1985 funding of the initiative, and the ascension of General Secretary Gorbachev, the SDI played a defining role in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union, particularly during arms control negotiations. Given the importance of these talks in easing bilateral tensions, and ultimately facilitating the end of the Cold War, this chapter establishes the enduring influence of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" and the subsequent response by General Secretary Andropov through a rhetorical history of the 1985 Geneva Summit and the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, seeking to a demonstrate a doctrinal shift in Soviet strategic thinking from adversarial doctrine to capitulatory necessity.

Rhetoric-as-Reality: The Role of SDI

While this project has established the SDI as a primarily *rhetorical* phenomenon, both the particular context of arms control summitry and internal evidence from the Soviet Union lend additional support to the rhetorical significance of the study. First, following the first summit between the United States and the Soviet held at Geneva in 1955, "summitry became a barometer of the competitive pressure in superpower relations," demonstrating that the rhetoric employed

during negotiations was not an isolated phenomenon, but paralleled broader, substantive realities in the bilateral relationship (Wheeler and Dunn 2015). Moreover, scholars have discussed summitry as an important site of rhetorical criticism, positioning such negotiations as a moment of intercultural communication whereby bridges may be built between differing, opposing actors (Reynolds 2009).

Second, evidence released following the end of the Cold War demonstrates that, by the twilight of the Cold war, the discourse of the SDI had become political reality, such that the rhetoric of the "Address to the Nation" had become a strategic threat for Soviet decisionmakers. For example, during the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, Gorbachev, highlighting the threat to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty posed by missile defense, "revealed that he knew that SDI was far along: 'The U.S. has scored breakthroughs in one or two areas--- and Moscow knew just which they are'" (Adelman 138). [41] Indeed, such statements ought to be of little surprise, given that Soviet intelligence[42] at the time considered SDI to an immense threat to the security of the country:

> Of greater consequence was the Soviet intelligence failure on SDI. This extended beyond the KGB to virtually all Soviet agencies. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs study, for instance, concluded that the 'U.S. could begin testing and then the deployment of all three' strategic defense systems by 1995. Moreover, the U.S. 'full-scale deployment of space-based missile defense systems can be expected after 2010'… Finally, and almost comically, the Soviet Ministry of Defense gauged SDI's effectiveness after 2010 at 'approximately 99%.' (Adelman 330)

As a result, the initiative was of so profound an importance that the program played a defining role during arms control negotiations from 1985-1986. Despite the anthem of critics and

[41] Ken Adelman was, among other positions, the Director of Arms Control during the Reagan administration, and was present for critical moments during the Reykjavik Summit. As such, this chapter will make extensive use of one of the few first-person accounts of the negotiations, especially given the lack of outside observers present at the negotiating table (media were barred from the proceedings).

[42] Archives from the Kremlin were made public during the reform initiatives by Gorbachev. Accounts of internal Soviet policy and doctrine are largely drawn directly from these archives.

rhetorical scholars that the "SDI will never work," both sides, Gorbachev, "along with Reagan, spoke as if it were practically working already" (Adelman 176).

Thus, following the constitutive function of rhetoric, not only did the 1983 "Address to the Nation" speak the program into being, but the discursive exchange of arms control negotiations, in which the trope of SDI figured heavily, only reinforced the 'reality' of the initiative. Indeed, the circulation of such rhetoric had a profound political impact. For example, one of the 'historical achievements' of the 1985 Geneva Summit was that Soviet enmity towards the initiative only made the SDI all the more real, and thus all the more threatening:

> The more historical achievement, however,… was the extraordinary equity Gorbachev instilled in SDI by virtue of his vehement objections to it. In 1985, Reagan's vision of a missile defense shield that would render nuclear weapons obsolete was little more than chimerical--- a product of his alchemic cognetics. Like Andropov and Chernenko before him, Gorbachev had granted SDI its substantive value. Their strategic, technological, and economic fears of SDI, coupled with Regan's mysteriously quixotic devotion, made a program that had yet to produce much of anything in the laboratory or in the field very real at the negotiating table. (Steding 148)

Moreover, speaking of the 1986 negotiations at Reykjavik, Adelman (2014) reached a similar conclusion:

> Among Reykjavik's many ironies is how Reagan and Gorbachev reinforced each other on this perspective. The more passionately each spoke of SDI--- Reagan, as the 'greatest opportunity for peace in the Twentieth Century,' Gorbachev as some space gun aimed squarely at Red Square--- the more real and potent SDI became to the other.
>
> After Reykjavik, whenever we [the Reagan administration] testified or gave a speech on SDI, we'd traipse out Gorbachev's zealous opposition as a convincing argument in support of the U.S. program. If he was so determined to stop it, there must be something to our proceeding with it. (176-177)

In other words, the iterative circulation of the rhetoric of the Strategic Defense Initiative, a function of the enduring legacy of the 1983 "Address to the Nation," served to both create and sustain the political reality of the Strategic Defense Initiative, a reality so potent that it came to dominate Soviet strategic doctrine. To further substantiate the role of such rhetoric, the

remainder of this chapter will analyze both the substance, and the legacy of the 1985 Geneva Summit and the 1986 Reykjavik Summit.

A Prequel Story: The Geneva Summit (1985)

The 1985 Geneva Summit, the first of its kind during the Reagan administration, came at a critical point in the Cold War. Following the 1983 Able Archer exercise,[43] in which mutual distrust and suspicion was of such magnitude that an annual (i.e. routine) training initiative nearly led to nuclear catastrophe, the need to re-establish communication, to create a connection between the President and newly elected General Secretary Gorbachev had become clear (Wheeler and Dunn 2015). However, despite the clear and present danger of nuclear catastrophe, the Geneva Summit ended without agreement, with both parties locked inexorably on opposing sides.[44] Indeed, the failure to reach an accord became the direct motivation for the 1986 Reykjavik Summit: "Gorbachev explained that he had proposed Reykjavik since the Geneva arms talks had 'a black eye or two and are virtually at an impasse'" (Adelman 84).[45] Thus, an understanding of the 1985 summit becomes necessary to understand the full magnitude of the rhetorical shift of the 1986 talks, and the differing role played by the Strategic Defense initiative in each. As such, this sub-section will briefly trace an outline of the Geneva Summit in order to set the stage for an argument criticism of the subsequent negotiations at Reykjavik.

[43] Able Archer was a 1983 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) exercise which simulated a political crisis between the United States and the Soviet Union that eventually escalated to the (simulated) release of nuclear weapons. While the exercise was held annually, the unexpected participation of key Western leaders made the simulation appear to be realistic preparation for a NATO first-strike, prompting the Soviet Union to order the mobilization of their strategic forces in preparation for nuclear war.

[44] This is not to suggest, however, that the Geneva Summit was a complete failure. The opportunity to engage in dialogue brought President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev the opportunity to forge a personal relationship that had a positive influence on the 1986 Reykjavik Summit. For example, Gorbachev himself remarked that "Now time is short, we need a summit to launch a personal dialogue with the American president" (qtd in Jackson 621).

[45] This excerpt was taken from the opening statement of Gen. Secretary Gorbachev at the Reykjavik Summit.

Gorbachev entered the negotiations at Geneva armed with a major shift in Soviet strategy; cognizant of the hardline tendencies of the Reagan administration, the Politburo was deeply skeptical the United States would fundamentally alter its policies towards the Soviet Union. Rather, the goal of Gorbachev was to out-flank the Americans through a *moderate* strategy: "Gorbachev had a larger political objective in mind. He saw such summits as a mean of advancing a new image of Soviet diplomacy as a champion of peace and of increasing domestic and international pressure on the Reagan administration to moderate the arms race" (Jackson 621). Such a strategy (at least for Western analysts) was rhetorical, in that negotiations were premised upon offering fantastical and infeasible arms control proposals, the refusal of which would isolate the United States on the international stage:

> They [the Soviets] sought to isolate the Reagan administration and thereby increase pressure on it to alter its policies by enticing Western Europe with bold new disarmament proposals…'encouraging contradictions in the Atlantic alliance through the influence of propaganda'… By demonstrating a willingness to make concessions in the name of peace, the Soviet Union would improve its own image and at the same time escalate international and domestic opposition to the Reagan administration's own military build-up. (Jackson 621-622)

Thus, while the stated priorities of the Soviet Union during Geneva were primarily focused around arms control and space weapons (i.e. the SDI), the actual goal of the negotiations was not an accord, but international gamesmanship. On a similar note, President Reagan seemed less concerned with negotiation than criticism, aggressively challenging the morality of the Soviet system, particularly the dominion of Eastern Europe and Soviet intervention in Third World conflicts (Jackson 622-623).

However, despite the political theatre in Geneva, the substance of the negotiations reveals the continued persuasive import of the rhetoric of the "Address to the Nation." In particular, the program became a critical point of divergence during negotiations: "In spite of Reagan's

assurances to the contrary, the talks in Geneva were stalled over SDI… During the initial summit between Reagan and Gorbachev in November 1985, SDI continued to be highly contentious" (Steding 147). While the expression of Soviet fears regarding strategic defense may have been but a tool in a broader propagandistic strategy, such rhetoric was but the latest articulation of long-held concerns.[46] The haunting specter of a technological conflict, a specter raised by the 1983 "Address to the Nation," continued to endure over two years after the speech, with Gorbachev arguing that "the President wanted to catch the 'Firebird' of SDI by using U.S. technical advantage" (qtd in Steding 148). That the Geneva Summit failed to achieve its stated objective, then, was largely unsurprising. Indeed, the primary character of the talks was not one of conciliation, but of an ideological rift so gaping that never the twain shall meet:

> Their first discussion, according to Gorbachev, had the character of an ideological debate and became at times heated and emotional. Neither in their private conversations nor in the broader conversations of the delegation was significant new agreement reached regarding regional conflicts or outstanding arms control issues…[T]he meeting did not result in a far-reaching reassessment of the nature of the Cold War adversary in either Washington or Moscow. (Jackson 623)

While an ideological dimension to the conflict, and therefore the negotiations, seems both inevitable and predictable, the naked vehemence of two adversaries so ideologically (and otherwise) opposed to each other that even the prospect of negotiations was but a charade emphasizes the sheer intensity of bilateral tensions during this period of the Cold War.

Thus, the proceedings of the 1985 Geneva Summit take on a particular character. Not only were the talks apparently destined for failure (as neither side intended to truly negotiate), but the demonstrable depth of the conflict indicated the likelihood of future compromise was extraordinarily low. The rhetoric of the SDI was a serious point of contention during the

[46] For example, when speaking to a Congressional delegation at Moscow in April 1985, Gorbachev argued that not only was SDI intended "for an attack on the Soviet Union," but that the development of "a large-scale ABM system inevitably set in train a radical destabilization of the situation" (qtd in Steding 147).

negotiations, but was not yet a defining influence on Soviet strategic doctrine. Indeed, the stalemate at Geneva was but the latest in a long history of stalled negotiations (Menos 123-141). For example, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) I, held from November 1969 to May 1972, led to agreement on strategic defenses, but merely codified the strategic build-up of the period. Similarly, SALT II, a seven-year long period of negotiations from November 1972 to June 1979, was derailed both by the differing strategic imperatives of either side, and the deteriorating U.S.-Soviet relationship under General Secretary Brezhnev. Such a situation, then, ought to make the Soviet capitulation at Reykjavik (less than a year later), and the critical role played by SDI, of profound significance.

Soviet Collapse: The Reykjavik Summit (1986)

By the following year (1986), General Secretary Gorbachev found himself proposing the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 not as gamesmanship, but out of necessity. With an imperative to remain competitive in an expanding arms race, yet also facing growing cracks in the Soviet system due to its structural unsustainability, reform had become both necessary and problematic. Indeed, the economic and political reality of the Soviet Union in 1986 was such that an untenable choice between militarization and its foundation (the economy) had become necessary. As Alexander Bessmertnykh[47] concluded, speaking retrospectively on the situation faced by the Soviet Union:

> [W]e were already feeling the pressure of the arms race. Gorbachev wanted to go on with the reforms, and the continued arms race, especially in the nuclear area, was a tremendous hindrance to the future of those reforms… Gorbachev had never thought his reform was possible without drastic reductions in nuclear arms. So when Reykjavik was on the agenda, he said, let's try in a very serious way to talk with the American side. (Wohlforth 164-165)

[47] Alexander Aleksandrovich Bessmertnykh. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister (1986-1987)/ Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister (1988-1989)/ Soviet Ambassador to the United States (1990).

The 1986 Reykjavik Summit, then, was proposed by Gorbachev out of political, strategic, and economic necessity. The possibility of failure at Reykjavik, both to reach an accord and to de-escalate the arms race haunted the General Secretary. For example, during a meeting on October 4th 1986,[48] a week before the beginning of the summit, Gorbachev observed that in the event of failure to de-escalate the arms race, to confine SDI to the research phase, "we will be pulled in an arms race beyond our power, and we will lose this race [because] we are presently at the limit of our capabilities" (qtd in Adelman 75). Indeed, that failure was not an option was reiterated by the General Secretary in the run-up to Reykjavik:

> Lest his colleagues miss the point, Gorbachev reiterated it many times during the lead-up to Reykjavik. "If the new round [of the arms race] begins, the pressure on our economy will be inconceivable," he said at one point. At another: "The arms race overburdens our economy. That is why we need a breakthrough." Soviet military efforts "first and foremost lead to a wearing-out of our economy. This is impermissible." And finally: "If they impose a second round of arms race upon us, we will lose!" (Adelman 75-76)

Thus, unlike the 1985 Geneva Summit, where both sides negotiated as ideologically opposed, yet relatively equal adversaries, the United States found itself unexpectedly negotiating from a position of strength. As one official described, in keeping with the American expectation that the 1986 Reykjavik Summit would be an optics-driven meeting of little import: "We came with nothing to offer and had offered nothing; we merely sat there while the Soviets unwrapped their gifts" (qtd in Fitzgerald 360). Indeed, Gorbachev himself complained that the United States "had come to Reykjavik with nothing at all to offer. The impression was that they had come there empty-handed to gather fruit in their basket" (qtd in Fitzgerald 360).

The negotiating strategy employed by the United States and the Soviet Union reflect this imbalance. On the one hand, Gorbachev sought a constructive approach, seeking to demonstrate

[48] This quotation (as well as subsequent references) are quoted directly from meeting notes taken by Anatoly Chernyaev (a foreign affairs advisor to Gorbachev) that have since been made public.

on an international stage that the Reagan administration was needlessly combative and did not truly desire an end to hostilities (Steding 150). As such, the Soviet priorities were two-fold. First, they sought not only to forestall the intensification of, but to de-escalate, an already extant arms race. Second, Gorbachev aimed to prevent the deployment of nuclear weapons in space (i.e. to prevent the SDI), and to embarrass Reagan if the president refused to concede the issue.

On the other hand, the American effort to prepare for Reykjavik largely concerned the optics of the event, and was conducted with several orders of magnitude less urgency than the corresponding Soviet preparation. Indeed, reflecting the widespread failure of American intelligence to appreciate Soviet vulnerability, intelligence reports forecast the summit to be a largely unproductive event in preparation for bilateral negotiations in Washington the following year:

> The NSC [National Security Council] had no clear idea of the Gorbachev they were about to face. The NSC did not understand Gorbachev's challenges… Intelligence reports argued that Gorbachev "wants to cut a deal on arms control in part to advance his long-term agenda, but is under little economic or political pressure to reach a quick agreement and would probably prefer to shelve a U.S. visit than concede too much in Iceland.[49] (qtd in Steding 151)

Thus, for President Reagan, the 1986 Reykjavik Summit presented little more of the same, a reiteration of the divisive sparring that characterized the 1985 Geneva Summit. Indeed, American intelligence assessments (produced and circulated within the technical sphere) served as the impetus for the rhetorical posture of the Reagan administration, an example of the co-constitutive relationship between seemingly disparate spheres of argument.

Ultimately, the actuality of the negotiations was defined by the Soviet strategic imperative, an imperative which hinged on preventing the development and deployment of the SDI. Indeed, Westwick (2008) argues that the Strategic Defense Initiative became not only a key

[49] Emphasis in original.

element of the talks, but the centerpiece of the 1986 Reykjavik Summit. As such, the discourse of the SDI, the legacy of the 1983 "Address to the Nation," becomes critical to understanding the overall rhetorical terrain of the negotiations. As Rozanne L. Ridgway, the lead negotiator at every Reagan-Gorbachev summit, concluded following the end of the Cold War: "There is a consistent straight line in the arms control field from SDI through Reykjavik. And if you reject that, then you get confused explanations of Reykjavik" (Wohlforth 41). Indeed, for Gorbachev, the technical reality of the SDI was immaterial; rather, the potentiality of the initiative, a potentiality spoken into being during the 1983 "Address to the Nation" was the level on which other strategic concerns rested: "Whether SDI was technically feasible was not the issue for Gorbachev. Gorbachev viewed SDI as Reagan's lever to extend the arms race and force the Soviet Union to play a game it could neither afford, nor win" (Steding 150).

October 11, 1986 (the first day of the Reykjavik Summit) began with Gorbachev outlining a three-fold agenda (Adelman 86). First, the General Secretary proposed a fifty percent reduction in strategic forces by both sides, balancing the desire for military strength with the necessity of de-escalating the arms race. Second, Gorbachev sought to put aside the question of British or French nuclear forces (a major concession) in favor of bilateral restrictions on intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe. Third, the General Secretary demanded that both sides respect the ABM Treaty, a demand that would become a defining point of difference during the summit.

Following a deadlocked, multi-hour discussion on both overall strategic reductions, and the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces, President Reagan sought to break the cycle, to find the source of the mutual distrust that hindered the discussion: "Before we can get around to weapons… we have to find out what causes mistrust between us. If we could get to that

mistrust, there would be no problem about what to do with the weapons" (qtd in Adelman 103). In an initial move that highlighted the strategic importance the Soviet Union accorded to its desire to eliminate the SDI, Gorbachev aggressively questioned the value of any accord reached without the side-constraint of maintaining the ABM Treaty:

> How, if we are beginning to reduce strategic missiles and eliminate intermediate missiles, could we two destroy the ABM Treaty? It's the only brake on very dangerous developments in a tense situation. How can we abandon it, when we should be strengthening it? (qtd in Adelman 104)

President Reagan, rather than de-escalate the situation, chose to unmask the Soviet desire to maintain the ABM Treaty as hypocritical: "With regard to the ABM Treaty, we believe the Soviets have violated it already…I myself think that SDI is the greatest opportunity for peace in the twentieth century" (qtd in Adelman 104).

After the United States refused to back down, the General Secretary sought to deny the strategic threat posed by the SDI, claiming (unpersuasively) that, "The Soviet Union does not fear a 'three-echelon strategic defense,' if the U.S. decides that's what it wants" (qtd in Adelman 105). Given that Gorbachev had claimed precisely the opposite mere minutes before, his bluster was seen for precisely what it was. Indeed, speaking of the SDI, the General Secretary conceded the strategic reality of Soviet fears of a technological arms race, demonstrating that the ethotic appeal of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" was internalized by the Soviet elite:

> Gorbachev then let slip a key point he had made to the Politburo, that his country was in dire straits: "The U.S. has money and can do things the Soviets cannot do." Nonetheless, he could not "begin reductions" of nuclear weapons "while the ABM Treaty was being destroyed. This is not logical, and my people and our Allies would not understand it." (Adelman 105)

Thus, the first day of the Reykjavik Summit ended without a breakthrough on any of the three Soviet agenda items. Despite mutual desire (and agreement) for both strategic reductions and eliminate of intermediate-range nuclear forces, negotiations faltered upon the insistence of

President Reagan to pursue the Strategic Defense Initiative. In a flurry of mutual frustration, both sides agreed to reconvene for a final round of negotiations the next day. Given the lack of progress by both sides, President Reagan remarked that the overnight, bilateral negotiations between panels of experts would be crucial in determining the outcome of the summit: "They have to go to work tonight. Tomorrow will be our final day, to see if we can close on things" (qtd in Adelman 106).

October 12, 1986 (the second day of the Reykjavik Summit) began with news of an unexpected breakthrough. Working through the night, arms control negotiations between teams led by Soviet Marshal Akhromeyev and Director of Arms Control Ken Adelman had reached an agreement. Unfettered by concerns of missile defense and the ABM Treaty (such topics were outside the assigned purview of the overnight talks), negotiators were able to make gradual progress towards a reduction in strategic forces, a process that ultimately led Soviet Marshal Akhromeyev to offer at 3 a.m., with the direct authorization of the General Secretary, an agreement to reduce strategic forces by fifty percent. The sudden reversal of decades of Soviet nuclear strategy left the American negotiators flabbergasted. As Director of Arms Control Ken Adelman describes:

> On our side of the table, we shot looks of amazement at one another. In his quiet, straightforward manner, Akhromeyev had just overturned key Soviet policies of many years' standing. In fact, he had just removed *the* major obstacle to realizing the president's goal of 50 percent strategic cuts. What previously had been deemed far too ambitious to be attainable had suddenly, in a half hour, not only become attainable, but had been attained. (Adelman 124)

The Reykjavik Summit, predicted by American intelligence to be an unproductive sparring match in preparation for talks the following year, had suddenly (and unexpectedly) yielded an independent agreement in favor of massive cuts in strategic arsenals. Elated by the possibility of a historic de-escalation of hostilities, ancillary disputes (e.g. human rights concerns) were set

aside in favor of discussion on the second agenda item, the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces.

Negotiations between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev immediately reached an impasse. The initial offer by the Soviet Union to eliminate intermediate-range missiles had been confined solely to Europe, leaving untouched the strategic forces of the USSR in Asia, a gambit that preserved the strength of the Soviet nuclear deterrent while allowing its negotiators to effect an affect of reconciliation. Indeed, Reagan refused to accept such a condition, citing concerns that such forces both threatened American allies and had the range to target American cities (Adelman 134). A function of the dominant negotiating position held by the United States (a partial result of SDI), American insistence on expanding the scope of INF restrictions, resembled less a negotiation, and more so an ultimatum. Incensed by the situation, Gorbachev accused the president of refusing to compromise:

> We have made major concessions to the United States in the hope that it will be possible to get the arms control talks moving seriously on reducing nuclear weapons. Yet it is my impressions that your side is not taking our position into account. Instead of seeking to give an impulse to the discussions, the U.S. is trying to drag things backwards. (qtd in Adelman 133)

In an ironic turn of events, the General Secretary subsequently accused Reagan of harboring the delusion that the Soviet Union was more interested in reaching an agreement than the United States, the very situation that Gorbachev himself had told the Politburo was the case, as the Soviet Union needed an agreement to take pressure off its ailing economy:

> I have gotten the impression that your approach to arms control is proceeding from the false impression that the Soviet Union was more interested in nuclear disarmament than you are. Perhaps the U.S. feels it can use this leverage to force us to capitulate in certain area. This is a dangerous illusion, as such a scenario will never occur. (qtd in Adelman 134)

Following this tirade, and faced with the prospect of an unacceptable breakdown in negotiations, the General Secretary conceded, albeit begrudgingly, to accept the American position on intermediate-range nuclear forces:

> Having told why Reykjavik might end without progress, Gorbachev then gave Reykjavik great progress. Most matter of factly, the General Secretary said, "In Asia, the Soviets *could* accept the U.S. formula--- that there be 100 warheads on our systems and 100 warheads on your territory. We would accept this, even thought it will require us to reduce several, by an order or magnitude that I cannot even compute" more than the United States would have to reduce.
>
> This huge concession was made more grudgingly than gracefully. Gorbachev said that he resented how the "U.S. has insisted in imposing an ultimatum," but nonetheless "the Soviet Union would accept this." (Adelman 136).

This dual concession, of both a fifty percent overall reduction in strategic forces, and the near-global eliminations of intermediate-range nuclear forces, catapulted an already historic summit into the stratosphere. Independent agreements, to which Gorbachev and Reagan had agreed, would not only de-escalate bilateral tensions, but "meant that more than 90% percent of those deployed Soviet warheads would be destroyed" (Adelman 140). Indeed, at one point during the negotiations, both Gorbachev and Reagan agreed to work towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons, the three dreams of the Reagan administration achieved in one fell swoop (Adelman 168).

Yet in that moment of elation, a moment too good to be true, the endgame of Gorbachev became clear. After further negotiations, during which the United States and the Soviet Union failed to make headway on the issue of the ABM Treaty, the General Secretary revealed that the previous concessions were not, as both the American negotiators and President Reagan had understood, independent agreements. Rather, the monumental progress made on strategic forces and INF issue was a package deal, a package contingent upon the United States conceding the ABM issue:

> But then came another Reykjavik surprise, one that shaped the summit's image that day and ever after.
>
> "The Soviets have proposed a package," Gorbachev warned. "Individual elements of our proposals must be regarded as a package."
>
> Back in Moscow on October 4, Gorbachev had told his Politburo that "we should not link" strategic arms to SDI, as strategic cuts were too imperative to be tied up. Yet, here at Reykjavik, less than a fortnight later, he was doing just that. (Adelman 148)

Thus, the overall arc of the Soviet negotiating strategy had unfolded. Failure to reach an agreement at Reykjavik was untenable given the reality faced by the Soviet Union, yet the threat to the Soviet strategic arsenal posed by SDI was too immense to ignore. Indeed, the last-minute 'package deal,' the position that strategic cuts were inextricably linked to an American concession of SDI, had been decided well in advance due to pressure from the Soviet military. As Alexander Bessmertnykh[50] explains:

> A big part of the SDI insistence was introduced into the follow-up system of working up the documents. The president [Gorbachev] gave us this idea of 50-percent cuts, and then [Marshal] Akhromeev worked with him every day on that. They were completely confident that they would go for 50 percent if there were no SDI. That was the price that the military asked for this deep cut. (Wohlforth 168)

The sudden light-night reversal of decades of Soviet strategic policy, the unexpected capitulation on the INF issue were a ploy, a pretty poison designed to extract an American concession on SDI:

> No General Secretary before had agreed to scrap nuclear weapons that had already been built, paid for, and deployed, as Gorbachev agreed to do that Sunday morning. He acted boldly when springing linkage of the nuclear cuts with SDI constraints. Playing a weak hand, Gorbachev used whatever leverage he had well. His eleventh-hour ploy would probably have worked with any other president. (Adelman 154)

In retrospect, then, the agenda outlined by Gorbachev at the outset of the Reykjavik Summit truly contained only one item: the demand to cease development of SDI. As President Reagan remarked, several years following the Reykjavik Summit:

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[50] Alexander Aleksandrovich Bessmertnykh. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister (1986-1987)/ Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister (1988-1989)/ Soviet Ambassador to the United States (1990).

> I couldn't believe what was happening. We were getting amazing agreements… Then Gorbachev threw us a curve. With a smile on his face, he said: "This all depends, of course, on you giving up SDI." I couldn't believe it and blew my top… I realized he had brought me to Iceland with one purpose: To kill the strategic defense initiative. He must have known from the beginning he was going to bring it up at the last minute. (Anderson and Anderson 310-11)

Indeed, the insistence of the General Secretary that the initiative be confined to non-operational research, was repeated "constantly during their free three sessions, and then a stunning *twenty-eight* times on Sunday afternoon, for an impressive clip of one mention every five minutes" (Adelman 153) Viewed in this light, the negotiations at the Reykjavik Summit were less about strategic forces, and more so a battle of wills between Gorbachev and Reagan, a battle upon which the fate of the SDI rested. As Paul H. Nitze[51] explained:

> I thought it [the SDI] had a very large effect upon the Soviet position, particularly upon Mr. Gorbachev. He took it very seriously. It became kind of a contest of wills between President Reagan and Mr. Gorbachev. Both of them were convinced that they were right about it and locked in battle on this issue. (Wohlforth 38)

Despite the brilliant move by Gorbachev, despite an expertly-played long-game, the failure of the Soviet negotiating strategy (and subsequent collapse of the Reykjavik Summit) lies in severely underestimating the dedication of Reagan to the Strategic Defense Initiative. For the president, the initiative was not merely a strategic asset designed to pressure the Soviet Union, but the outcome of a moral imperative to rid humanity of the terrible threated posed by the offensive balance of deterrence: "I've become more and more deeply convinced that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence" ("Address to the Nation").

President Reagan, then, unsurprisingly chose to derail the summit, to eliminate the possibility of a truly monumental bilateral accord in favor of preserving strategic defense: "I

[51] Ambassador-at-Large and Special Advisor to President Reagan and Secretary Shultz on arms control (1985-1989)

have promised the American people I would not give up SDI… I will not destroy the possibility of proceeding with SDI. I could not confine its work to the laboratory" (qtd in Adelman 169). Gorbachev, incensed that a litany of concessions had failed to convince President Reagan to confine SDI to a laboratory, ended the negotiations, walking out with a sense of somber finality after a flurry of attempts to evoke a last-minute American concession: "I have tried. My conscience is clear before you, Mr. President, and my people. What had depended upon me, I have done" (qtd in Adelman 171). The Reykjavik Summit, which had held such promise mere moments ago, had collapsed under the weight of an impossible dream.

The End of the Cold War: The Legacy of 1986

That the Reykjavik Summit, which had the potential to yield a landmark agreement on strategic reductions, collapsed so spectacularly under the complete and utter refusal of President Reagan to compromise on missile defense led all sides to consider the negotiations a disaster of monumental proportions. For the Reagan administration, the failure to reach an agreement signaled Russian obstinacy, and the foreclosure of even the possibility of future negotiations. As Don Regan, then the White House Chief of Staff, remarked during an interview immediately following the negotiations: "No, there will not be another summit… The Soviet are the ones who refused to make the deal. It shows them up for what they are... They're not really interested in doing a deal" (qtd. in Adelman 181). Gorbachev, for his part, found blame for the end of the Reykjavik Summit in another quarter; speaking of the American refusal to concede the SDI, the General Secretary remarked, "Who's going to accept that…It would take a madman to accept that, and madmen are mainly in hospitals" (qtd. in Adelman 181). The domestic media reaction paralleled that of the Soviets, with ABC News correspondent Sam Donaldson declaring that, with the "magic of the Reagan persona gone," "[t]ime has just about run out on the Reagan

presidency" (qtd. in Adelman 183). Political focus (and energy) soon shifted elsewhere, with the Iran-Contra scandal defining the remainder of the Reagan presidency, and the ensuing flurry of Soviet reforms demanding the full attention of General Secretary Gorbachev.

While these immediate (and almost universally negative) reactions were of almost indisputable justification at the time, the legacy of Reykjavik is not nearly so easily dismissed. As Anatoly Chernaev[52] explained, the ultimate goal of the Soviet strategy at the time was a cessation of conflict (i.e. the end of the Cold War) through a process of disarmament. Arms control, then, and its success (or failure) became the linchpin upon which other disputes turned: "Gorbachev at that time believed that we could end the Cold War mostly or exclusively through a process of disarmament while putting aside all those other questions, such as human rights, et cetera" (Wohlforth 166). That the 1987 INF Treaty[53] and 1991 START I Treaty[54] immediately followed, and closely resembled the compromise reached, at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit suggests that the subsequent end of the Cold War was no coincidence. As George Shultz[55] concluded, thinking back on the twilight of the Cold War, such agreements are the direct legacy of Reykjavik: "So Reykjavik introduced the basic INF Treaty and settled, in an immense amount of detail, the basic structure of what became the START I agreement" (Wohlforth 174). In particular, the rhetoric of the Soviet Union, the offered reversal of nearly five decades of Soviet strategic policy, endured long past Reykjavik. As the then-Secretary of State Shultz explained:

> What came out of Reykjavik was sensational. As we all know once you put positions on the table, you can say, 'I've withdrawn them,' but they're not withdrawn. They're there. We've seen your bottom line and so we know where it is, and they all came right back up on the table before long. So it pained me to hear the Bush administration[56] people saying

[52] Anatoly Sergeevich Chernyaev was a confidante of General Secretary Gorbachev and his personal advisor in regard to matters of foreign policy from 1986 – 1991.
[53] Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.
[54] Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.
[55] George Shultz was the American Secretary of State from 1982 – 1989.
[56] George H.W. Bush (the 41st President of the United States); the author was speaking prior to the election of George W. Bush.

> about summits, 'Now the worst thing in the world would be like Reykjavik, a random, unprepared, crazy summit like that' --- when what they were describing was the most productive summit that was ever held. (Wohlforth 175).

The enduring legacy of Reykjavik, then, becomes neither a failure of historical import, nor the folly of a President so wedded to the foolish dream of a world without nuclear weapons that an opportunity for disarmament was irrevocably lost, but a watershed moment. The refusal to concede SDI was part and parcel of a broader strategy that exploited the structural vulnerability of the Leninism practiced by the Soviet Union, a strategy that contributed decisively to the end of the Cold War (Meese 1992). Indeed, speaking in retrospect, key figures from the Soviet Union and the United states have stated that the legacy of Reykjavik was a legacy of liberalization, of peace. As then-Director of Arms Control Adelman concluded, speaking from intimate knowledge of both the Reykjavik Summit and U.S.-Soviet relations:

> Mikhail Gorbachev--- as expert a witness as you could get--- said explicitly that from Reykjavik sprang the 'elimination of the Cold War.' To him, "Reykjavik marked a watershed" that resulted in both "the elimination of the Cold War and the removal of the world nuclear threat." Otherwise, "the past decade" when the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War ended--- "would have been entirely different"...
>
> Eduard Shevardnadze [the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs] said that Reykjavik "released the world from the Cold War confrontation." Because of Reykjavik, "the Wall was destroyed [and] a more secure and open world emerged." When he wrote this, Shevardnadze was President of Georgia, which he called one of "many nations… liberated through the process begun at Reykjavik" (Adelman 313-314)

In conclusion, then, the rhetoric of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" was not performative at a purely textual level, in that the constitutive function of the was confined to the moment of its utterance. Rather, the announcement of SDI intervened in the discursive terrain of the Cold War, beginning an iterative process of discursive exchange the made an impossible strategic defense program and impossible burden for the Soviet Union.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Overview & Summary

This thesis conducted an argument criticism of the 1983 "Address to the Nation," demonstrating that both the speech by President Reagan and the ensuing response by Soviet General Secretary Andropov had a framing effect on subsequent U.S.-Soviet arms control initiatives. In particular, this project established that the 1983 "Address to the Nation," as public argument with technical ramifications, impacted the way in which governments circulated public discourse surrounding arms control. Having drawn a through-line from the contemporary reception of the so-called 'Star Wars' speech, to the 1985 Geneva Summit and the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, the study discussed the influenced of the speech on the negotiating strategies of both the United States and the Soviet Union, concluding that the SDI was a significant contributing factor to both the 1987 INF Treaty and the 1991 START agreement.

Chapter I established the contemporary and theoretical exigency for the project, drawing parallels between the contemporary political context and that of the Cold War. In particular, as a great power tension grows against the backdrop of strategic modernization programs by Russia and China, robust debate regarding the purpose, composition, and deployment of American nuclear forces will become necessary. Similarly, as American BMD deployment is expanded to counter the threat posed by rogue states, often to the chagrin of other strategic powers, public debate over the proper role and deployment (if any) of BMD has become necessary. Thus, given the role of rhetorical scholarship in aiding publics to craft their own futures, this study intervened

in the current political moment by returning to the twilight of the Cold War, wherein tensions the United States and the Soviet Union over strategic modernization and missile defense played a defining role.

The theoretical exigency for the project concerned the relationship between argument criticism, particularly the spheres of argument theory articulated by Goodnight (1982) and previous rhetorical scholarship on SDI. In sum, previous scholarship on SDI overwhelmingly emphasized the social reason employed by the text and its subsequent effect on public deliberation. As such, previous scholarship on SDI was not only overwhelmingly negative, but overlooked a critical aspect of the 1983 "Address to the Nation": the extent to which the text deployed technical and social reason concurrently to (re)create the framework within which domestic and international deliberation over strategic modernization took place. Thus, the international ramification of SDI as a rhetorical phenomenon were privileged by the current study.

Chapter II advanced a theoretical framework (presidential rhetoric) under which the SDI may be understood as a primarily *rhetorical* phenomenon, while articulating the dual methodologies (argument criticism and rhetorical history) that undergirded the analysis of such a phenomenon. In particular, drawing on the claim by Neustadt (1976) that the power of the presidency is the power to persuade, this chapter not only established the uniquely rhetorical character of presidential, but expanded the scope of such leadership to the context of international affairs and foreign policy. In particular, given the confluence between the Commander-in-Chief powers of the presidency and the agenda-setting power of the Executive Branch, the scope of such leadership ought to be expanded. Thus, as the representative of the United States on the world stage, the president engages in persuasive appeals in order to change

the political calculus of other actors (e.g. national governments), and such appeals co-constitutively create the rhetorical framework within which bilateral and multilateral international dialogues take place. Applying such a thesis to the ream of strategic relations between nuclear powers, this project juxtaposed the textual character of nuclear weapons advanced by Derrida (1984) against the backdrop of the logistics of military perception, the era of total (i.e. pure) war developed by Virilio (1989).

Applying this theoretical framework to the text(s) in question, Chapter III undertook an argument criticism the 1983 "Address to the Nation" and the subsequent *Interview with Andropov*, positioning each artifact as a rhetorical intervention in the discursive terrain of the Cold War. After establishing the strategic implications of the SDI for the deterrent value of the Soviet strategic arsenal, three dimensions of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" were explicated: governmental legitimacy, nuclear weapons, and economic competitiveness. In particular, President Reagan sought to delegitimize the legitimacy of the Soviet system by portraying the USSR as an aggressive adversary bent on adventurism, while proposing the SDI as a moral and ethical imperative to counter such a threat. Relying upon the technological prowess of the United States relative to the Soviet Union to establish the credibility of such a proposal, the rhetor ultimately articulated a moral (albeit utopian) vision of a world free of the existential threat of nuclear weapons. In contrast to this moral imperative, this utopian vision, General Secretary Andropov was forced to defend the technical logic behind the offensive threat of deterrence, thereby creating a contrast between the euphemistic language of President Reagan and the more technical jargon of the *Interview with Andropov*.

Chapter IV substantiated the enduring persuasive efficacy of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" by analyzing the negotiating strategies employed by the United States and the Soviet

Union at the 1985 Geneva Summit and the 1986 Reykjavik Summit. Indeed, whereas the 1985 Geneva Summit was gridlocked due to intractability of either side, the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, in what scholars have termed a rhetorical ambush, bore witness to a monumental, conciliatory shift in Soviet negotiation positions, creating the foundation for the 1987 INF Treaty and the 1991 START agreement. Through extended analysis of the argumentative strategies employed at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, this thesis substantiated the persuasive efficacy of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" by the demonstrating that the shift in Soviet negotiating strategy was primarily designed to force the Reagan administration to abandon its hardline stance in favor of SDI.

Theoretical Contributions

As its first theoretical contribution, this study provides a counterpoint to the overwhelming negative scholarship on the Strategic Defense Initiative, scholarship that conservative critics have accused of fostering a 'Reagan Revisionism' whose arguments bear striking resemblance to official Soviet doctrine, a doctrine in which the feckless aggression of the United States critically undermined Soviet efforts to achieve peace). By expanding the scope of the rhetorical power of the presidency to the realm of foreign policy, this study articulated a different dimension along which the rhetoric of SDI may be evaluated. Indeed, given the persuasive efficacy of the 1983 "Address to the Nation" and its role in facilitating the Soviet collapse at the 1986 Reykjavik Summit, this study should be seen as a complementary counterpoint to previous work.

As its second theoretical contribution, this study expanded the relationship between argument and foreign policy, positioning the delineation between technical and public rhetoric as one of argumentative logic in which technical reason and social reason co-constitutively frame

the discourse of foreign policy. Rather than confining argument criticism to the manner in which a rhetorical artifact employs social reason, this thesis expanded the scope of such inquiry to encompass the extent to which its use of technical and social reason implicates the deliberative process.

As its third theoretical contribution, this thesis highlighted the enduring potential of nuclear criticism. Whereas the application of the Derridean position to the public sphere may have fallen victim to its internalization of the problematic elements of Cold War discourse, the claim that nuclear weapons, as objects of intense simulation, offer a unique subject for rhetorical criticism may be productive for scholars of argument seeking to understand the manner in which the simulated textuality of strategic armaments are leveraged persuasively as a foundational element of both deterrence and relations between nuclear powers more broadly. By positioning textuality as a foundational aspect of nuclear weapons, this study attended to nuclear criticism as an outgrowth of technical reason, position argument as critical to understanding contemporary strategic relationships.

Finally, following the call of Jamieson and Cappella (1996) for interdisciplinary work between the field(s) of rhetoric and political science, this study contributed to a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between messages and political effects. Thus, by articulating presidential rhetorical leadership as the power to persuade but also the power to appear to need to be persuaded, this study complicated the traditional effects-based model by positioning the presidency as a focal point of public discourse, thus acknowledging the role of the presidency in creating the rhetorical framework within which a public deliberates.

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