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ONCE S.T.A.R.T. STOPPED AND GENEVA STARTED:
U.S. AND SOVIET RHETORIC PRIOR TO THE 1985 MEETING

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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BY
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This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of Communication Studies.

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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRE-1985 GENEVA SUMMIT PERIOD

President Ronald Reagan, when confronted with the age gap between himself and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, commented with regard to the November, 1985, Geneva Summit:

"It'll be the first time we've ever had someone on our side of the table who's older than the fellow on the other side of the table. So maybe I can help this young man with some fatherly advice."¹

Apart from the President's attempted humor, Reagan's statement on the summit offers insight into his view of the Soviets and the Geneva meeting. He seems to be searching, in fact, for American advantages which will cause the Soviets to accept international agreements consistent with U.S. goals. While the age gap may not be the key to such consensus, it is one effort among many designed to promote such an accord. In addition to Reagan's hopes of influencing Soviet actions, statements like this one were intended to preview American positions to other audiences, like the U.S. citizenry and Western Europeans.

It should be noted, however, that Reagan was not the only party prone to such "summit jockeying." Gorbachev not only played the media supremacy game during the months preceeding Geneva, but some claimed he was more persuasive than the "Great Communicator" himself.²
 Those who study summits have often noted the public nature of these meetings and the months that precede them. For example, Gordon R. Weihmiller and Dusko Dodor included in their study of summits from 1955 to 1985 the pressures presidents experience that tend to push them toward summit meetings, the influence of public expectations and domestic political concerns, the role of the media and public relations, and the international context. . . .

Additionally, a review of newspapers and periodical literature during the pre-summit period reveals numerous references to propaganda advantages, media ploys and, as one author noted, the tendency for leaders to smile when in doubt (about public opinion). 4

The fundamental assumption in studies of both summitry and pre-summitry is that face-to-face meetings between heads of state are of some value, to the respective nations involved or simply to scholars of communication or diplomacy. This assumption is widely shared by academics. The second report of the Harvard Nuclear Study group observed that summits "can contribute greatly to mutual understanding of how each side sees its own interests, the other's and the risks." 5 If the value in studying summits is to develop an understanding of each side's interests, then studies of pre-summit periods are equally worthwhile. As noted earlier, pre-summit rhetoric illuminates the tactics used to "influence the international atmosphere" prior to the actual negotiations. 6 Based upon this justification, then, the following study will analyze the
rhetorical strategies used by the two leaders in 1985 to influence domestic and global audiences.

The Geneva pre-summit period was an especially active one in terms of public relations ploys. Various factors contribute to this occurrence. First, Reagan invited Gorbachev to the summit only days after the Soviet leader came to power. The Reagan Administration had been preparing for a meeting with Konstantin Chernenko in the months prior to that leader's death. Second, Gorbachev was a surprisingly able statesman in the area of public relations. A New York Times news analyst wrote:

not since Nikita Khrushchev harangued and bantered 25 years ago had a top Soviet leader summitted himself directly to the world press, and never had one handled himself with such confidence.

Another element that contributed to the public nature of the pre-1985 Geneva summit period was that a great deal of importance was attached to the meeting. The summit symbolized a fresh start for both the American people and the world community. By the end of 1983, the Soviets had expressed their disappointment in US arms control positions by disengaging from talks.

The reason was a conviction that, after a year and a half of nonstart START [Strategic Arms Reduction Talks], the US was not seriously interested in negotiating a mutually acceptable agreement.

The summit was also the first meeting between an American president and a Soviet leader in six years; it was only the second set of arms control discussions during Reagan's tenure. Although the purpose of this conference has been
described, strictly speaking, as arms control, the agenda also included other issues pertaining to U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations. The reasons for the development of a broader agenda will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV of this study.

Thus, Geneva represents an excellent case study of pre-summitry. From its media-oriented beginnings, it was an unabashed attempt by both leaders to capture world and domestic opinion. The world community hoped that the Geneva summit would mark the end of the confrontational attitude that had, up to that point, been associated with the Reagan Administration.

In order to unveil the rhetorical methods used by both President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev, a number of salient issues must be reviewed. First, an historical analysis of summits between World War II and Geneva is necessary. This discussion will reveal a number of trends in pre-summitry. The uniquenesses of various summits will also be evident. Ultimately, such a review will provide a basis for understanding the months prior to Geneva.

Second, a framework for studying pre-summitry will be established. The "Political Languages" model developed by Doris Graber will describe many of the general functions of political rhetoric. This perspective will also serve as a foundation for making generalizations about pre-summit rhetoric because it will help to isolate some of the strategies used during this period.
Once the historical background and general observations about political communication have been discussed, the study will then move to the specific issue of the months preceding Geneva. In Chapter IV, the United States domestic and Western European response to the maneuvers of both Gorbachev and Reagan will be considered. Therefore, the strategies used by the two world leaders will be reviewed. Finally, the results of the study as well as suggestions for future research will be identified.

Before proceeding into the history of pre-summitry, two parameters of the study should be clarified. The use of the terms "U.S." and "U.S.S.R.," when applied to any form of rhetoric, will imply statements or actions by Reagan, Gorbachev and any officials of their respective administrations (unless otherwise indicated). This distinction is drawn because the phrase "U.S. rhetoric" may also refer to the response of all U.S. citizens, not just the government. For the purposes of this study, these two groups must be separated. Thus, this distinction is drawn to help remove confusion about the focus of this analysis.

The second point of clarification involves the use of the term "rhetoric." In works dealing with mass communication, it is difficult to discuss every arena leaders use to disseminate their message. For the most part, this analysis will deal with speeches, press releases and press conferences that relate to the Geneva summit. Intergovernmental communications, however, are rarely published; thus, this discussion can only examine the
effects of such communication and consider those effects as reflective of pre-summit rhetoric. A substantial portion of the strategies utilized during this period would be ignored, for instance, if Gorbachev's pre-summit visit to Western Europe was not analyzed; yet, as is the case with the Soviet leader's stay in Western Europe, Gorbachev did not direct statements about this visit directly to President Reagan.

This case study, then, will be developed by using the historical and rhetorical tools in Chapters II and III. Chapter IV will focus upon the specifics of the months before Geneva. Finally, general conclusions will be outlined in Chapter V.
ENDNOTES: CHAPTER I

1 "Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 21 (15 November 1985):1384. (Hereafter Presidential Documents.)

2 The public relations abilities of Gorbachev will be more fully discussed in Chapter IV of this study.


6 Weihmiller and Doder, p. 11.

7 Ibid., p. 113.


CHAPTER II

A HISTORY OF PRE-SUMMITRY SINCE 1955

From 1955 to 1985, eight summits occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union. In each, the tools of mass communication were utilized; issues of world interest were discussed at these meetings; and, for the most part, the leaders of both the Soviet Union and the United States were concerned about world opinion. All of the elements that would seem to create a media-oriented pre-summit strategy were evident. Thus, based upon these factors, it is reasonable to expect similarities between pre-summit Geneva and earlier pre-summit periods. Although there are some exceptions, there exist marked examples of these similarities.

For the purposes of this study, only bilateral US-Soviet meetings will be reviewed; this delineation is made to ensure comparable circumstances to the most recent Geneva summit. As mentioned earlier, there are eight such examples. They are listed in Table I.

When reviewing each of these examples, two elements of the process will be discussed. First, any external factors, such as the state of the Presidency or significant world events that occurred during the pre-summit period will be analyzed. More importantly, the rhetoric (or absence of rhetoric) will then be discussed. Just as the Geneva summit
cannot be separated from world issues like Afghanistan and human rights, it is essential to couple a study of the environment surrounding the meeting with pre-summit discourse to fully understand the methods employed by the two world leaders.

**TABLE I**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-27 September 1959</td>
<td>State Visit of Khrushchev and Camp David Discussions/Eisenhower and Khrushchev</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 June 1961</td>
<td>The Vienna Summit/Kennedy and Khrushchev</td>
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<td>22-30 May 1972</td>
<td>The Moscow Summit and State Visit/ Nixon and Brezhnev</td>
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<td>27 June-3 July 1974</td>
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<td>19-21 November 1985</td>
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September 15-27, 1959--Eisenhower and Khrushchev

The state visit of Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev was one of the most highly-publicized summits of the 1955-1985 period. Much of this media exposure is due to the volatile issues surrounding the summit. Under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the United States expanded the Cold
War with its confrontive brinksmanship technique. The President's belief was that "all the new nations appeared more or less in danger of falling to the communists..." Predictably, the biggest fear of Communism was in Western Europe, as best exemplified by the Administration's fear of Soviet domination in Germany. As a result, the potential unification of Germany became a sensitive issue for the U.S. The Soviets chose to be especially aggressive when they discussed this region.

On November 27, 1958 he [Khrushchev] reignited the Berlin crisis by announcing that the wartime agreements were at an end, that Western occupation of Berlin was unlawful, and that Berlin must become a demilitarized free city within six months or he would sign a separate peace treaty with East Germany (to preclude access to the city). Additionally, First Deputy Premier Frol R. Kozlov, when speaking before the National Press Club, "warned that 'force will be met with force if war is unleashed' over Berlin." Despite these instances of Cold War confrontation, however, the Soviets were interested in settling down to a summit. One observer noted a possible motive when he wrote:

Can the Soviet Union find a way of liquidating its long-standing conflict with the West before Communist China obtains the atomic bomb and becomes a full-fledged member in the world club of nuclear powers? In essence this is the problem that confronts Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev as he prepares for the greatest diplomatic venture of his career—his trip to the United States. Thus, both the United States and the Soviet Union prepared for a meeting to discuss the aftermath of the second Berlin crisis and the deadlock in the Geneva foreign
ministers' talks (whose purpose was to devise a German peace treaty).5

The Soviet Union initiated a number of moves during the months before the summit. Khrushchev called for a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing in March, which the United States matched in August (after the summit).6 The Soviet leader also invited seven US governors to visit him in Moscow. The Governors were extremely impressed with Khrushchev's abilities. Governor McNichols, remarked, for instance:

He is very adroit. He has a great capacity to draw on a wealth of information without notes. He is able to deal with questions at any level. Also he is capable of street fighting or alley fighting. He can take you anywhere.7

During this visit, Khrushchev underscored his desire to promote peace. At one point, he lowered his voice and spoke "gravely about the desire of the Soviet Union for peace 'with all nations, above all with the strongest and the biggest--the United States of America.'"8 When Premier Kozlov visited an American toy factory, he remarked that his "one big desire" was that "all these tanks, jet planes and rockets remain toys."9

The apparent contradiction in Soviet statements, as illustrated by the difference between rhetoric concerning Berlin and rhetoric concerning world peace, was discussed at length by one New York Times writer. He claimed that "the gestures of friendship appeared to be aimed at influencing world opinion, particularly among the uncommitted nations."
The tough gestures appeared to be aimed at wringing concessions from the West."10

The US, on the other hand, was more aggressive on all fronts. Eisenhower, for instance, made success at the four-power conference (regarding the Germany issue) a precondition for the bilateral summit.11 Additionally, the President insinuated that peace to Americans was a non-Soviet style human rights system when he stated that it was "inseparably linked with our firm belief in the rights of peoples everywhere to enjoy peace with justice and freedom."12

The United States, additionally, questioned the genuineness of the Soviet appeals for peace. Eisenhower stated that "there doesn't seem to be any bright, hopeful rift in the clouds at the moment, but we are still plugging away."13 The President even suggested that Khrushchev's true wish was to split the Western allies. He based this conclusion on "unreasonable" demands regarding Berlin.14

Soviet and American rhetoric, then, appears to have had a two-pronged strategy during the Eisenhower/Khrushchev pre-summit period. While both countries expressed a desire to reach agreements that would promote peace, the leadership focused accusatory, harsh rhetoric toward their superpower counterpart. Perhaps the most likely explanation for this dichotomy involves the different audiences targeted by the leadership of each country. Both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. wanted to convey their interest in peace to the world
community; they also wished to demonstrate their bargaining strength before the summit to their adversary. This effect has also been noted during many of the following pre-summit periods.

June 3-4 1961--Kennedy and Khrushchev

On May 16 of 1961, President John F. Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev announced that they would meet informally at Vienna in June. The purpose of the summit was "mutual assessment and frank discussion of divisive issues."

The major issue of contention during the months before Vienna was the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion on April 17. Many observers felt, for instance, that nothing could be accomplished at Vienna because of tension that had been created. Khrushchev described it as "a crime that revolted the entire world" and added:

For all its denials, it has now been proved beyond doubt that it was precisely the United States that prepared the intervention and transported the gangs of mercenaries which invaded [Cuba]. . . .

The Soviet leader insisted that his intention was not to develop bases on that Carribbean island and assured the West that the real Soviet motive was to "build . . . relations" so that the two superpowers would never have to "engage in saber-rattling or push . . . military or economic superiority to the forefront."

The second issue of dispute involved the control of nuclear weapons. The Soviet leadership supported the
“troika” proposal which would create "a three-man directorate [within the United Nations] which must reach unanimous agreement on inspection questions. The three men would represent the Communist world, the neutral world and the West..." The United States felt that the proposal was not "a formula for a 'test ban' [as the Soviets had suggested] but a formula for an 'inspection ban' that would assure Moscow of a veto over all control of arms."21

In a similar confrontive fashion, Khrushchev’s January, 1961 speech concerning wars of national liberation still rung through the halls of diplomacy. In this address, the Soviet leader claimed that the U.S.S.R. was justified in supporting "freedom fighters" around the globe. Thus, the Soviet perspective on US foreign policy (as illustrated by its rhetoric) served to keep the dialogue of the Cold War fresh in the minds of those within the Kennedy Administration.

The United States responded in a defensive manner, which certainly contributed to this atmosphere. Many analysts, for instance, felt that the Soviet leader was attempting to take advantage of the young President.22 The fear of Communism, consequently, ballooned. As a result, Kennedy requested that the press voluntarily censor information that would be helpful to Communists. He claimed:

The danger has never been more clear and its presence has never been more imminent. It requires a change in outlook, a change in
tactics, a change in missions--by the Government, by the people, by every business man, union leader and newspaper. 23

Kennedy's justification was nothing less than the national security of the United States. From the American viewpoint, then, the pre-summit period was marked by numerous Soviet initiatives indicative of the continuing Cold War environment; the US reacted to these initiatives with defensive domestic proposals and harsh language about Soviet motives.

The genuineness of the other superpower's motives was a constant concern during the Vienna pre-summit period. Khrushchev remarked, for example: "We are sincerely interested in a relaxation of international tension, but if others aggravate it, we shall reply in full measure." 24 The obvious reference in this statement was to the Bay of Pigs invasion. Kennedy, in response, underscored the "desirability of steps to improve the international atmosphere" and hoped that the Soviet Union would "cooperate in opportunities now available to this end." 25 The "inflexibility" of the Soviet leader lead editorialist James Reston to argue:

President Kennedy has been making a genuine effort to reach an accommodation with Khrushchev . . . but this primary question is now being overwhelmed by secondary questions and both capitals are being plunged once more into the tiresome dialogue of the cold war. 26

In essence, the Kennedy/Khrushchev Vienna pre-summit period was overshadowed by the Bay of Pigs incident, which put the United States at a tremendous propaganda
disadvantage. Nevertheless, President Kennedy concentrated on domestic opinion by requesting that US citizens adapt to what he considered the near-permanent features of the Cold War.

June 25-27, 1967—Johnson and Kosygin

"'Why here of all places?' one excited coed asked when she heard the news. 'Why not?' another replied. 'It's nowhere, halfway between New York and Washington.'"27 The most difficult aspect of arranging the Glassboro, New Jersey summit was deciding upon where to meet. The conference represented an excellent compromise because it was situated between President Lyndon Baines Johnson and Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin. Initially, neither leader was willing to go to where the other was located. The two leaders finally decided to meet at the home of the president of Glassboro State College, Thomas E. Robinson, who "learned about it [the plan] when it came over the radio."28 Because of the logistical question, analysts wondered if a summit would even occur as late as the third week in June.29

Originally, both leaders left the decision to have a summit up to the other. Analysts were not certain that Kosygin's UN visit for the emergency session concerning the Middle East Six Day War would provide an adequate opportunity for discussion. One reporter noted: "President Johnson and Premier Kosygin each suggested today [June 21] that it was up to someone else--each presumably meaning the..."
other—to determine whether they would meet." Johnson suggested that he would meet Kosygin anywhere provided the Soviet leader would "promise him 'substantive' rather than merely social conference." Aside from the issue of logistics, two major international occurrences occupied the mind of Kosygin. The first was the war in the Middle East. The second was Vietnam.

The Soviet premier wanted to focus on the Middle East crisis and was adamant on a prompt withdrawal of Israeli forces from Egypt, almost to the point of threatening war over it, according to President Johnson. He also insisted on a halt in US bombing of North Vietnam and withdrawal of US combat forces from the hostilities.

President Johnson, however, chose to ignore these issues and concentrate upon nuclear issues, including nonproliferation and the U.S.S.R.'s development of an anti-ballistic missile system. Vietnam, however, was a substantial thorn in the side of U.S.-Soviet relations at this time. "Administration officials sought repeatedly to justify the war [to the world community] as one more stage in the long process of Containment that had begun twenty years before." The division over the agenda also proved to be characteristic of this pre-summit period.

When finally the decision was made to meet, Johnson remarked: "The great need now is to turn away from 20 years of combat, temporary truce and hatred toward the building of durable peace in the area [the Middle East]." The US desire to drastically alter the character of U.S.-U.S.S.R.
relations is contrasted with the two-pronged Soviet approach. One writer, recognizing this dichotomy, mused:

The Soviets . . . are much better than the Americans at operating in the diplomatic field on two wholly different levels. They are quite capable of denouncing Johnson on television, and talking to him about longer-range U.S.-Soviet interests in private.36

The rhetoric prior to the Glassboro Summit, then, was very sparse, due solely to the shortage of time between announcement and the summit. Thus, the Glassboro summit appears to be a more spontaneous than previous meetings. In this sense, it violates Weihmiller’s and Doder’s observation, noted in Chapter I, concerning the typical long, media-oriented, pre-summit period.

22–30 May 1972—Nixon and Brezhnev

The Nixon Administration, and its policy of Detente, "marked a major departure from the foreign policy pursued by the US since 1948."37 Nixon’s policies sought areas of cooperation, however small, instead of exaggerating differences between the two superpowers.

In regard to the Soviet Union, America’s only serious military rival, "confrontation" is to give way to "negotiation." Rather than attempt at every point of the globe to match and frustrate Soviet challenges with counter-moves of its own as the theory of Containment had demanded, the US will seek areas of agreement between the two superpowers. . . . Concurrently, through increased trade, the USSR is to be enmeshed in a "web of interests" through which it will gain a greater stake in world stability.38

Even Nixon felt that it was realistic to expect change when he stated: "a fundamental improvement in the U.S.-Soviet
relationship may be possible." He cautioned, however, that the change might be "only a passing phase concerned more with [a] static than with a fundamental commitment to a stable international system." 39

The shift in approach to the Soviet Union was evident in the three summits that occurred during the period that Nixon was in power. The rhetoric before the first summit was remarkably optimistic in tone compared to previous summits.

The Soviets were concerned most about Vietnam and China during the first Nixon/Breshnev pre-summit period. The "China card," in fact, was said to be the original impetus for the meeting. "Moscow's interest in a U.S.-Soviet summit suddenly peaked" after "President Nixon's . . . announcement that he would visit China in February 1972." 40

Although the China issue may have pushed the Soviets to the negotiating table, the Vietnam dilemma nearly led to the dissolution of the summit. The Soviets, for their part, were insistent on supporting the North Vietnamese as indicated in one Tass statement which read: "[the USSR] has been and will continue to be on the side of heroic Vietnam and all the patriots of Indochina, by giving them the aid and support necessary to rebuff imperialist aggression." 41

Nixon's response, regardless of the potential consequences, was to maintain his tough stance. "If, despite the atmosphere of summity, the Soviet leaders insist on giving maximum support to the ally in North
Vietnam, the President, it is said, is convinced that he can do no less for his ally in the South." 42

In keeping with the policy of Detente, however, Vietnam became an issue of mutual concern before the summit:

In the broadest sense, President Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger sought to enlist Soviet interest in assisting the United States in finding an acceptable way to terminate the war in exchange for improved relations between Moscow and Washington. 43

The President, soon after the initial bombings of North Vietnam, cautioned the Soviets that superpower confrontation was not necessary and made it clear he "was trying to keep the . . . visit to Moscow alive." 44

Prior to the meeting, Nixon met with several leaders within the world community to "telegraph to the boys in Moscow and Peking, however gently, that the Western World is not in disarray." 45 According to one US official, meetings with France's Gorges Pompidou, Britain's Edward Heath, West Germany's Willy Brandt and Japan's Eisaku Sato were designed "to enable the President to go to Peking and Moscow as the spokesman for the free world, with the endorsement of the allies." 46 It appears that Nixon was in search of consensus for Detente through these actions. 47

Consistent with the basic tenet of Detente, both the Soviet Union and the United States stressed the importance of peace when announcing the summit. The joint communique stated that both superpowers would "review all major issues with a view toward further improving bilateral relations and enhancing the prospects for world peace." 48
The difference in pre-summit rhetoric, while reflective of general US-Soviet relations, is stark. Many issues of confrontation existed; the most apparent was Vietnam. Yet both nations tempered their previous tactics and looked optimistically toward the future. The language used indicated a recognition of world tensions, but also served to pave the way for a new relationship between the superpowers.

June 18-25, 1973--Nixon and Brezhnev

The second Nixon/Brezhnev summit exhibited significant changes in the environment surrounding both the Vietnam and China issues. These topics were more important during the first summit.

The combination of improved relations with China and an end in sight for the Vietnam agonies placed the next summit with Brezhnev in a new light from the American perspective. As related by Kissinger: "We were becoming confident that we would be free of the Vietnam War by 1973; a summit was no longer important to separate Moscow from Hanoi." Since the war in Southeast Asia was not the tie that bound the summit together, the US and the Soviet Union began to focus on the prospectives for peace and domestic topics prior to the summit.

The announcement of the meeting came slightly over a month before it was scheduled to occur. During the interim, Kissinger made a visit to Moscow to discuss the agenda for the upcoming conference.
... a senior Administration official said that the primary mission of the President's adviser for national security would be to discuss the details and likely agenda for Mr. Brezhnev's visit to the United States, which will return Mr. Nixon's visit to the Soviet Union last spring.52

The focus of the new summit was more specific to the SALT I (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) and general continuation of Detente.53

The predominant issue of the time was the Watergate scandal within the Nixon Administration. The summit, however, was not overshadowed by this complication.

With Henry A. Kissinger due at the Kremlin tomorrow, the atmosphere of Soviet-American relations could hardly be more hospitable: This is the one big world capital where a Nixon Administration official can escape the Watergate nightmare.54

The topic of Watergate, for the most part, was ignored by Soviet leadership; this omission occurred as a result of the investment the Soviets had placed in the American President. In fact, much of the cultural exchange and promotion of the United States within the Soviet Union continued. This support remained undaunted due to the Soviet desire to "reshape the American image among ordinary Soviet citizens."55

The furtherance of Detente was emphasized in a May Day speech by Brezhnev before the Soviet people. This address was designed to provide "advance welcome for Henry A. Kissenger." Brezhnev assured the West that peace was the goal of Soviet policy. He noted: "We shall in the future, too, facilitate a favorable development of Soviet-American
relations on the principles of mutual respect and mutual advantage."56 Thus, it appears that pre-summit rhetoric was quite similar to the rhetoric of Detente. The summit evidently became one manifestation, in fact, of the new Soviet-American relationship.

June 27-July 3, 1974--Nixon and Brezhnev

By the time of the third summit during the Nixon Administration, the issue of Watergate permeated nearly every aspect of the meeting. This was true both domestically and from the Soviet perspective.

Anxiety existed in the United States that the summit was not appropriately timed because of Nixon's declining credibility as a leader. While Nixon "in his efforts to salvage the rest of his term, [had] ... turned once again to what he considers his strongest appeal--that of a world statesman whose leadership is essential to maintaining peace,"57 Americans wondered if he would be too demanding during the negotiations. Consequently, there was considerable lack of enthusiasm in Washington about this summit. ... Mr. Nixon's political weakness has raised doubts about the value of a new Moscow journey, not so much from fear that he will be too soft, but because of concern that he may feel compelled to act too tough.58

In part, the "dwindling support on Capitol Hill and around the country for the Administration's policy of improving relations with Moscow"59 eventually led Kissinger to seek support for Detente by testifying in Senate hearings on the subject. The declining importance of Detente partially
accounts for the near absence of American rhetoric prior to the final Nixon/Brezhnev summit.

Although not directly linked to the Watergate scandal, the Soviets began to emphasize much of the rhetoric more common during previous pre-summit periods. For example, USSR Defense Minister Andrei A. Grechko, in a speech before the Soviet citizenry, claimed that the West was causing an arms race to occur because of its continued modernization.60

The shift in language seems to be rooted in the Soviet effort to divorce themselves from the American President. In official public statements, the leadership stated "[Nixon's] a good partner for us. And you don't let a good partner down when he is in trouble. You help him out."61 In practice, however, few statements of optimism about the summit were made, few specific goals were articulated, and little pressure was placed on the leaders for a positive outcome.62

The third Nixon/Brezhnev pre-summit period, then, was not marked by a great deal of rhetoric. With the exception of Soviet contentions that the U.S. was pursuing an arms race, there were few Soviet statements about superpower relations. The U.S. also did not actively discuss its feelings about the summit or diplomacy between the two nations. Like the Glassboro meeting, this could be due, at least in part, to the little amount of time between the announcement and the summit itself (which was less than a month).63
November 23-24, 1974--Ford and Brezhnev

Once the Watergate scandal forced Richard Nixon to resign on August 8, 1974, the Gerald R. Ford Administration became responsible for US foreign policy.

The Soviet leadership had difficulty comprehending the fall of Richard Nixon and remained suspicious that it was largely the result of machinations by opponents of Detente. They were, however, reassured by Ford's retention of Kissinger and reaffirmation of Detente by both men. 64

Ford, however, let the goals, if not the concept, of Detente fade from his administration. Publicly he supported it, but in actuality he employed a policy of "competitive coexistence and Containment." 65 The combination of American and Soviet doubts over cooperation produced doubts about the ideas expressed during earlier U.S.-U.S.S.R. discussions.64 Specifically, the Soviets worried about American diplomatic success in the Middle East and the US perceived the U.S.S.R.'s policy as a purely aggressive one, especially in Angola.

The Soviets, who had earlier attempted to ignore the potential consequences of a Nixon impeachment, openly stated that the new President would not be readily accepted. Their reasoning is unveiled in the following statement by a Soviet official:

"As far as we are concerned, Ford is on probation," one highly placed Communist told a foreign visitor. "We are very glad he said he would continue detente policy. But he is still a complete unknown to us. We trust Kissinger and Rockefeller more . . . Why Rockefeller? Not because we know Nelson Rockefeller so well but
because David Rockefeller has many ties here and has come here often. I suppose this must have some influence.\(^65\)

It seems, then, that the U.S.S.R. could not understand the role of the new President in relation to the then deteriorating Detente policy.

Three months after Ford first came to the oval office, he went to Asia to affirm ties with the Soviets and other nations in that region. It was considered the first test of his skills in foreign policy.\(^66\) William Safire, an essayist for the *New York Times*, however, believed that the Vladivostok summit was merely a last-ditch effort to retrieve some semblance of Detente. He writes: "The underlying reason we pressed for this summit at this time is that the opening that permitted our creative diplomacy over the last five years is showing signs of closing."\(^67\)

The three months preceeding Vladivostok did not exhibit many of the previous pre-summit periods' penchant for rhetoric. This effect was caused by the uncertainty which surrounded the new American President. Ultimately, the summit was regarded as merely a time for the leaders to become familiar with one another.

Neither Mr. Brezhnev nor Mr. Ford can expect to depart from Vladivostok with more than an assessment of their respective personalities and with some cosmetic agreements on the continuation of previous policies and—perhaps most important—and agreement that keeps the door open for negotiations on the limitation of nuclear arms.\(^68\)

Vladivostok, consequently, represented the final summit transition from Detente to a more confrontational rhetorical
stance on the part of the superpowers. The precariousness of the Soviet-American relationship helps to explain the limited statements of the two world leaders prior to the summit, because neither superpower was certain of their bargaining strength or their adversary's relative power.

June 15-18, 1979—Carter and Brezhnev

Though faith in Detente clouded under Ford, it eventually broke down completely under the Jimmy Carter Administration. Only the first three years of the Carter Administration exhibited direct support for this cooperative form of U.S. policy. During the end of Carter's term, what was termed the "arc of crisis" (instability spanning from Southeast Asia into the southernmost areas of Africa) "led to the proclamation of the Carter Doctrine and the virtual abandonment by the US of Detente with the Soviet Union." Instead, Carter replaced efforts to recognize our similarities with strong "punitive sanctions, a freeze of American-Soviet relations, increasing geopolitical leverage, and building regional positions of strength." The competitive coexistence and Containment the Ford Administration espoused, albeit subtly, became a policy of open practice under Carter.

The Vienna summit of June 15-18, 1979 was initiated in a growing confrontational atmosphere. Although it was "explicitly linked to the consummation of the SALT II treaty," the mood surrounding the summit was laced with
pessimism. As the veteran summit editorialist James Reston quipped:

Part of this letdown [about Vienna] is undoubtedly due to Brezhnev's declining health and Carter's declining position in the U.S. popularity polls, which make long-range planning rather awkward.73

The Soviet leader, in fact, was so unhealthy at this point that many foreign diplomats stated it was "difficult for him to sustain a conversation for more than an hour."74

As a result of these external factors, much of the US rhetoric prior to Vienna promoted the ideas of SALT II while downgrading the policies of the Soviet Union. In one speech, for instance, President Carter noted:

I think that the SALT agreement is so important for our country, for the safety of the entire world that we ought not to let any impediment come between us and the reaching of a successful agreement. But there is no doubt that if the Soviets continue to abuse human rights, to punish people who are monitoring the Soviet's compliance with the Helsinki agreement, which they signed of their own free will, and unless they show some constraints on their own involvement in Africa and on their sending Cuban troops to be involved in Africa, it will make it much more difficult to conclude a SALT agreement and to have it ratified once it is written.75

The use of such rhetoric led many analysts to believe that "the Carter Administration seemed to have shifted its position and shown an increased recognition of the Soviet threat."76

The Soviet moves prior to the summit, however, were very limited. Perhaps this was a result of Brezhnev's deteriorating health. The USSR, however, did begin to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China. In
a sense, this was the Soviet counterpart to Nixon's 1972 visit of Nixon to the PRC. One editorialist suggested that this was a deliberate pre-summit move designed "partly to throw the United States off balance" before the summit. Based upon the timing of the Soviet offer, this conclusion seems feasible.

The Vienna pre-summit period, then, appears to be rhetorically meager for a number of reasons. The little emphasis placed on the summit is one factor; additionally, the physical state of the Soviet leader surely contributed to this effect. The changes that occurred in American rhetoric should be attributed to the changing US-Soviet relationship, as embodied in the emerging Carter Doctrine.

Pre-Summit History as a Basis for Studying Pre-Geneva

Many of the issues have changed, but the bilateral meetings of heads of state between 1955 and 1985 exhibit trends in pre-summitry. Leaders from the Soviet Union and the United States chose to discuss similar issues: peace, the agenda for the summit, the arms race and other subjects of superpower relations.

Four of the summits within this historical survey, however, are not comparable to Geneva. First, the Eisenhower/Khrushchev Glassboro Summit and the third Nixon Brezhnev Summit both had very little time between the announcement and the actual meeting. This gap did not allow the two leaders a great deal of latitude in playing the
public relations supremacy game. And the last summit during the Nixon Administration was lost in the disarray created by the Watergate scandal. The Ford/Brezhnev Vladivostok Summit did not seem typical of competitive pre-summitry because of the newness of the President. Thus, the concomitant Soviet suspicion of the American leader stifled pre-summit jockeying. Finally, the Carter/Brezhnev Vienna Summit was marred by a lack of enthusiasm and the deteriorating health of the Soviet leader.

The fact that these pre-summit periods may not be as similar to 1985 Geneva as the other four included in this survey does not diminish their importance to the study. Certain characteristics of Geneva may limit the applicability of these pre-summit periods, which implies that the historical review provides solid basis for making useful generalizations. Only identification of pre-summit trends will illustrate the uniquenesses as well as commonalities between Geneva and the other pre-summit periods.

Other summits of this period, for example, provide great insight into Geneva. The Eisenhower/Khrushchev Summit is extremely helpful because of its high public visibility; this element of the Geneva summit was noted repeatedly by observers. The Kennedy/Khrushchev Summit is also useful because of the confrontational rhetoric used. Although such language related solely to the Bay of Pigs invasion, this type of discourse was also present during the Geneva
pre-summit period. Also, the first two Nixon/Brezhnev summits illuminate the strategies because of the pre-summit maneuvering of both leaders.

Before the historical precedents of pre-summitry can be discussed in relation to Geneva, however, it is important to develop an understanding of political rhetoric generally. This topic is addressed more fully in the following chapter.
ENDNOTES: CHAPTER II


2 Weihmiller and Dodor, p. 29.


5 Weihmiller and Dodor, p. 128.

6 Ibid., p. 29.


9 "Soviet Line: Soft Words--and Hard."

10 Ibid.


13 Ibid.


16 Weihmiller and Dodor, p. 135.

17 Ibid., p. 46.

18 "Soviet Leader Says Goal is Still East West

19Ibid.


21Weihmiller and Doder, p. 43.


25Reston, "Will Khrushchev Overplay his Hand?"


27Ibid.


30"The Summit Comes to Glassboro, N.J."

31Weihmiller and Doder, p. 48.

32Ibid.


35"Washington: President Johnson and Premier Kosygin."


37Ibid.
Aside from the previously mentioned issues of international interest, the Soviets began to promote cultural exchange between the two superpowers. A prime example includes the unprecedented visit of three Soviet student debaters to the United States. "The tour [marked] . . . the first time that the Soviet authorities have allowed students to engage in such public dialogues in the United States." The topic of contention dealt with U.S.-Soviet relations. Although these debates were obviously not directly linked to the summit, the occurrence does show the mood of easing tensions during the pre-summit period. See: "3 Soviet Students Will Debate on 7 U.S. Campuses," *New York Times*, 11 April 1972, sec. 2, p. 4.

48Weihmiller and Doder, p. 68.


51Weihmiller and Doder, p. 152.

52Hedrick Smith, "U.S. Relations With the Soviet

53Ibid.


57Ibid.


60Ibid., and Weihmiller and Dodor, p. 75.


63Ibid., p. 36.

64Ibid., p. 538.


69Garthoff, p. 662.

70Ibid., p. 958.
71 Weihmiller and Doder, p. 84.


77 Ibid.
CHAPTER III

A MODEL OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

Based upon an historical examination of pre-summit rhetoric, each of the superpower meetings since 1955 was shaped by a unique set of circumstances. Although a number of trends in pre-summit rhetoric exist, a significant portion of the discourse may be peculiar to one meeting. This phenomenon was especially apparent in the Kennedy/Khrushchev meeting (because of the Bay of Pigs incident) and the third Nixon/Brezhnev summit (due to the Watergate affair). Because of the limited applicability of these meetings, most examples of pre-summit rhetoric have been derived from the other periods.

As with the previous historical review, a framework for analyzing political communication will also be valuable to the study of rhetoric prior to Geneva. Arguably, generalizations concerning political discourse can illuminate the purposes of such rhetoric. It should be noted, however, that the chosen model deals with political rhetoric in general and does not deal with the specific issues of summits or pre-summitry. Yet, such a broad perspective is beneficial to the extent that it is not as self-serving as a more tailored model. In essence, the latitude afforded by such political communication analysis does not encourage an inaccurate interpretation of events.
Instead, specific conclusions about pre-summit rhetoric will be reserved for the final chapter of the thesis; the following observations about political rhetoric will serve as a guide for deriving those conclusions.

Doris Graber, professor of political science and specialist in mass communications at the University of Illinois, identifies the functions of political rhetoric in her 1981 article, "Political Languages."¹ Graber fundamentally argues that political discourse creates a reality; it describes pertinent social problems, and, "in the process, shapes them."² By constructing verbal images of a given political event, for example, the rhetor provides the basis for public understanding of that issue. Politicians, then, attempt to project their perspective onto the opinions of an audience by using rhetoric in strategic ways.

In her article, Graber identifies various goals of political communication which include: Information Dissemination; Agenda-Setting; Interpretation and Linkage; Projection to Future and Past; and Action Stimulation. Although each of these objectives could be valid, this study will consider only information dissemination and interpretation and linkage. The remaining goals of political rhetoric are not as applicable to the pre-Geneva study, therefore they will not be used to guide this analysis. Where useful, however, references to those functions will be made.
Graber's article regarding political communication has only been cited on one other occasion. That author did not use the specifics of the model outlined here, but instead referred to one of Graber's conclusions in her "Political Languages" article. The citing author recognized that "depending on which interpretations become accepted by a population," an audience can react in different ways. The previous use of Graber's analysis, which concerned the interpretation and linkage function of political communication, lends credence to the model's applicability to pre-summit rhetoric.

Information dissemination represents the efforts of the rhetor to disperse his message. Depending upon the interests of the speaker, the desired audience varies with the speaker and the associated events. Access to a message may also lead the audience to compare past versus present messages. The information dissemination function, then, encompasses the two sub-categories of message accessibility and emergent patterns from a series of political messages.

Graber explains that the "availability of such information is crucial, because, for the most part, people cannot experience the world of politics directly." It is only "images conveyed through verbal and non-verbal symbols, rather than reality . . . [that] turn the wheels of the political world." Considering the importance of message circulation, leaders should be expected to describe their perspective to several different groups of people, particularly if a sufficient amount of time and resources
exist to influence diverse audiences.

Information in the public domain "may [also] reveal patterns and trends . . . about the situation in which message senders find themselves, [and] about their appraisal of these situations." There is an important distinction between the discernible patterns of available information and the interpretation and linkage function. The latter is a deliberate attempt by the sender to define the political situation, whereas the former is composed of inferences drawn by the audience. Arguably, this aspect of Graber's analysis is very subjective. Nonetheless, specific evaluative statements which appear in official releases can reveal patterns of discourse.

Interpretation and linkage is a more elusive political communication goal in comparison to the straightforward objectives of information dissemination. In a sense, political rhetors are attempting to set boundaries of meaning when they utilize this rhetorical tactic. Rhetors desire to create a positive image of themselves. They recognize that "the skill with which they wield the tools of political discourse, adapting them to the needs of various audiences and goals to be achieved, determines their success." Politicians convey these intentions to the audience in their use of definitions and their manipulation of audience expectations.

Graber isolates the importance of definitions when she states: "The potency of definitions of political situations springs from the fact that they become bases for beliefs and
actions even though they are not readily identifiable." Politicians, according to this analysis, may not provide explicit definitions but will, instead, hope that the audience will infer conclusions about their message. Predictably, this interpretation function becomes a battle between the various communicators' definitions because each rhetor probably possesses different viewpoints. It becomes apparent that rhetors often attempt to define events to suit their needs which is followed by the adversary's redefinition of the event. The action-reaction structure of political rhetoric in regard to situational definitions will also be evident in the months preceding Geneva.

Just as definitions serve to delineate positive or negative interpretations of the rhetorical situation, leaders also inform the public of their likelihood of success. Whatever expectation is derived from such messages becomes the yardstick for determining attainment or non-attainment of goals. Graber writes that "politicians announce benchmarks by which their achievements are to be judged. In the process, they determine whether their judgment will be positive or negative."  

Political communication, like the vast majority of communication generally, is teleologically-based. Most communicators have specific goals they use to help formulate their discourse and some rhetors are strategic in their approach to this process. As a result, a rigorous consideration of rhetoric in any political situation should
help to unveil the function of his discourse in the speaker's mind. Graber aids in this process by developing general strategies used by political rhetors. Ultimately, this discourse is designed to circulate the message to the constituency, or intended audience; also, political communication reflects the efforts of leaders to project a positive image of their positions. Hence, Graber's model of political communication is an excellent tool to analyze pre-summit rhetoric. Because of the often intensely competitive atmosphere prior to such meetings, the goals of both leaders are articulated frequently and, for the most part, vehemently. The months before the 1985 Geneva summit provide a fitting example of this effect. Armed with an understanding of pre-summit history and a framework for discussion, it is time, then, to turn to the Geneva case study.
CHAPTER III ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., p. 107


4 Graber, p. 198.

5 Ibid., p. 199.

6 Ibid., p. 199-200.

7 Ibid., p. 195.

8 Ibid., p. 204.
CHAPTER IV
PRE-GENEVA DISCOURSE

A study of the months spanning from April to November of 1985 will illustrate the many rhetorical techniques used by President Reagan and Soviet leader M.S. Gorbachev. Both targeted various audiences when making their appeals. From the perspective of the United States, for instance, Reagan wanted to explain his position to the domestic audience, the Soviet Union and Western Europe. He also focused upon the remainder of the world community, although to a lesser degree. Soviet leader Gorbachev, alternatively, emphasized the Western European people when he discussed his views. The purpose of this case study is to compare the methods used in both of these arenas. Thus, pre-summit rhetoric in the United States and Western Europe will be analyzed.

Pre-Summit Rhetoric and the United States

The media supremacy struggle began, necessarily, with efforts by both Reagan and Gorbachev to disseminate their summit message. The American allies, in fact, frequently complained that they had "learned more from the media and the 'megaphone diplomacy' which the superpowers [were] ... conducting than from official sources."¹

The President's major complaint during this period was that "Gorbachev was taking advantage of his ability to reach
the Western press while denying equal access to the Soviet public."2 The availability afforded Gorbachev included a highly publicized interview with Time magazine on September first3 and a three-hour meeting with a senatorial delegation on September third. The eight senators, R. Byrd, S. Thurmond, C. Pell, S. Nunn, D. DeConcini, P. Sarbass, J. Warner, and G. Mitchell, met personally with Gorbachev in Moscow.4

Presumably in an effort to provide the appearance of equal availability, the U.S.S.R. arranged an interview with four Soviet journalists and Reagan, which was subsequently published in the government newspaper, Izvestia. This interview was widely regarded as "a clear indication of how concerned the U.S. had become that the Russians . . . [were] winning the public relations war."5 The Soviet reaction to the discussion was very negative; they felt that "Reagan’s statements . . . [were] contradictory and reflected ‘an imperial mode of thinking, the jungle law that might is right.’"6

In addition to the interview, President Reagan wanted an uncensored medium accessible to the entire Soviet public. His justification was that it would forward the cause of peace and "improve the Administration’s image in the Soviet Union."7 White House Spokesman Larry Speakes, for instance, commented that "if President Reagan had a comparable opportunity to present his views to the Soviet people, through the Soviet media, this would doubtless

When the Soviets finally did refuse television access, the President instead decided to broadcast his message via Voice of America airwaves. His remarks during that ten-minute speech illustrated his conception of unfairness:

Your leaders can freely appear on American radio and television and be interviewed by our magazines and newspapers. So I was grateful for my recent and rare opportunity to speak with representatives of the Soviet press. While I appreciate that, only parts of the interview were published in Izvestia, and much of what was left out I think is important.

It is interesting to note that the Soviets did not completely jam the Voice of America speech. It was considered a significant turn of events from the Reagan Administration's perspective, since the Soviets had to accept—at least in part—the American appeal for free access.

It is difficult to determine whether the access question was simply a propaganda device for Reagan. Even he admitted that it would not achieve total peace. Maybe Reagan believed that the Soviets would never allow access; he possibly felt that they might attempt a complete censoring of the Voice of America speech. By pointing to the
inequities of message availability, it is most likely he accentuated the lack of freedom in the Soviet Union.

Those messages raised by Reagan during pre-summit maneuvers indicated patterns of response to the Soviet Union as well. The emergent trends seemed almost contradictory. On the one hand, Reagan's rhetoric was mellowing, showing his ability to stress negotiations. On the other, he actively criticized the Soviet public relations success by using harsh terminology.

Only three months prior to the summit, Western Europeans warned that Reagan's strong rhetoric was counterproductive. They complained that a dichotomy existed between Soviet and U.S. discourse. As Western Europeans viewed it, Gorbachev's aim was "to weaken Reagan's position before the summit by presenting himself as a reasonable and peace-loving statesman." Reagan was "seen as counter-attacking with tough language about the Soviet Union in an attempt to intimidate the Soviets into believing the U.S. will make no concessions at the summit." 12

By November, however, even Reagan admitted it was time to soften his language. When questioned about this change in course during a press conference, Reagan remarked:

I used the term "evil empire." . . . I think both of us have stopped that language, thinking that we'll get farther at the meeting if we come together and try to eliminate the need for such talk. 13

Both domestic and foreign audiences perceived that the new pattern of language was prompted by Reagan's recognition
that negotiation-oriented rhetoric was more effective than the intimidation strategy. At least regarding the summit itself, the President was willing to discard the historical confrontation policy. The purpose for such actions becomes clear only upon a more complete examination of the leaders' rhetoric.

When discussing Gorbachev's success with public perceptions, Reagan renewed his commitment to confrontational rhetoric. Members of the media often teased him about Gorbachev's abilities. During one interview, for example, a journalist questioned: "Some people believe the Soviets are winning the propaganda war leading up to the summit. . . . Is Mr. Gorbachev beating you at your own game?" Reagan's response, like all references to Soviet media success, seemed more like his old rhetoric: "Well, I've not engaged in a propaganda game. I'm getting ready to go to the meeting and take up some issues I think should be discussed. . . . He can practice whatever tactics he wants to." 

In reality, however, the Reagan Administration did everything in its power to minimize the Soviet campaign. Administration officials called it a "media blitz" and Reagan cautioned that "the preservation of our freedom and independence will not be secured by wishful thinking and a public relations campaign." Reagan acknowledged Gorbachev's skill, but claimed it lacked substance. Aides regularly challenged Soviet tactics because they believed
the U.S.S.R. gained an undeserved reputation of sincerity and flexibility. The Soviet media posturing, according to Reagan, undermined the goals of Geneva.\textsuperscript{17}

By placing Reagan's rhetoric in the context of his Soviet policy, this contradiction can be reconciled. The President calmed his language when discussing the Geneva summit, or negotiations. His rhetoric toward the Soviet leader's strategies, though less provocative than his past "evil empire" references, was more severe. The pattern of pre-summit rhetoric merely reflected the vacillation of Reagan's attitudes toward the U.S.S.R. Discussion with the Soviets was important, so the rhetoric directly related to the meeting was supportive. Aggressiveness toward them was an equal priority; thus, Reagan downgraded the Soviet's public relations success. Soviet achievements in pre-summit arenas, though, were only indirectly related to the summit. Reagan could, therefore, be both confrontational and flexible without appearing unreasonable in the eyes of the world community.

The availability and patterning issues, or what Graber collectively identifies as the information dissemination function, were predominant within pre-summit rhetoric. Reagan, in fact, skillfully utilized the message availability question by literally forcing his message into the Soviet Union. Despite Western European concerns, he also communicated his interest in Geneva with positive language, while indicting Gorbachev's tactics to achieve the
public opinion advantage before the summit. The disseminated pre-summit message, both in content and pattern, conveyed an emphasis on Geneva, and toughness toward the Soviets.

The Administration found it easier to define events during the pre-Geneva period. As Geneva was the first summit dealing with U.S.-U.S.S.R. arms balance in six years, the public had few comparisons to make. Reagan was, then, offered latitude in his interpretation. Accordingly, he fought to control public opinion with his use of definitions and his manipulation of expectations.

The major definitional battle involved, predictably, the elusive term "peace." The chief American negotiator at Geneva, Max Kampelman, admitted that this goal was an obvious one for both parties: "... The language this adversary speaks is one of peace. We all want peace."\(^\text{18}\) It was the differing conceptions of peace that forced the two leaders to the table originally. By examining the way that both leaders chose to deal with the issue of "peace," the U.S. and Soviet pre-summit positions become evident.

The United States and the Soviet Union both stressed the importance of peaceful coexistence during the pre-summit period. Secretary of State George Schultz explained during a press conference:

... I think it is one of the very necessary challenges to leadership on both sides to work at the problem of finding a way for two different systems to coexist in this small world of ours.\(^\text{19}\)
Simultaneously, the Soviets were persistent that they had the correct view regarding the route to a stable superpower relationship. An article in Izvestia contended that "the active interest of American press and TV attests to the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the U.S. propaganda machine to hide Soviet peace initiatives from the public." 20

Reagan supported his position during pre-summit maneuvers by broadening the agenda. The unofficial summit docket included the issue of arms control solely. Reagan, however, desired a discussion "not only about arms control but also about regional tensions, about our bilateral relationship, and about the obligation of both nations to respect human rights. . . " 21 According to the President, arms control was "one of the central issues between us. But it is not the only one. We need to look at the fundamental sources of tension in our relationship." 22 This policy was not a new one; Secretary of State Kissinger chose to "link" summit agendas to Soviet actions, as well. Although the official reason for the broadening of the agenda may have been to promote "true peace" as Reagan defined it, in some part this move was made because of the introduction of a new arms control proposal by the Soviets in late September. 23

Ultimately, the Soviets insisted that the topics should be limited to arms control, while the U.S. brought emphasized regional conflicts. Consequently, the Soviets
balked at the expansion of discussion. When Schultz went to the Soviet Union to begin talks, "Pravda published letters from readers accusing Mr. Reagan of refusing to focus on arms control in his meeting with Mr. Gorbachev." One Moscow woman, for example, objected to Reagan's actions by posing: "Would he really betray the hopes of millions of people?"24

For the United States, it was worthwhile to add more topics into the agenda. The Soviet Union's focus before the summit was exclusively arms control. The public also expected talks strictly on arms. Reagan, alternatively, felt these new issues were Soviet weaknesses. He justified his stand by re-defining the peace Geneva was intended to establish. Reagan remarked:

True peace must be based on more than just reducing the means to wage war. . . . True peace is based in self-determination, respect for individual and human rights, open and honest communication. That is the kind of peace we want. . . . [Geneva] will contribute to building true peace.26

It is striking that the President included open communication in his "new" definition of peace, for the Administration painstakingly argued that the Soviets do not allow access to their people. Although the use of the phrase "open communication" may simply coincidental, it seems likely that there is some link to Reagan's request for access to the Soviet people. Essentially, "true peace" was designed to undermine the Soviet's Geneva position. Reagan's peace definition strategy legitimized the negotiations as an avenue toward global goals while painting
Gorbachev as an inflexible leader. The more the Soviets protested the broadening of the agenda, the more stubborn they appeared.

Ultimately the use of such rhetoric contributed to the dampening of expectations regarding the summit. President Reagan anticipated very little accomplishment from Geneva. As Graber suggested, these limited prospects lessened the pressure on Reagan because less room for public disappointment exists. Only days before the summit, it was suggested by the Western press that cultural exchange between the two superpowers would help to mask the lack of success in the arms control arena.27

The initial Soviet outlook for Geneva seemed very bright. While Reagan busily produced an uncertain summit environment, Gorbachev reassured the public that it would generate positive results.28 The Administration attempted to counteract the Soviet ploy by referring to historical U.S.-Soviet failures. When Reagan was asked about the difference in U.S. and Soviet hopes, he responded: "Well, it worries me a little bit that they go out of their way to raise expectations, in view of summits in the past and what has come of them."29 Eventually, the Soviets also agreed that little would be accomplished.30

Reagan created a precarious summit climate by establishing ambiguous goals. During one of the many queries about his predictions, he would comment: "I haven't tried to pin it down to success or failure, . . . ."31 and
"I think it'll [i.e., success] be on the basis of when I report judgment of the outcome of the things that I will specify that were done or the things that were left undone, . . ."32 and "I think the most that we could get out is if we could eliminate some of the paranoia."33 The glaring lack of tangible expectations turned Geneva, in the minds of Americans, into little more than a get-acquainted meeting. The public would be satisfied with minimal progress.

A joint New York Times/CBS poll suggests that there could be some validity to Graber's low expectation thesis. The findings indicated that

[only half the American public expects the summit meeting . . . to improve Soviet-American relations, and just a third thinks it will lead to an arms control agreement. . . .]

The underlying causes, according to the poll, were "the cautious prospects that have been outlined by Reagan Administration officials. . . ."34 As Graber argued, then, Reagan's "benchmarks" of success helped to formulate the public's yardstick as well. By manipulating audience perceptions, the President simplified his task at Geneva; public opinion conformed to the Reagan Administration's position, demonstrating the possible veracity of Graber's interpretation and linkage function.

The manner in which Reagan exemplified Graber's information dissemination and interpretation and linkage elements reveals two ideas. First, Reagan strategically oriented his rhetoric toward the summit in a
non-confrontational manner. He proclaimed his interest in peace; he associated Geneva with this goal. Although he was skeptical of attaining this end at the summit, he conveyed the impression of realism and sincerity in negotiation. Reagan was so committed to peace that he insisted on communicating with the Soviet people directly. In contrast, his forcefulness was directed at the Soviet leader. Reagan desired to portray Gorbachev as a statesman with empty promises. The President's Soviet policy, embodied in his pre-summit message, was that the U.S. would try to negotiate, but it would be a useless enterprise.

Pre-Summit Rhetoric and Western Europe

French President Mitterand dubbed the Soviet campaign in Europe "Operation Seduction." In response to Gorbachev's proposed "Star Peace" program which required sharing of the Strategic Defense Initiative technology, Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Juson quipped: "he seems to be employing one of the better Madison Avenue firms." The fact is, Western European governments were well aware of the Soviet attempts to gain an upper hand during the pre-summit period. The U.S., as well, took great pains in ensuring unity prior to the summit; Vice President Bush's visit to Western Europe in June is an excellent example of this effort. In many respects, the leaders of the Western European governments hinted in not-so-subtle ways that they should try different tactics. For the most
part, however, NATO members had to wait on the sidelines essentially "keeping score" during superpower public relations maneuvers.

The crucial aspect of American and Soviet pre-summit rhetoric in Western Europe is that it seems to follow an action-reaction pattern. For the most part, it was a battle of information dissemination; each leader attempted to communicate their message to the governments and the people in the region. In addition, the patterning and interpretive elements of rhetoric were prevalent. Expectations, however, were underplayed by both leaders.

Graber's neat categories of political communication overlapped in every example of pre-summit rhetoric in Western Europe. It is nearly impossible to separate efforts by the leaders to disseminate and interpret the message; it is also difficult to distinguish the audience's beliefs about the message due to the patterning effect. Thus, this section will follow a more chronological format as opposed to the approach taken in the previous section. This method will help to reveal the action-reaction effect.

Before discussing the specific techniques Gorbachev used to influence the Western Europeans, an important distinction should be made. Although the Western European governments may not have been persuaded significantly by the Soviet leader's moves, the message was probably directed more to their constituency. Since the beginning of Reagan's first term, these governments were able to quell
anti-nuclear and anti-American sentiments only by promising to emphasize the second track of their nuclear policy—namely, negotiation.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, it appeared that the pressure was upon Reagan to show that he truly was interested in peace.\textsuperscript{38} This appeal to the people of Europe was particularly evident when Gorbachev discussed the Star Wars program.

The Soviet strategy, analysts said, is directed not so much at Western governments as at Western opinion. If the media conscience Soviet leader can persuade Europeans that space weapons represent the only impediment to serious negotiations and a new ear of detente, he may be able to strip away support for the American program.\textsuperscript{39}

Finally, the Soviet leader chose to woo the Netherlands, a nation which was in the process of deploying 48 new cruise missiles. It was in this country that the force of the Western European peace movement was most powerful.\textsuperscript{40} Despite Gorbachev's overtures, however, Dutch Prime Minister Rudolph Labers affirmed that the missiles would go into place on schedule.\textsuperscript{41}

It would be very difficult to quantitatively describe the effects of Gorbachev's efforts in the Western European region because of the numerous variables involved. The most that can be reasonably concluded about this struggle is that it was difficult for both sides. Gorbachev had to overcome years of Soviet unassertiveness in the realm of public opinion; Reagan, it seemed, was caught unprepared for his counterpart's abilities. In order to understand the
arduousness of each leader's task, it is crucial to understand the action-reaction pattern that developed prior to the summit.

As early as mid-September, President Reagan challenged Gorbachev to detail his plan for arms control. He asked him "to translate his publicly stated readiness for sharp cuts in nuclear forces into 'concrete proposals.'"\(^42\) Surprisingly, the Soviet plan for a fifty percent reduction in nuclear forces was released only fifteen days later. The U.S. response was that the proposal represented "an attempt to force the U.S. to choose between defending itself or defending its European allies."\(^43\)

One month later, the American government released its counterproposal. It was instantly characterized by the Soviets and critics as "essentially a repackaging, with minor modifications, of longstanding proposals . . . [that was] not expected by itself to lead to a breakthrough."\(^44\) Despite the obvious shortcomings of both plans, the Western European governments were pleased that Reagan finally developed a proposal to counter the Soviet September plan.\(^45\)

The proposal/critique/counterproposal response of the United States seems to fall within Graber's information dissemination category. The leaders attempted to show that they had a true interest in arriving at an agreement by releasing these potential treaties. The fact that each superpower advanced a proposal ostensibly implied that both nations were equally sincere about such desires. The
action-reaction pattern is typical of the information dissemination function of political rhetoric: a great deal of information was released about each leader’s positions (message access) and that information created a patchwork of actions and reactions on the part of each nation (message patterning).

Next to the exchange of arms control proposals months before the summit, the second major area of contention involved miscellaneous appeals to those associated with "the other side." The prime illustration of this technique was Gorbachev’s October 2-5 visit to Paris, France. This trip was not only a sounding board for new negotiating stances, it was also a symbolic presence. One Manchester Guardian journalist characterized the Franco-Soviet meeting in this way: "[it is] an attempt by the Soviet leader to win NATO support against SDI, as well as to take out an insurance policy in Western Europe in case the November summit misfires."46

During the meeting with Mitterand, Gorbachev reversed years of Soviet policy when he suggested that British and French nuclear arsenals could be negotiated separately from the U.S. discussion. Gorbachev assured the two nations that this action was not designed to split the allies. Despite these overtures, France promptly refused.

In addition, Gorbachev made a number of significant goodwill gestures during the pre-summit period. These included such items as a six-month moratorium on underground
testing and new weapons deployment\textsuperscript{47} and a zone free of chemical weapons in Europe.\textsuperscript{48} Many of these aims were widely perceived as designs to foil U.S. research on SDI. So interested was the Soviet leader in disseminating his positions on world issues that he published a book about his views\textsuperscript{49} and even used a deity during an interview with the U.S. \textit{Time} magazine.\textsuperscript{50}

The U.S. reaction was accusatory. Reagan once again emphasized that the Soviets were trying to split the West: "The Soviets have long sought to divide the Western alliance from each other, and the people from their governments. They have never succeeded."\textsuperscript{51}

The combination of Soviet efforts eventually led Reagan to embrace the Western European governments in a grand show of unity. In early October, Reagan called for a meeting of a group of these leaders to be held during the time of the United Nation's fortieth anniversary celebration. The Soviets quickly set up a counterpart meeting in Sofia.\textsuperscript{52} "The call for a seven-nation meeting underlined Mr. Reagan's desire to arrive in Geneva for his meeting with Mr. Gorbachev with a fairly unified Western alliance behind him."\textsuperscript{53} The French leader was angry at being "quasi-summoned" to the meeting; he did not come to the conference.\textsuperscript{54}

In spite of an outward show of support during this impromptu parley, a great deal of controversy surrounded American actions. Many leaders felt that Reagan should take
a more offensive approach in dealing with Gorbachev in the arena of public relations.

Despite tremendous concern that Gorbachev had finally out-manuevered Reagan, as the end of the pre-summit period approached, the American President turned the summit propaganda warfare into a close battle. Eventually, even the most skeptical began to see both leaders as virtually equal. Taking Western European opinion on-balance, no one of the superpowers appeared more sincere than the other in their quest for peace. "After fearing at first that Mr. Gorbachev had seized the propaganda initiative ... Western European governments appear satisifed that the Reagan Administration has evened the score."55

Hence, the net result of the action-reaction process that evolved was a near standoff. While Gorbachev, at breakneck pace, had captured global attention with his P.R. dazzle, his success did not overwhelm the American position. Ultimately, it seemed that he could not maintain the momentum he had originally achieved. This does not imply that he did not challenge Reagan; Gorbachev, on the contrary, became almost a mirror image of the American President in terms of his ability to deal with other nations. Even though the Soviet leader rested at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, the people of Western Europe were impressed with his tidings of peace.
A Comparison of the two Audiences

It becomes evident that the effect of pre-summit rhetoric was very different in the United States and Western Europe. It is remarkable that the same information was communicated to both audiences considering the distinctive responses.

In the U.S., it appears that Reagan stressed the inequities of message access and the strategies used by Gorbachev; also, expectations were extremely low within the Administration and, as a potential consequence, within the domestic audience. Gorbachev strove to reach the U.S. citizenry by visiting with senators, interviewing with Time magazine and writing a book.

In Western Europe, the issue of a solid Atlantic Alliance dominated the rhetoric. Aside from any of the specific issues discussed, whether it be an arms moratorium, a zone free of chemical weapons, or a arms control proposal, both leaders noted the effect on the governments in that region. Gorbachev wanted to speak directly to the governments about his perspective; Reagan countered by accusing the Soviets of "driving a wedge in the alliance."

The political role of each of these audiences has an obvious impact on the type of messages disseminated to these audiences. In the U.S., given the popularity of Reagan during that time, Gorbachev did not have a great opportunity to influence opinion. This conclusion is contrasted with
Gorbachev's ability to alter opinion regarding his role as a public figure and spokesman for his nation. Western Europe, on the other hand, provided excellent ground for Gorbachev to demonstrate his P.R. abilities to the Western European people. The dichotomy of reaction implies that both leaders attempted to tailor their strategies during the months preceding the summit.
ENDNOTES: CHAPTER IV


7 "Gorbachev Ready To Make Radical Arms Offers," Manchester Guardian, 4 September 1985, p. 7.


11 "Statement by the Principal Deputy Press Secretary to the President on the President's Radio Address to the Nation and the Peoples of the World, November 9, 1985," Presidential Documents 21 (15 November 1985):1375.

12 "U.S.-Soviet Rhetoric Before Summit Worries Western


20"In a Fog of Rhetoric," Izvestia. 9 October 1985, in CDSP, v. 37, n. 41, p. 21.


31"Interview with Foreign Broadcasters, November 12, 1985," p. 1386.


34"Sounding a Soviet Challenge on Arms," Maclean's 98 (14 October 1985):44.


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41"Sounding a Soviet Challenge on Arms."; the Soviet response to this move by the Netherlands can be found in "Fatal Mistake," Pravda, 3 November 1985, p. 3 in CDSP. v. 37, n. 44, p. 25.


CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT GENEVA PRE-SUMMITRY

Due to many factors, the 1985 Geneva Summit was an extremely media-oriented event; the most important one seems to be the role of domestic and international opinion during pre-summit manuevers. Specifically, the fact that a bilateral U.S.-U.S.S.R. summit had not been held for six years and that Pershing II and Cruise missiles had been deployed in Western Europe made the Geneva Summit an especially critical meeting in the eyes of the world community. Both President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev appeared to recognize the importance of two audiences in particular: United States citizens and Western European peoples. As a result, numerous statements and acts were directed at these groups. Hence, the real interest in this case study involved the two leaders' approaches to the U.S. and Western European audiences.

The history of pre-summitry, reviewed in Chapter II, was an integral part of this endeavor. In that section, the common elements of pre-summitry were identified. In order to provide comparable circumstances to the 1985 Geneva summit, four (of eight) summits between 1955 and 1985 were emphasized more than the remainder. Two items served as a common foundation to compare pre-summit Geneva rhetoric and the four previous summits. First, all five of these summits
had a lengthy period of time between the announcement and commencement of the meeting, which provided ample time for public musings about the summit. Second, none of these summits were completely overshadowed by issues that disrupted the oftentimes delicate U.S.-Soviet relationship.

Because pre-summitry is fundamentally a communicative activity, Chapter III discussed a model of political communication which was developed by Doris Graber. Two major functions of political rhetoric were identified: information dissemination and interpretation and linkage. This tool illuminated the methods used by the Soviet and American leaders; it was based on observations regarding political communication as a type of discourse, and was not specific to pre-summit rhetoric.

Ultimately, the historical preview and the communication framework were integrated in Chapter IV, which dealt with the pre-summitry of Geneva. Graber's model provided the structure for the analysis; the historical review complemented the model because it showed that these functions were also evident during previous summits. Although this combination is not foolproof, it does help to remove some of the doubt concerning the self-fulfilling nature of using communication models like Graber's. It would be relatively easy to overinterpret the facts surrounding each summit to show that the model is valid. By using more examples of pre-summit rhetoric, however, it seems less likely that the rhetoric and events before the
summit were manipulated so that the framework appeared sound. Instead, Graber’s generalizations concerning political rhetoric were more likely to be universal because they applied to many examples of pre-summitry.

After looking at the specifics of the pre-summit Geneva case study, a few conclusions about pre-summitry as a form of political rhetoric can be made. It is hoped that these findings will be as applicable to the previously-described pre-summit periods as they will be to future pre-summit periods.

First, leaders are aware of their media-orientation during the months preceding summits. As a result, they use varied forms of communication to reach their desired audiences. This generalization is what Graber called "information dissemination." Examples of these efforts include Reagan’s Voice of America speech prior to 1985 Geneva and Brezhnev’s May Day speech before the first Nixon/Brezhnev meeting. Graber further divides the information dissemination function into accessibility and patterning categories. The efforts of leaders to describe their summit positions and to project interpretations into the audience’s framework fall into both of the subdivisions within Graber’s model.

Second, leaders attempt to tailor their messages to their desired audiences. Graber defined this effect as "interpretation and linkage," which involves strategic definitions of occurrences during the political event and
the discussion of expectations. In the case of pre-summit Geneva, different tactics were used for the Western Europeans and the United States. In both arenas, President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev stressed the importance of peace, but in Western Europe both tried to use symbolic gestures to further sway the opinions of that audience. Western Europe became the public relations "battleground."

Third, no one leader really wins the "pre-summit propaganda game." Although the press may question the leaders about their public relations ability, as was President Reagan during the pre-summit Geneva period, in the end the Western European and U.S. audiences generally perceived that leaders are equally matched and that they approach the negotiating table with similar bargaining strengths; this observation is based upon reported reactions just prior to the summits. It is difficult to determine if this effect occurs because the leaders struggle to develop such a relationship or if the audience prefers to view the leaders in this way. Like all mass communication studies, it is nearly impossible to separate the causes from the effects. Nonetheless, pre-summit rhetoric should not be used to define who is the better communicator, as is often done by the press.

Since the basis of studying pre-summitry is not rooted in determining who won the "game," one should hope that these powerful rhetorical "battles" would represent more than a mere careless superpower banter. Bilateral
pre-summitry is a worthwhile focus of discussion because it helps to identify the state of superpower relations. During the first two Nixon/Brezhnev meetings, Detente was flourishing and the rhetoric reflected that. The Soviets slowly opened their nation to the uniquenesses of the U.S. culture. As the U.S.-Soviet connection soured during the Carter Administration, pre-summit rhetoric also took a turn for the worse. In a sense, studies such as this one allow scholars to put their hand on the pulse of superpower relations because of the difficult issues that are addressed.

What makes pre-summit rhetoric different from other forms of superpower rhetoric is that, for the most part, summits deal with the true issues of divergence between world leaders. Studies such as this help to define the manner in which leaders chose to deal with these issues. As was mentioned in the first chapter, summits, as a form of communication, are important because they allow leaders to discuss their positions in a face-to-face meeting. Pre-summitry functions as the prelude to these conferences and, because of this role, the rhetoric during these periods encompasses most of the sensitive summit issues. Scholars interested in superpower relations or, more specifically, in negotiation strategy, should pay close attention to the months before these meetings.

Thus, pre-summit studies should not stop with Geneva. Instead, much of what has been discussed here should be
expanded to include more current bilateral U.S.-U.S.S.R. conferences. In addition, findings from these studies should be compared with summits held under different circumstances. For instance, in multilateral summits, as opposed to bilateral U.S.-Soviet meetings, one would expect that pre-summit jockeying operates on a completely different level because of the number and the interests of the parties involved. The contrast in tactics employed and resulting effects may help to forecast how issues will be dealt with at those summits. Most importantly, studies like these will help to demonstrate that conferences are not held in a vacuum; a great deal of preparation goes into these meetings and, consistent with this prior effort, leaders often reveal their positions well in advance through pre-summit rhetoric. The 1985 Geneva case study therefore serves as only a stepping stone for future work in the area of political rhetoric.

The November meeting was a first for Reagan. He has since attempted to rationalize the difficulty he faced in the months prior to the summit by comparing himself to Nixon. He mused: "Nixon had it easy. He had a leader that was there while he was there. My problem for the first few years was that they kept dying on me." Gorbachev will be around for some time, although Reagan, at least in person, will be out of the limelight after 1988. The public is left to follow meetings like Geneva and hope that, at some time in the near future, the U.S. and the Soviet Union will
develop a greater mutual understanding and an ability to strike agreements that will secure the peace of the world.
ENDNOTES: CHAPTER V

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