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Labor Series

AMBASSADOR MAX M. KAMPELMAN

Interviewed by: Morris Weisz
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is Morris Weisz and I am now seated in Ambassador Kampelman's comfortable home in Washington, DC. The date is Friday, June 4, 1993. This interview will cover Ambassador Kampelman's background in the trade union movement and the political-trade union issues which he covered many years ago in his Ph.D. thesis on communism in the C.I.O. The purpose is to examine the impact, if any, of his experiences as an anti-communist in the trade union movement upon his work later on at the State Department in the administrations of Presidents Carter, Reagan and Bush, first in the negotiations on the Helsinki process, which is the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and later on as the negotiator on arms limitations for the Administration. In any event, Max, I guess the record will show that we are old friends and therefore I may refer to a lot of things in the past that will help you recollect your experiences. As I recall from your book, your trade union experience was actually as a negotiator, educator, and the sort of intellectual that we used to have in the labor movement in that period, in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, among others..

KAMPELMAN: Murray, let me, if I may, clarify a point, because you now refer to my book and a few minutes ago you referred to my doctoral dissertation. I want to clarify that because my doctoral dissertation also turned into a book, so we are dealing with two books. Just for the sake of any research people involved, the first book, which was my doctoral dissertation, first came out as a publication of the United States Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare. I guess this would have been in the 1950s. They published it as a document, because it was quite relevant to a study that Senator Humphrey was undertaking with the help of Jack Barbash. I had no problem or objection with their publishing that as a Senate document, and it was later published by Praeger as The Communist Party Versus the C.I.O.: A Study in Power Politics. Another edition of that book was then published by the New York Times Publishing Company, so you've got Praeger and the New York Times. For any researcher, they are identical; they're not different books.

The second book to which you refer is one that came out in November of 1991, just quite recently, which was a book of memoirs. That was called Entering New Worlds: the Memoirs of a Private Man in Public Life, published by Harper and Collins. I didn't mean to go in [to a lot of detail], but I just thought that any researcher should know that we are dealing with two books.

The question that you are now asking me relates to something in the most recent book, the book of memoirs. If I can recall correctly, what you are asking me is whether my early experience with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union was the experience of an intellectual dabbling in trade union affairs. I guess that's the question, Murray?

Q: Not an intellectual dabbling, but a person who -- parallel to my own experience when I got out of school -- entered the labor movement to become active because of the

political background that led me to feel that I could do something in the field. In my case, I couldn't get another job. I don't know if that was your experience.

KAMPELMAN: Well, in my case my interest in the labor movement evolved out of college through two influences. One was the influence of a professor of mine, a sociology professor. His name was Jack McConnell, who is still alive and with whom I am still communicating.

Q: N.Y.U.

KAMPELMAN: This was at New York University at the University Heights Section. Jack now lives in New Hampshire, and we keep in touch with each other two or three times a year. He is fully retired now. I took courses with him that dealt with the labor movement, and I developed an interest in it. It was consistent with my own very strong predilections in favor of American democracy, and I saw this as an extension of the same principles into the area of economic relationships.

The second influence was more of a religious influence, not from a Jewish Rabbi but from a Christian theologian by the name of Frank Olmstead, who was the Advisor to Christian Students at New York University. I got to know him quite well by virtue of my activity heading up the Menorah Society, which was the organization of Jewish students. Frank and his wife Florence had a keen interest in labor matters. I had earlier decided that I wanted to go to law school but that I couldn't afford to go to a law school during the day. I had to work during the day and go to law school at night. Frank and Jack both influenced me to try to look in the direction of working in a plant or tying in with a trade union. It was Frank, I believe, who recommended me to the people running Local 155 of the I.L.G.W.U., which was the Knitgoods Workers' Union, with the idea of my getting a job during the day and then being able to be active in a trade union.

Q: So you don't, like many of us who entered the I.L.G., come out of the radical movement but rather out of an academic interest. It is interesting that a sociology professor influenced you, because so many of the people currently active in the revisionism of American politics have been out of the sociology field.

KAMPELMAN: I think a great deal of what might be called "corruption" has developed in many of the social sciences. First of all, they began to quantify to the point where it was difficult to read an article in a social science journal without understanding statistics and equations. That was totally alien to the studies of sociology and political science that I experienced in school, where we talked about ideas and theories but did not make an effort to quantify them. I think that influence of quantification comes from the use of the term "social science." You know in the physical sciences that if you mix two parts of hydrogen with one part of oxygen you will always get water. You can predict that clearly. That's a law of science. H-2-0 gets water. So there was a search for the equivalent of H-2-O in sociology and political science. In my opinion that is a fruitless search. It has never

produced anything that can provide the certainty of prediction, which is what the unique characteristic of a physical science is.

Q: But it does lend itself to the type of revisionism that we see in the history field and in the labor field and in many others, in which you can use sets of numbers to come to conclusions which logically don't fit into a ...

KAMPELMAN: And they failed in my opinion. We are also beginning to touch on a larger subject that I don't know that I feel qualified to discuss, although I know that I have strong feeling about, which is a kind of failure of the [intellectual community] -- particularly I'll talk about the American intellectual community -- the failure of the American academy to make a significant contribution to our society as a result of the fact that there is a kind of ideological component to it which takes on the tone of certainty, because they are trying to turn it into a science. If you turn ideology and certainty together, what you have is rigidity, immobility, and something that has turned out to be a failure in any effort to influence the American society. So that's sad. And I'll say a word if I may, Murray, as to why I think it's sad. I think it is sad, because at a time when our society is on the verge of significant new opportunities, because of our wealth and our strength and the diminution of international tensions, we don't quite know where to go and there's no help from the academy.

In Roosevelt's time for example, to use that as an illustration, if a politician wanted to know where to go. . . -- We had no reason to expect that a politician would be able to create the new thoughts and the new directions. -- . . . an intelligent politician like Roosevelt knew to go to the academy. Paul Douglas wrote a book on social security. You could turn to some good thinking and good writing and learn from them. You might throw out half of it. Or you accept five percent of it, but you had a body of knowledge in which to look. And the failure of the academy is so clear that today nobody tells you anything from the academy that's helpful, in my view. So the politician is left hanging depending only on pragmatism and give and take, and experimentation, failure and success. When he follows academic writing, he is likely to go wrong.

Q: You are so apologetic about getting into your opinions. I want to make sure that you understand that one of the purposes of this Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project is precisely because of the fact that we have seen a whole lot of rigid revisionist thinking in the labor field which doesn't take into account the theoretical influences that you talk about, so we are very anxious to get these, because the only way to get students interested in this aspect of it, the more pragmatic, the practical, the theoretical, rather than the number crunching, is to get different people's opinions which then can form the basis for an informed evaluation.

KAMPELMAN: I'll channel my answers now to your questions.

Q: Well, what we got out of your second book, the more recent one, is this background that you had of which I hadn't known all the details, in this particular local, where you

actually engaged in collective bargaining, and observed it very closely in addition to engaging in it. As I mentioned to you this morning in our telephone conversation, this was a case in which, in spite of the opposition between the two parties, the process of negotiation has to take into account this important fact: with all that institutional opposition to one another, the parties ultimately must agree that the successful functioning of the organization, the union and the management, requires ultimately an agreement.

Now, that is one aspect of your experience, whereas the first book you wrote on communism in the C.I.O. is one in which the battle between the two parties -- the ideological Communists and the more pragmatic trade unionists -- was one that didn't have to result in ultimate agreement; the object was full control rather than complete victory by one of the two contenders. Your negotiations for the Government involved, in both cases -- in the CSCE and in the arms negotiations -- reaching an accommodation over long periods of time and with great difficulty; that's what I want you to direct your attention to.

KAMPELMAN: Let me think out loud with you about this to see what really happens here, because I don't know that I have ever given it the kind of specificity that you are suggesting. My labor experience, of course, started with working in a shop and then being active, as much as I could, in the educational program of the union. Phil Heller was then the Educational Director of that particular union and he was a good teacher. The head of that union was Louis Nelson, who was a former radical, a Trotskyite or a Lovestoneite, and he was a good teacher. He was a radical person but a responsible person.

Now the essential element of American trade unionism, which was prevalent in that particular local as well as in the I.L.G. as a whole, was based on the assumption that labor and management had differences but that ultimately they were reconcilable differences. Adjustments had to be made and through the process of negotiation you would reach a result. It wasn't always easy. Emotions got inflamed. Strikes took place because one or the other or both sides either miscalculated or whatever it was the spirit was not one of accommodation. Or they needed a strike in order to sell the result to their constituencies.

Now I also later, when I began teaching at the University of Minnesota, developed a relationship with the trade union movement. There I became a consultant and advisor to the Textile Workers Union at the request of the national office of the Textile Workers' Union. I had been doing some teaching at the School for Workers at the University of Wisconsin . . .

Q: Where we first met.

KAMPELMAN: . . . where we first met, and this led to the C.I.O., which was then engaged in a struggle internally, but that trade union experience was built upon my I.L.G.W.U. experience, and then I was also active in the American Federation of Teachers, which was the trade union of professors. I was elected a delegate from that

Teachers' local to the central AFL body in Minneapolis. I have had that kind of broad trade union experience, which did clearly strengthen the conviction that a strenuous effort must be made in a negotiating process to resolve differences wherever possible, short of violence. This was consistent also with the fact that I had become a pacifist in college, which also has its roots in decision-making through negotiations rather than through violence.

Now, what you are asking me to do is to kind of jump forward then many years, which I will do, and ask the question as to whether that emphasis was useful in my negotiating with the Soviets. Let's say we'll jump to 1985, when President Reagan asked me to head up the nuclear arms negotiation effort.

Q: I wonder if I could interrupt for one moment. While you were in Minnesota. . . -- Because we have had so many interviews, at least half of them, in which the persons interviewed coming out of trade union experience, have referred to the various radical theologies, and one of them that some people have given us some information on is Trotskyism. -- In your work in the Minnesota trade union movement, which was largely, you said, with respect to the internal conflict within the C.I.O. Textile Workers, did you have anything to do with that fascinating Trotskyite group there?

KAMPELMAN: By the time I got to Minnesota. . . -- This would have been in the middle to late 1940's after World War II. -- . . . the Trotskyite influence had significantly diminished in the Minnesota trade union movement. I saw some signs of it but minimal signs of it. What I did see, prevalent in the C.I.O. particularly, was a tremendous influence by the Stalinists, the Communist movement, and I think they really took over the radical mantle of the old Trotskyites and were able in many trade unions to defeat Trotskyite influence, replacing it with their own influence.

But I would have to say that yes the trade union experience did play a significant role in persuading me that there was a way of resolving differences through negotiations. Now I want to add a footnote to this, a caveat, if I may. A negotiation can be successful if the parties feel they have more in common with each other than they have differences with each other. If the differences are so profound as to mean they don't think they share more than they differ, then a negotiation to solve problems is much less likely to succeed. You can have a negotiation to arrive at a truce, at a cease-fire, because immediate, pragmatic goals on both sides require it, but it's less likely to solve [problems].

Q: Retaining under those circumstances the objective of destroying the other party.

KAMPELMAN: Exactly!

Q: It's a temporary truce, whereas what you are referring to is something else.

KAMPELMAN: What I am referring to is something else. It requires having an understanding of more in common with each other. Now, therefore, I have to go back to

the second part of your question as a way of answering this first part of the question. And the second part of your question refers to my first book which is The Communist Party Versus the C.I.O., A Study in Power Politics.

Q: Which was a sort of zero-sum game where each party was trying to destroy the other.

KAMPELMAN: To destroy the other. Once it became clear that they didn't have more in common with each other than they had differences with each other . . . You have to understand that one of the characteristics of American politics and certainly trade union politics -- let's say up until the end of the Second World War -- was a general feeling on the part of most trade unionists that Communists were maybe a little more to the left, but they were after all bona fide trade unionists, and the coloration during World War II was that they were also American patriots.

Q: After June 22, 1941.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, that they were American patriots. So that with that view you had most of the dominant element of American trade unionism didn't share the strong anti-Communist feelings that later became evident both internationally and within the trade union movement. But once the American trade union movement, and I would say perhaps led by religious thinking, looked upon Russian communism as godless and people whose whole faith was directed toward defending that system therefore being godless, and totalitarian and un-American or anti-American, then you were at the point of conflict where I think, for example, the C.I.O. leadership, Philip Murray and Jim Carey and Arthur Goldberg, the three of them as the leaders, came to the conclusion that negotiation toward reconciliation was no longer feasible, that what was required was defeat.

Q: And that you say was really at the end of World War II and the beginning of the Marshall Plan.

KAMPELMAN: The end of World War II and the beginning of the Marshall Plan and the beginning of the serious tensions between the Stalinists and the others, the people who believed in democracy, and the growing reports of the inhumanity associated with the Stalinist regime, which offended a great many people. That was something that became evident increasingly there. I'm not sure I know where my rambling is taking me, Murray.

Q: Well, it's taking you to where I want to get you. It's how you used that understanding... But let me interrupt, if I may, for a moment to ask you how you weigh into that conclusion about the objective differences between the two groups with the fact that there were many people with this history in the radical movement, like the Reuthers, who during the War had this internal conflict within their union in which for them it was necessary to fight the Communists even though the Communists didn't show their true colors until much later? For example with instances like that North American strike in the Far West where the Communists during the period before Hitler attacked [the Soviet Union] they opposed certain . . . I've forgotten. North American Aviation comes to mind. So there was still this

ideological conflict, where ideology was important between the Communists and anti-Communists even before the total break.

KAMPELMAN: Well, the nature of the Soviet Union was known to a great many people before World War II and to an increasing number of people each year that passed. This included a great many Socialists. It included some trade unionists. It included some businessmen, some conservatives, some intellectuals, but I don't think that it included enough of them to sharpen the issue as clearly as the end of World War II sharpened the issue. We have to understand that in the days before World War II, these sharp differences, let's say between people who believed in Social Democracy or Democratic Socialism. . . -- They used different terms. -- . . . and people who believed in Stalinism and Communism in the Soviet sense of the word, that existed, but it really didn't preoccupy the American society. It only preoccupied those few individuals whose intellectual status and thought process or reading or political commitments or political rivalries dominated their beings. It was only a relatively isolated kind of phenomenon.

Q: Isolated and submerged really.

KAMPELMAN: And submerged really. It was there, but it wasn't dominant. It became dominant when the Soviet Union and the United States at the end of the War began to have sharp differences, intellectually and internationally, and when the C.I.O. leadership decided that there was no room within a democratic trade union movement for people committed to totalitarianism. Now, we should say a word here that the fact that the C.I.O. leadership took this position led. . . -- I will call them "opportunists." I don't mean to be pejorative about it -- . . . but it did lead opportunists, who were not ideologically Stalinists but who were perfectly prepared to work with them and gain from the association with them, particularly in leadership roles, to shift pragmatically to the leadership of the C.I.O. and to become more legitimate. I can think of one important trade union . . .

Q: Quill?

KAMPELMAN: Well, certainly Michael Quill in New York is an example of that in the Transport Workers Union. Incidentally, as an aside, I'll mention I've had an interesting exchange recently with Bill Safire. Bill made a reference on some television appearances to a Reuther quote, which he said was "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it must be a duck." I got a hold of Bill Safire, and I said, "Bill, that's not a Reuther quote, that's a Michael Quill quote." I said, "I read the trials at the C.I.O., and I saw that in Quill's testimony."

Q: We should say here that the "trials" Max has just referred to are the internal investigations, much more effective than the Congressional ones, within the C.I.O. when they were considering throwing out some unions.

KAMPELMAN: And when they indeed did throw out a number of unions.

Q: Six of them.

KAMPELMAN: And Michael Quill, who had been firmly identified with the Communists in the C.I.O., testified against them during the trials and used this business of quacking like a duck. Bill then came back to me and said, "Well, I don't know. Maybe you're right. Maybe it was Michael Quill, but Roy Reuther told me it was Walter Reuther, who said it." So there we are! They may have both said it.

Q: And I thought it was Carey.

KAMPELMAN: And you thought it was Carey. It doesn't really matter. It's an interesting phenomenon.

Now, let's see what [it means] if we translate this into international negotiations, if I may.

Q: Sure, that's what we want.

KAMPELMAN: Let me then say that my beginning with serious international diplomacy took place in 1980 when I was asked by President Carter first to co-chair, then chair the American delegation to the Madrid CSCE meetings under the Helsinki Final Act. This was actually not my first formal introduction. My first formal introduction was through Arthur Goldberg at the United Nations, where I got involved in the South African problems, but let's put that aside.

Now I went to Madrid. I did head up the American Delegation there. Actually Cy Vance, who was Secretary of State, told me I should expect to be away for perhaps three months. It lasted for three years. That forum was a direct confrontational forum between the United States and the Soviet Union, between Democracy and Communism, and I chose frankly to make it so, making, I believe, diplomatic friends uncomfortable because the theory behind diplomacy is negotiation produces results, and therefore let's be kind and respectful of one another. I had no problem with being respectful toward the individual on the other side. I did have a serious problem and would not accept the concept of being respectful of the ideology on the other side, and I made that distinction very real. But you see this is the same kind of fight as Communism versus Democracy in the labor movement or, putting aside the labor movement, in Minnesota when I began to teach in 1945, 1946, as an instructor. The Democratic Party of Minnesota was then called the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party, because there had been a merger in 1944 between the Democratic Party and the Farmer-Labor Party, which was very strong in the state. They merged in 1944 in order to help Roosevelt get the electoral votes of Minnesota, and as you know, the Communists supported Roosevelt in 1944, so that there was a merger of interests which produced that harmony. We decided . . . -- We, me, I was a small part of that machine, not a major part, but I participated actively. I was a soldier in the ranks we might say. -- . . . since we felt the party in 1946 had been taken over by the Communists at a convention, we decided to take the party back. This was a parallel to the fight within the C.I.O. I worked hard in it, very hard, as a matter of fact. Three or four times a week I

was on the road after I had taught. They would pick me up and we would travel around the state preparing for the party convention of 1948, where we wanted to take the party back by defeating the Communists. So I had that experience of observing Communists fighting democracy.

Q: Was Hubert Humphrey Mayor of Minneapolis by that time?

KAMPELMAN: Humphrey was the Mayor in 1945. Humphrey saw the defeat [of democratic forces] in 1946, although they [the Communists] had pushed him forward because he was the most successful elected official in the state, so they wanted to use him, but he saw that. I was present at the 1946 convention where the Communists took over the party and indeed was bodily lifted out of the convention and thrown out of the convention just because I was there. I wasn't unruly in any way, but just because I was there trying to organize people. I remember a man by the name of Frank Puglisi, a big man, just picked me up bodily and carried me out, and Humphrey saw this and objected to it. Well, the fact of the matter is that Humphrey saw this and we worked out an accommodation. Humphrey insisted on having at least one party official that he would name, and he named Orville Freeman as Secretary of the Party, which gave us our in, because Orville was pugnacious and determined. He was a pro-democrat, a Marine, so we kept our roots and we knew where to go as we organized for 1948.

Anyhow, what I am trying to say is that I've had some experience in [fighting Communism]. Also as a political scientist working for a Ph.D. and teaching political science, I taught a course in problems of democracy, where I really familiarized myself with Marx and Lenin. I also taught a course in the humanities where we read Lenin. So I understood the nature of that which I was opposing. And let me just say a word about this if I may. I noticed in your earlier introduction you talked about anti-Communism, and indeed, that is correct. I was an anti-Communist, but I have to confess that my preferences were not to call myself an "anti-Communist", but a "pro-democrat", because I don't feel that a lasting philosophy is a negative one. I think a lasting philosophy has to be a positive one, for human dignity and democracy and freedom and human rights, which is the position I used in Madrid.

Now, let's move ourselves to the Madrid picture, where I knew the nature of the Soviet Union. I had studied the Soviet Union. I knew something about Marxism and Leninism. I had taught in the area. I had followed the area very carefully and understood that therefore we, meaning the United States, had to take a leadership position in this role.

Now, I made a strenuous effort [to respect my fellow negotiator], and I want to say this is where my pacifist training came in, because I think [it was] my pacifist training. You don't escape your training. You may modify your views, but you don't escape things that have influenced you fully. And I guess that I have always had a respect for the human dignity of the other fellow no matter how. . . -- I'll use the word evil, because I believe in the existence of evil. -- . . . how evil that may be. We are all partially evil and partially noble. Reinhold Niebuhr called us children of light and children of darkness. But I did

always respect the personal integrity of the Communist and Soviet leaders with whom I negotiated. And I want to say that I haven't got the slightest doubt in my mind that: A) they appreciated it and welcomed it, and B) it proved useful.

Indeed, I am still in touch with the Russian who ran the Soviet Delegation as their number two man, who was a K.G.B. general. I'm still in touch with him. He is writing a book. I just got a letter from him about a month ago. I saw him when I was in Moscow recently. We developed a personal relationship, but though I had that personal relationship and respected them [the Soviet representatives] as individuals, and if I met as I did the wife of one of them, I would ask about her and talk to her and ask about the children and try to recognize in them a human ingredient, I was extraordinarily tough on the system.

This led some of our allies' diplomats to be uncomfortable, because rough, tough language traditionally bothers them as a barrier toward agreement and understanding. Now, I used to take the position really from week one, not only with my staff but with our allies, that an agreement is not necessarily the most desirable outcome from a negotiation where the interests of the parties were significantly diverse, that an agreement might be in their worst interests. And I used illustrations as a lawyer where you are providing a disservice to your client if you push for an agreement, because some agreements are not in the best interests of your client. And the Soviets finally came to understand that I meant it, that I would be perfectly pleased to end the Madrid meetings without any kind of a piece of paper, unless that piece of paper and that result were in our interests.

Q: What this teaches me though is that it is more than your trade union experience in which you might come to a conclusion that a strike is necessary. More than your trade union [experience] it is your political background in the sense of things like pacifism and an understanding of democracy, although it fits in with the idea that you might have a strike.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, I have to say to you that you're right. It is much more than a trade union experience. I want to also say that it fitted in quite well with my experience with Humphrey in Minneapolis and Washington. My relationship with Humphrey was strengthened, because we both had a very similar approach to this problem. You think of Hubert Humphrey as a liberal fighting with the world, standing up against the Southerners, but you know it was not strange that at his funeral Richard Nixon came, and Barry Goldwater cried, because he [Humphrey] respected them as individuals and they knew it. He looked upon them as human beings, opposed as he was to them, and they knew it. Anyhow, it was that, I think, that strengthened his relationship with me and mine with him, because we both saw things pretty much the same way. I look upon [this outlook as coming] out of a pacifist influence, which I did use instinctively in my diplomacy.

Now, I am diverting [for a moment]. I spoke yesterday at lunch at an American Bar Association meeting. It was a large audience and it was apparently on C-SPAN. I made an interesting point there as I was talking. I referred to Gunner Myrdal with his emphasis as

a social scientist on the "ought" and the "is", and the distinctions between them. I pointed out that a fundamental prerequisite for stability is the search for and the attainment of agreement on what "ought" to be. If you don't have an agreement on what "ought" to be, you really are not in a position to take significant steps toward stability, toward peace, toward understanding. If you know what "ought" to be, then you have this difficult task of equating the "is" with the "ought" and either changing the "ought" or changing the "is", if you want to have some kind of harmony.

Now, to look at CSCE. In 1975, for whatever motives, a piece of paper is arrived at, unanimously signed by East and West, Soviet Union and the United States, which presumably says what "ought" to be. We arrive in Madrid in 1980 and it's very clear that the agreement on what "ought" to be is not being lived up to by the Soviets. Now, what do you do about that? I explained all this to the allies at first, because before I went to Madrid, I had traveled to visit our the NATO partners.

Q: But you said that you didn't go to Madrid until 1980.

KAMPELMAN: 1980.

Q: Oh, but you said that in 1975 they had agreed.

KAMPELMAN: In 1975 they had agreed on . . . I was not part of that agreement. There was an agreement. "The Helsinki Final Act" it was called. And a meeting was scheduled for 1980.

Q: Who negotiated that for us? Was that Goldberg?

KAMPELMAN: No, in 1975 the State Department did. It was under the Presidency of Gerald Ford, and Gerald Ford signed the agreement for the United States and Brezhnev signed the agreement for the Soviets.

Now, for the position I took at the Madrid meeting with the Soviets and our allies. I said, "You have here an 'ought'. Somebody is not living up to it. Do you just leave it alone? You should leave it alone, if you don't want to take the agreement seriously. You should drop it and change to something else if that's not the course you want to pursue. But if you want to dignify this process, you've got to hold their feet to the fire." That was the position I took.

Let's take an issue, the mentioning of the names of the victims of Soviet repression. Arthur Goldberg started that at a meeting that took place in 1977 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. He headed up the American Delegation. I think he mentioned three or four names. I am told that all hell broke loose. The State Department was unhappy about it. Our allies were clearly unhappy about it. Now, there are complications that I have in my book of memoirs as to how that happened. Arthur was right. The State Department was right. The State Department didn't know the instructions that Arthur received from

President Carter. You see, they were not on the same wave length. Goldberg was doing what he knew the President wanted done.

Q: Was it what he knew the President wanted or what he had convinced the President was necessary?

KAMPELMAN: Maybe, but it was consistent with what the President wanted. But there was a lack of communication. The State Department didn't want Arthur in that job anyhow. Be that as it may, I can only tell you that I looked upon the mentioning of names as a barometer. I decided that I would build on what Arthur did, and I'll only say this to you, we were the only country out of 35 in Belgrade to mention names. In Madrid the first country to mention a name was Sweden, a neutral country. We mentioned not six but close to 300 names of the victims of Soviet repression during the course of the meetings. And about 22 or 23 countries mentioned names.

For example, why was Sweden the first country to mention names? Because Raoul Wallenberg had become an American citizen by a Congressional Act. An honorary American citizen. I went over to the Head of the Swedish Delegation at the preparatory meeting, which was working on the agenda before the formal meeting even started, and I said to him, "Mr. Ambassador, I feel I owe you a statement here. I have been instructed to mention the name of Raoul Wallenberg. I want you to know that he is now an American citizen, and I intend to mention his name. It seems to me, if I do that, that might cause embarrassment to you, because he is a Swedish citizen. And how come an American is raising an issue about a Swedish citizen, even though we have every right to do so? I just want to bring this to your attention and to the attention of your government that my purpose is not to embarrass you in any way, but if you should wish to raise it, then I will hold back my mentioning it, so that you can do it first." That's all I said to him. This was the preparatory meeting.

On the day the meeting was being opened in November 1980, he came over to me in the morning, and he said, "My minister is speaking today. You'll be interested in what he has to say." And Sweden talked about Raoul Wallenberg.

Q: And supplied the advantage of having a neutral country . . .

KAMPELMAN: Of course. Anyhow, what I am trying to say to you is that if you take it seriously, you can't pussyfoot around important issues. So I was very strong about it and was able to bring together the whole NATO group and the neutrals behind it, because after all countries like Sweden, Austria, Finland, and Switzerland are committed to human rights. They would be embarrassed to be left out of this advocacy of human rights. So that's how we worked that out.

Now, similarly, on a personal level, I would meet with the Soviets, and make them understand. Now, let me use another illustration. My co-chairman at the outset was Griffin Bell, who was the former Attorney General. He was going to make a speech early

on in the meeting about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. He wanted me to make a speech about anti-Christian activity, and he would make the speech on anti-Semitism. We had a draft that somebody on the staff had worked on, and frankly I was not pleased with it. Through some emergency Griffin Bell called me at the hotel at midnight the night before he was going to make the speech. He had to go back to Atlanta the first thing in the morning, so he couldn't do it. Would I do it?

Q: Would you do both?

KAMPELMAN: They weren't to be on the same day. Well, frankly, I looked again at the speech and I was not satisfied with it. So I decided I was not going to deliver that speech. And let me drop a footnote here to say that I said something about talking tough. I never was polemical. I never made a charge without evidence. I acted like a lawyer. If we were going to talk about anti-Semitism, I wanted to have illustration after illustration after illustration. Not just a charge. And I did this with respect to trade unionism, psychiatric hospitals, whatever the charge was against the Soviet Union. That tended, you see, to make it more acceptable to our allies, because I wasn't engaged in insults, but facts. Anyhow, I went over that morning to my Russian colleague and I said, "Look, I just want you to know that I have here in my hand a statement the American Delegation is going to deliver this morning on anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union." And his face blanched. I said, "But I'll tell you what, Griffin Bell was going to make it, and he was called back; he's expecting that I will make it. I'm going to deliver it, but I'm not going to deliver it to the meeting, I'm going to deliver it to you." And I said, "Sergei, you have been telling me that we can get more with honey than we can with vinegar. Okay, here is my statement. You send it to Moscow. Let me see, if without making a public statement on this question, I can see some changes in your behavior on this problem." Well, he was grateful. "I'll tell Moscow." He took the speech and as it turned out, they did nothing. Meanwhile I wrote and prepared a good devastating statement on anti-Semitism. I waited about six to eight months; I then made it. He was upset about it, but I said, "Sergei, you had every chance to give me a response. I never heard a word from you or from Moscow." So that was, you see, a way to deal with a personal level at the same time as you hit on the other level.

Anyhow, the fact is that at the end of three years in Madrid, we came closer to an "ought" that was realistic than we had at the beginning of the meeting, because at the beginning of the meeting I have no doubt in my mind that, as far as the Soviets were concerned, the 1975 agreement was words, and nobody expected them to live up to it, and they didn't expect to live up to it. By the time Madrid ended, they knew we were serious about this, and they paid a price. What's the price they paid? They were interested in having a disarmament conference. Why? Because we were about to deploy the Pershings and the cruise missiles. They were playing a role in getting out hundreds of thousands of Europeans in demonstrations all over Western Europe against the deployment of the Pershings and the cruise missiles. And they wanted to be able to say, . . . -- They never told me, but I knew this. -- "Why are you deploying Pershings and cruise missiles. We've just agreed in Madrid to have a disarmament conference. So we are on the verge of a disarmament conference and you are now arming with Pershings and cruise missiles." I

knew the argument that they would use and I knew that they were desperately trying to get something out of this meeting and get the meeting to end in order to do this. In the meantime, I wasn't permitting the meeting to end, because we had a case to make, and I was not going to agree to nonsense. And even though we changed the nature of the meeting, they insisted on still calling it a disarmament conference. Well, by the time the meeting ended three years later, we had already deployed the Pershings and the cruise missiles. They did take a licking. They paid a price for this. Anyhow, what I am trying to say is that I did not feel that the confrontation on issues was one that disrupted the movement toward arriving at an "ought".

The fellow who introduced me at the luncheon yesterday was John Norton Moore, a University of Virginia law professor and an international law expert. He is convinced, he said in introducing me, that it was that effort in Madrid that gave rise to many of the changes that were taking place. And let me say to you, my K.G.B. friend would tell me frequently . . . I remember the first time he said to me. He said, "Your government and you don't understand how many friends you have among my friends." I said, "I want to see evidence. I don't need you to tell me we are friends. I want to see evidence." And as you know, maybe you don't know, because it wasn't publicized, we got a lot of people out of the U.S.S.R. before this meeting was ended as a price for our agreeing to the end of the meeting. They agreed to let Sharansky out, except Sharansky wouldn't accept the terms. He has that in his book. He reports on the fact in his book of how he made his decision not to accept the terms. Well, that was an act of courage on his part.

So you have confrontation on ideas; you have confrontation on ideology; you have confrontation on national interests. Now, why was I trying to get an "ought"? Because as a matter of fact as human beings, we have a keen interest in avoiding war. Do the Russians or did the Soviets accept the premise that we had more in common in achieving stability than in advancing their ideology? I didn't know. All I knew was that I had to make that effort. I had to make that presentation, and I had to do it at all levels. I did it on the personal level. I knew this K.G.B. fellow was close to Andropov after Brezhnev died. I knew that, because I got biographical material on each of these people.

Now, when 1985 came along, that was the arms business, that was the crystallization, and I had no doubt in my mind that if we could get the kind of political understanding in the "ought", we could do something about the arms. Arms to me were not the cause of the problem. Arms were what nations resorted to because they have the problem.

Q: It was the manifestation rather than the cause.

KAMPELMAN: The manifestation. So we had to be pressing for those changes. Now that, of course, ties in with 1985, but before we go to 1985, let me say that you may know that even after I left the government in January 1989, the State Department called me back five times. Three times for a month each and twice for a week each. This was always associated with the Helsinki Final Act. He dropped me notes saying, "You've got

to take this month's assignment. You are Mr. CSCE." Except for the first one which I simply refused to take, because I couldn't, I took them all and I did all of these things.

Now, what we were doing was establishing an "ought" and now let me take trade union experience, which was direct. One of the three meetings we had, and I think it was the Moscow meeting in 1991, dealt with conflict resolution.

Q: This was the Moscow meeting on the CSCE.

KAMPELMAN: We were beginning to see the manifestations of conflict. How do you resolve them? What does CSCE do to resolve them? And I was guided primarily by trade union experience. This I have no doubt about. Indeed, I used to explain it on the basis of American trade union experience. Not easy to explain! Let me tell you what I had in mind. I said, "We have the process of mediation. I looked upon it as a step even prior to conciliation. Getting the parties to talk, so that you at least came to some kind of an understanding of the issues, and that's what CSCE can perform. If the parties agree, you get a CSCE person to come in, and no fact-finding, no judgment rendering. 'Just tell me what's on your mind and tell me what's troubling you.' And to the other side, 'Tell me what's on your mind. Tell me what's troubling you. What are you trying to achieve?' And seeing whether that mediator can clarify [the issues], bring them together. There are times when one side cannot make a concession without saying, 'I really didn't want to do this, but the international community was there and putting pressure on us, so we had to do it.' We don't have such a mechanism," I explained. "You need this mechanism."

So I remember the first draft I got back from the drafter in the group who was an Austrian. It said, "Fact-finding Mission." I said, "No, no, no, no, no. I don't want any fact-finding. Here's why. There is an argument. He threw the rock first. No, he shot first. So you come up with saying what was the fact and immediately you have declared one of the parties to be a liar. I don't want to do that," I said. "You later want to do that, but the first step has to be getting the parties to understand the issues and seeing if you can come up with a creative idea which permits both of them to get what they want."

"You've got to have a second step ready. Why? Because the parties have to know that the second step is going to be a little tougher and they may not do as well." I explained all of this. "So you move it to the second step afterwards, which maybe is fact-finding. And you keep moving it up, up to the point of [being] judgmental." That was clearly trade union experience.

Interestingly enough I found it difficult for the Europeans to accept this.

Q: Because they have nothing parallel to it.

KAMPELMAN: They don't have that same thing.

Q: There are many things that they have that we don't have, for instance the acceptance of the union which is much more prevalent in Europe than here, but the idea that you have to have a step at which, before you start arguing the facts, you find out the relative concerns of the parties, that is a [new concept].

KAMPELMAN: And give them a chance to explain to somebody else what they are worried about.

Q: Incidentally, this is what Bill Usery in his present occupation does. He enters a situation in which both labor and management have agreed that he should come in to explore the issues, and then before long he is the mediator at their joint request.

KAMPELMAN: At their request. Sure.

Q: Very interesting. This is . . .

KAMPELMAN: Europe has far to go yet in this area. I blame ourselves too for this. The United States isn't pushing CSCE procedures on a high enough level. The rest of Europe doesn't understand its utility. And it requires sending somebody in with prestige and capacity. We are not doing that.

Q: Again the parallel to what Usery is doing. His prestige permits him to enter into delicate situations.

KAMPELMAN: Of course.

Q: Do you have any candidates for a prestige person in the diplomatic field?

KAMPELMAN: Oh, of course. I have a lot of them. At the Secretary of State level, the United States has regrettably not understood the utility of the CSCE in advancing American interests, except for George Shultz preliminarily. CSCE is a bona fide presence of the United States in Europe. We are not strangers, we are participants in this. We are not from across the ocean, we are part of this process.

Q: Why the "preliminary" for George Shultz? He too has the labor-management background.

KAMPELMAN: Of course. And I am not only talking about conflict resolution, but sure he understood this very clearly. This I did discuss with him. We are not involved yet in this process.

Q: Incidentally Shultz is one of the former Secretaries of Labor I am most anxious to have [participate in the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project] who has not yet agreed [to be interviewed], because he is busy with his book.

KAMPELMAN: Have you written to him?

Q: I've written to him. Ray Marshall, Bill Usery, and John Dunlop have agreed to be interviewed, and we are negotiating the dates, but Shultz has not yet replied to my letter.

KAMPELMAN: You've written to him?

Q: Oh, yes.

KAMPELMAN: Why don't you send a copy of the letter to Charlie Hill at the Hoover Institution and say you are doing that at my suggestion.

Q: Oh, good. Thanks very much. Okay. I'll get that connection from you later. Well, this is very interesting what you've said so far, and I wonder if you could follow that up, if you wish, with any other examples that you have.

KAMPELMAN: Well, we moved then, of course, to the bilateral negotiations on nuclear arms. At the first press conference that I had in Washington after being appointed head of the negotiating team. . .

Q: This would be January 1985?

KAMPELMAN: 1985. I don't remember the month of the press conference. It might have been January or February. But at the first press conference I had, I explained to the press that I did not believe that you could deal with reductions until you had political understandings, that the crises were not created by the existence of the weapons. It was the existence of the crises that created the weapons, so that governments felt an obligation to defend their security and their values. "And since," I said, "there has been no reasonable alternative to the use of armaments that's been presented as the ultimate defense, this is where they go. So what we must do is advance the political understanding between the parties, all of which would then produce the reductions. But we will have a bona fide effort to see if we can reduce these arms, because we have too many now anyhow, even for our security needs. We have more than we need."

But that negotiation continued and began. And ,again, you have to start from the premise that a bad treaty is worse than no treaty. Difficult for a negotiator. Why? You get applause when you have an agreement. If you don't have an agreement, it's looked upon as a failure. Yet it might be your greatest success. And this is what the press and normal public opinion judge. This is the criterion. So that the negotiator feels under pressure to come up with a piece of paper. And a number of times I had to make clear to my delegation that's not what we're about. It has to be in our interest, in addition to which we have the safeguard that I knew that every word in our treaty was going to be looked at carefully by critics of the treaty, like Malcolm Wallop and Alan Simpson and Jesse Helms and others who would look at it very carefully. So we had to make sure we could

defend everything we were doing. This care with detail is something we in America are accustomed to in the trade union movement too, because . . .

Q: The contract.

KAMPELMAN: The contract. The contract is a piece of paper that is carefully examined, gone over, and scrutinized by lawyers.

Q: More than lawyers. You know these guys at the machine shop, especially the skilled ones, they always got the agreement in the back pocket and they look at it carefully.

KAMPELMAN: The back pocket and they look at it carefully. That also is something that is involved in this process. Taking it seriously, the fundamental threshold that had to be crossed, therefore, was an understanding on the part of the United States that the Soviet Union was prepared to accept certain fundamental bases and premises, and I suppose an understanding on the part of the Soviet Union that their image of the United States required some alteration as well. The first summit between Reagan and Gorbachev went very far toward producing that. This was held in November of 1985. It took place in Geneva and I know that Reagan came back saying. . . -- like Margaret Thatcher had said publicly, when she said, "I can do business with him." -- . . . Reagan came back feeling that this was not a Communist who was seeking world domination, that this was a Communist preoccupied with his own country and its economic interests and its own ideology, but not expansionist.

Q: Was it an accident of fate that at just this juncture comes in the guy Gorbachev, who could do that?

KAMPELMAN: Yes, I think it's accident.

Q: But I should tell you that a couple of nights ago I saw on C-SPAN, the presentation at Princeton in March of a group of people including Bessmertnykh (?), Shultz, Nitze, and some others in which the representative of the Soviet Union, who I believe was a general, described from the notes he had of the discussion within the Politburo of Gorbachev coming back and saying in effect, "This is a guy we can do business with no matter what he said about the evil empire."

KAMPELMAN: I had evidence of that, because when a few weeks later the Geneva negotiations reconvened, Victor Karpov, who was the head of the Soviet Delegation, took me aside to say, "Max, I want you to know I have instructions from Moscow not to attack Reagan at all." So that fits in with what you are talking about.

So we had the beginnings of some kind of a fundamental [understanding]. Gorbachev made a speech in September of 1985 to the United Nations, in which he called for the elimination of nuclear arms by the year 2000. It was a very effective propaganda speech. The question came up what about Reagan's speech which was to follow, I think, the

following month. I was in Geneva and I received a request from I think it was Bud McFarlane asking me whether I had any ideas about this. Apparently there was a discussion in Washington about it. I responded by saying I did not think that we should get into a competition by saying let's make it 1999. That was not constructive. I felt that what we ought to be doing was not even trying to compete at that level but to point out the significance of the problems that led us to take arms and to talk about Afghanistan and to talk about violations of human rights and to talk about the nature of the Soviet Union as the problem and that these had to be dealt with, in which event then obviously we have to go reducing arms as quickly and as expeditiously as possible, once the political situation permits it.

Interestingly enough the President opted for those of us who were taking this latter position. If I recall correctly, he came out with four major items including Afghanistan and human rights and bilateral problems we had as well as arms. Let me say to you that those four items became the agenda for the first summit and those four items were the agenda for every single summit and every single meeting between Shultz and Shevardnadze, which was interesting. So that they accepted this premise even though their propaganda was the year 2000, they accepted this premise. Anyhow, this was the basis which led us to proceed in our negotiations.

You know, if I could go back for a moment to Madrid [and make a comment] which ties in here, at one point in 1982, I think, I told George Shultz that I thought we were going to get what we wanted in Madrid in the papers, in the words. I also said to him that I was not satisfied with what we wanted any longer. I wanted to get some people out, because I couldn't defend words any longer alone, but I would feel better and could defend myself before the Congress if a single human being got out, although we wanted to go for more than that. "Well," he said, "You saw the President a few weeks ago." He (Shultz) had been in Asia at the time and so he wasn't along. "Did you mention this to him?" I said, "No, I didn't for a couple of reasons. One, it was not as evident to me, but also there were a lot of people around, and I didn't want to get involved in that situation." So he picked up the phone and he called the President. He said, "Max and I would like to see you."

So we went right over to see the President. And I said to George Shultz, "What I don't know is: Does the President want an agreement with the Soviets? I think we are going to get what we want. Does he want it?" So he said, "Ask the President." So we went and he said, "Max had a question." And I asked the President. And he said, "Sure, what is it? If it's a good agreement, I want it." I described the agreement, then I told him I wanted more things than paper, and we had a full agreement on this. But it's interesting that Reagan did want some "oughts".

Q: Now, what about the elements within the government that felt on this zero sum game thing that if they agree to it, we can't agree to it, because it must be to their advantage.

KAMPELMAN: Yes, there was some thinking about that, and I was not totally free of that myself. That's why I was so careful about it, but the fact of the matter is there were

some. I think most of that came from the Defense Department. There was an assumption that you could not trust them, and if it was in their interest to sign, it was probably not in our interest to sign.

All right. I felt that only made it more difficult to negotiate, but it made it desirable that we ask the proper questions. I wasn't troubled by that. I became troubled at the point of irrationality which did inject itself, namely on provisions that were clearly in our interests that the other side was prepared to accept. A feeling, and it existed within the Defense Department, a feeling that: Well, if they are ready to accept it, it must not be in our interests, even though it was in our interests. I couldn't accept that irrationality, and we did have many arguments in front of the President on this question and in front of his national security advisor on this question, but we moved along. We got there; we moved along on that process.

Now, there were people like Ken Adelman, who had serious questions as to whether verification was possible on some highly technical matters. And I will say to you that we had to appear before the Senate Committee saying that we could not be sure about this or that verification, but, and this but was very important to us and to me as a negotiator, assuming they lie, assuming they violated it, we will know it quickly and we are no worse off. On those specific points, I said, "Sure, I am not saying to you that these are men of honor particularly. They may very well violate it, but there is no way for them to violate these particular provisions, and we were specific about them, without our knowing about it. And if we know about it, we then pull out of our responsibilities, so that we are not in a position of being hurt.

What did disturb me is that there was some of this latent when Bush became President. We handled it quite well with the President with Reagan's help in the Defense Department. I want to say one man who helped us very much on this was Dick Perle, because Richard Perle is a sensible, rational fellow. Dick stimulated his staff, I think, to be irrational at times, but I would then sit down with Dick, and we had confidence in one another, and it would become a rational discussion again. Do you see?

Q: Yes, yes.

KAMPELMAN: And he had influence. There were difficulties with [Secretary of Defense] Cap [Weinberger], but there were fewer difficulties when Carlucci came in, and we had a great deal of help from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs [of Staff] Bill Crowe, who was a rational person and looked at things straight, so we were able to overcome the [difficulties]. With the I.N.F. Treaty we still had trouble with some Senators. I think there were something like nine or eleven negative votes. That's not many, but they obviously felt that if it was in the Russian interests to sign, it was not in our interests to sign. That's fine, but the process continued and the process worked.

Now, where I think we were slightly hurt was with the new President coming in. I am convinced that the President and the new Secretary of State Jim Baker could not

understand why Reagan had become so close to Gorbachev, and they wondered whether we were not misreading the developments in Moscow. And I know this frankly because I developed this sense when I was briefing Jim Baker before he took over office. Now, what I have to say is that I am not so sure whether that this was Jim Baker's view or whether this was Jim Baker reflecting conversations he had had with the ten or eleven Senators, . . .

Q: Who might be the problems.

KAMPELMAN: Jim, I think, was a very good Secretary of State, but I do know that the learning period for Bush and Baker delayed things for nearly a year. And when I think of the price we have paid as a result of that delay, it bothers me, because START II has still not been officially ratified. We would today be better off if we were more timely and could have concluded the arms reductions treaties before the Soviet Union disintegrated. They would today be realities with the successor states bound by them.

End of interview