

CHAPTER 3

Return to Mathematics, to Moscow,
and to Washington

After “retiring” in 1966 to teach mathematics at Pomona—and despite continuing to write about the ABM and to lobby Moscow about it—a career as mathematics professor is found to be too dull. Efforts to retool as an economist also fail. A return to Washington permits participation in the climactic ABM debate of 1969.

In the fall, a new U.S. senator’s visit to Moscow leads to the beginning of a surprisingly successful campaign to slow the arms race. In great secrecy, efforts are made to save the life of the daughter of the retired premier, Nikita Khrushchev. Because of related circumstances, the KGB decides that the author works for the CIA—something he learns twenty years later.

I concluded, while in Cambridge, that I should return to teaching mathematics. I did not feel comfortable in political science per se, and I was unable to attach myself to the senior activists. I felt that the Pugwashites had not been preparing with sufficient care for their meetings. A misunderstanding about whether I was invited to a Polish Pugwash conference—which led to my arriving and being bounced—deepened a certain antagonism.^[21]

Accordingly, after the trip to Russia and Poland, I moved to Claremont, California, where I took up a position teaching mathematics at Pomona College while my wife took a full year off to advance her Russian. The climate was ideal, and Pomona had very much the Swarthmore College ambiance I had known as an under-

"EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY"

graduate. My associates in Cambridge believed that I had "retired" from political life. But my interest in the ABM debate continued, and B.J.'s Russian studies signaled our intention to run our own private Pugwash.

By the summer of 1967, B.J. and I had decided to return to Moscow, this time traveling from California to Japan, then by boat to Nakhodka (near Vladivostok), and from there by train to Moscow on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. In fact, the Russians required us to fly from Kharbarovsk on the east coast to Irkutsk. This seemed an effort to prevent us, both Jews, from jumping off the train when it passed through Birobidzhan, an autonomous region that had been set up as an ersatz Jewish homeland and that I had asked to visit.

In Irkutsk, on a boat on Lake Baikal, the KGB tried to set us up with a young girl who was carefully seated next to us. It just happened that she spoke English, was Jewish, had a father who was a journalist, and was the second best chess player in the Oblast. Central casting must have worked hard on this.

On the train for about a week with two female doctors traveling from Khabarovsk to Leningrad for a medical conference, B.J. got a great workout in speaking Russian. I explained Freud to the doctors, who knew nothing of it and found it "dirty."

In Moscow I gave a second lecture at Dom Druzhbi—to a group of people who said absolutely nothing; I concluded that they spoke no English, that the Soviet "system" was just recording what I said, and that the talk's organizer had been unable to drum up a real audience.

I also lectured both at Arbatov's new Institute for the USA and Canada and at IMEMO. By then, I had my second book to hawk: *Strategic Persuasion: Arms Control Through Dialogue*.²² It was especially interesting to meet Arbatov, whom I was to encounter periodically for the next quarter century. He was an enormously interesting addition to the Soviet Pugwashites. He was far more aware of political realities and the political line than the scientists were. He was obviously well connected, as the head of an Institute,

Return to Mathematics, to Moscow, and to Washington

and he was smart.²³ You could be sure he understood what you were saying. For someone like me, who was trying to influence Soviet policy, he was a grand improvement as an interlocutor.

He found himself, of course, in a difficult political situation. Americanologists were as suspect to the Soviet authorities as Sovietologists were to McCarthyites. And the situation in the USSR was, of course, more tense than any of us could fully realize. When Arbatov, in the post-Soviet days, wrote his memoir, *The System*, he related a truly revealing anecdote. The KGB chief, Andropov, invited Arbatov to share a letter, written in a sincere tone, that the KGB censors had seized from a person with whom, in fact, Andropov and Arbatov had good relations. In the letter, the man complained that his (unnamed) superiors were “worthless” and “stupid” and were wasting his energy and time. Andropov was planning to turn the letter over to Brezhnev, who would have assumed that it was referring to Brezhnev himself, even though the general secretary was not mentioned. Arbatov tried to dissuade him. Andropov responded that this would be naive: “I’m not certain that a copy of this letter has not been handed over to Brezhnev already. After all, the KGB is a complex institution, and its chairman himself does not escape its attention. All the more so since there are people who would be delighted to compromise me in the eyes of Brezhnev for having concealed from him something touching upon him personally.”²⁴ Even the KGB chief felt surrounded by the system.

Arbatov managed to stay afloat, however, with everyone watching everyone else. In later years he confided to me that it was he who had prevailed on Gorbachev to limit the president to two five-year terms in the new constitution. When I asked how long he had been running his institute, he said, “Twenty-seven years, but I still have work to do.”


B.J. and I returned from Russia through Eastern Europe and got a clear picture of the enormous variety of living standards from Russia rising steadily to Bulgaria to Rumania to Hungary to Vienna to

"EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY"

London and finally to southern California, where even as an assistant professor I lived in a house with a heated outdoor swimming pool.

The Adelphi Paper and the Specter of Nuclear Weapons Use in Vietnam

At Pomona in 1967–1968, I was teaching a course in arms control besides courses in mathematics, and B.J. was teaching mathematics at Harvey Mudd College. Among the strategists opposed to anti-ballistic missile systems, I had sufficient standing to receive an assignment from the Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS) in London to write a monograph. And this monograph, *The Case Against Missile Defenses*,²⁵ was the most important paper I had prepared on the subject since my 1964 contribution to the Doty group. I eventually distributed about a thousand copies at my own expense to add to those distributed by ISS to its many members worldwide.

The paper attacked the idea that a proposed “thin defense against Chinese missiles should be used as a ‘building block’ for a larger defense designed to neutralize Soviet offensive weapons.” As we shall see, it was, indeed, the Army’s effort to use the “thin” (or “light”) ABM as a building block for a “thick” defense that brought the ABM program to a screeching halt and made the ABM Treaty possible. 

The Adelphi paper was scheduled to appear in the spring, and I decided to carry it personally to Moscow the next summer to make sure it was well read. But before the paper was printed, the specter of nuclear weapons use in Vietnam interrupted my teaching.

On February 15, 1968, in an article in *The New York Times*, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle G. Wheeler, was quoted as saying, “I do not think that nuclear weapons will be required to defend Khesanh,” a city then under siege in Vietnam, but he refused “to speculate any further.”^[26] Two days later, President Johnson went to the El Toro Marine Air Station in San Diego,

Return to Mathematics, to Moscow, and to Washington

purportedly to see some marines off to Vietnam, and, being in the neighborhood, on February 18 he stopped in to see ex-president Dwight D. Eisenhower, then vacationing in Palm Springs.

All my alarm bells went off. Eisenhower considered it a personal triumph that his threats to use nuclear weapons against China had brought about an armistice in the war in Korea. Johnson might think him both willing and able to give national “permission” to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons in Vietnam. This was the moment, I felt, when Johnson would have to fish or cut bait on any possibility of nuclear use, and that might be the reason he was visiting Eisenhower.

I summarized my fears in a memo on February 25, 1968; I mailed my analysis, entitled “A Crime Against Humanity,” to every U.S. senator. Not content with that, I canceled classes for a week and flew to Washington to drive home my point. At the intermission of a play in Washington, I spoke to my friend from Harvard, Morton H. Halperin, then the deputy assistant secretary of defense for arms control and policy planning in the Pentagon (and now the director of policy planning at the State Department). He told me “not to worry.”

Why was he so relaxed about this? Clark Clifford had just taken over as secretary of defense, and, as I learned years later, Mort already knew that Clifford wanted to withdraw from the war, not escalate it. But was Johnson contemplating such use? I am not sure that we can ever know, but I subsequently discovered that senior American scientists shared my concern.^[27]

Third Trip to Moscow

B.J. and I decided, for that summer, to travel to Moscow via Constantinople and a boat through the Black Sea to Odessa and thence by train to Kiev and Moscow. Passing through New York, I attended a small meeting at the Carnegie Endowment that was attended also by the former secretary of defense Robert McNamara.

"EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY"

I had long sympathized with McNamara and his heroic efforts against the bomber lobby and the pro-ABM forces. He had also organized the Defense Department in a rational fashion for the first time in history. And he had been magnificent in handling the Cuban missile crisis. I felt I was in the presence of a giant among men.

Our journey took us to Odessa and Kiev, where we went to visit the dying and repressed synagogues. In the guest book in Odessa, a canny Jew had written a message: "The rabbi assures us, in private conversation, that there is no anti-Semitism in Russia."

In Moscow I offered an apparatchik a hundred dollars if he would have my Adelphi paper translated into Russian and give me a copy. This was done, and I gave a copy of the Russian translation to a startled U.S. embassy.

The whole thing gave me enormous satisfaction. Now, in Russian at least, what was I hoped the definitive work would be read. And the translator said it would be sent to the Ministry for Medium Machine Building, which was known to be the heart of the Soviet military-industrial complex.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia took place that August, while I was in Moscow. Over a lunch at Dom Druzhbi, a young Soviet apparatchik, Aleksandr Bessmertnykh—who rose, two decades later, to be the Soviet foreign minister—gave this astonishing explanation of why he believed this invasion was necessary: "Well, we did a poll, and it showed that 15 percent of the population still preferred capitalism, so we knew we needed more time before we could relinquish control."

After returning home, I got a last-minute invitation to attend a fall Pugwash meeting in Denmark that was specially devoted to the ABM problem. My degree of specialization in this problem had overcome the American delegation's preference for not inviting me. My wife and I returned to Europe for this meeting, but my visits to Moscow now seemed much more important than my individual participation in Pugwash.

Emelyanov was there, always friendly, but he asked a question that

Return to Mathematics, to Moscow, and to Washington

froze my blood. Why, he wanted to know, did the American Pugwash group not include me in more meetings? To me, this question meant, “If you are OK and sincere, that is, not CIA, why do not Bernard Feld, Paul Doty, and the rest invite you more often?”

I rose to the occasion. I recounted the true story of the animal experimenters who had a colony of chimpanzees in a cage with a complicated machine that would produce—if the right buttons were pressed—a banana. The experimenters learned, I told him, two things. If a senior monkey figured out, somehow, how to work the banana machine, all of the other monkeys would stand around, watch, and learn, and soon they, too, would be producing their own bananas. On the other hand, if a junior monkey somehow induced the machine to produce a banana, none of the others stood around to watch, nor did they learn; they just took his banana.²⁸

Emelyanov laughed and said it was the same in the Soviet Union; they would say they wanted new blood, but in the end, they kept waiting to make sure the blood type was right.

“How ya’ gonna keep them down on the farm after they’ve seen Patee” became a popular refrain about American soldiers returning from World War I. And so it was with my effort to return to mathematics. My teaching at Pomona suffered from my lack of interest in preparing adequately for the classes. I spent all my time reading books on China or something else—anything else. I resigned from my position. □

While I was a junior at Swarthmore College, I had won a summer fellowship from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to design “An Experiment in Bargaining Games”; this was an effort to apply psychology to mathematical theories concerning the outcome of certain non-zero-sum two-person games. The results were published²⁹ in the scientific literature, and on the basis of that success, SSRC gave me a first-year fellowship to study mathematics at Stanford on the theory that I would apply mathematics to problems in the social sciences.

Remembering this happy experience, I applied for and secured a

"EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY"

fellowship to return to Stanford to retool as an economist. But studying economics turned out to be, for me, every bit as boring as teaching mathematics.

During this year, in 1969, something totally unexpected occurred that, in retrospect, sealed the fate of the ABM systems and made possible the ABM Treaty banning such systems. It was the lucky break that ABM opponents needed. By complete coincidence, it involved the largely defunct chapters of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), which, a year or so later, I took over as chief executive officer.

In sum, the Army had decided to base the dozen anti-missile sites necessary for a "thin" anti-Chinese defense near major cities, where the system could more easily be bolstered into a "thick" defense. This was a fatal error. FAS chapters began to complain about "bombs in the backyard," and people who would not otherwise have noticed the ABM system decided that it was dangerous.

I remember how embarrassed I was about this argument at the time. In fact, the ABM warheads were not, in my opinion, likely to go off by themselves, and they were not a danger to the cities. But the public reaction was extraordinarily favorable to the anti-ABM cause. I neither fanned this fire nor tried to douse it. In any case, nothing could have stopped it.³⁰ About this time, Senator Edward M. Kennedy joined the opposition, and under his leadership, Senate opponents of the ABM grew from a dozen to thirty-four, on their way to fifty—a development that turned out to be decisive in securing the ABM Treaty.

With the ABM debate in Washington heating up and my economics retooling foundering, I decided to leave Stanford University in February and relocate to Washington. In part, it was because Jerome Wiesner had decided to put together an anti-ABM book to be sponsored by Senator Kennedy. I had telegraphed Jerry an offer of help and been assigned a chapter on inspection techniques.³¹ Some-time around February I tested the waters in Washington without B.J. and, later, asked her to quit her job and join me.

Return to Mathematics, to Moscow, and to Washington

I felt comfortable in Washington. My family had moved there in 1940 when I was five years old. My earliest memory was of a Washington neighbor, a certain naval captain—Captain Willenbucher—coming to the door and shouting to my father, “It’s war!” He had learned early of the attack on the Navy’s ships at Pearl Harbor and had rushed four doors down Nebraska Avenue to tell the neighborhood newspaperman.

I had attended local public schools (Lafayette Elementary School and Alice Deal Junior High School) until age fifteen. In 1950, my father moved to Paris to serve as a foreign correspondent for the now-defunct *New York Daily Compass*. And although I later attended high school in New York and then went off to college and graduate school, I continued to visit Washington regularly, since my parents had moved back in 1952. So I knew the town.

I quickly made contact with the anti-ABM forces, which were then being led by Senator John Sherman Cooper (R, Kentucky), whose chief aide was William Miller, and Senator Philip Hart (D, Michigan), whose chief aide was Muriel Ferris. Together they were moving the anti-ABM Senate forces from some thirty supporters to the eventual fifty.

With the entire scientific community to draw upon, they had experts on the ABM with credentials that far surpassed my own. (The single most effective ABM opponent was Wolfgang K.H. Panofsky of the Stanford University linear accelerator.) But none was living on Capitol Hill. As McGeorge Bundy once wrote in a *Foreign Affairs* article, one of the most important aspects of influence is “being there.” I came to learn, during the following months, how important it was to be on the scene soldering wires and making connections.

Watching William Miller, a real operator and later the U.S. ambassador to the Ukraine, was instructive. He would sit in a back office of Cooper’s suite calling senior scientists, working the press, rounding up other aides of key senators, and, in general, developing a campaign. Three years my senior, he had prior experience as a for-

“EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY”

eign service officer and knew the ropes. I helped him whenever I could and walked the halls serving as an unpaid operative for the anti-ABM forces.

The Problem of MIRV

During my time at Hudson Institute (1962–1964), I learned in a classified document about the possibility that missiles might fire more than one warhead with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRV), which raised the possibility of destroying enemy land-based missiles in a particularly cost-effective first strike. By 1969 MIRV had been well publicized and rightly criticized as a new escalation in the arms race.

In retrospect, MIRV was an enormous assist in persuading the Soviet Union to accept an ABM treaty, since it raised the specter of so many warheads being fired at an ABM system at once as to reduce its effectiveness to zero. This was certainly a major reason why McNamara had approved the development of MIRV. But at the time, we all looked upon MIRV as an unalloyed arms race disaster. As I wrote for the June-July issue of *War/Peace Report*, “In anticipation of the Soviet MIRV, the U.S. is about to buy ABM. In anticipation of the Soviet ABM, the U.S. is about to deploy MIRV. . . . It has been suggested that the political leadership of each major power is simply too weak to seize this opportunity and to respond to this urgency. . . . The question seems to be, will they try?”³²

Not since 1949 had the Senate seen even a close vote on a major military issue. But when, on August 6, 1969, the ABM issue matured, the vote turned out to be perfectly balanced at fifty–fifty. The opposition had grown from twelve votes in 1967 to thirty–four in 1968 to fifty in 1969. Vice President Spiro Agnew broke the tie, allowing the ABM system to go forward. But the administration had been forced to shift its ABM rationale to “bargaining chip” in a negotiation aimed at a no-ABM Treaty. The vote was a perfect outcome for the ABM Treaty pro-

Return to Mathematics, to Moscow, and to Washington

ponents. A win by ABM opponents might have doomed the U.S. ABM system, but at the loss of a bargaining chip in negotiations with the Russians. On the other hand, a big win by the ABM supporters would have left the United States with an ABM system but without a treaty. So this very close result was, in fact, optimal. It represented, after the Bombs in the Backyard debate, the second big break for the ABM Treaty.³³

At the end of the summer, we made another trip to Moscow. There a mathematician friend invited me to a conference he was running in Tbilisi on “large systems.” The paper I had written at RAND on a new way of doing linear programming was vaguely relevant. I used the conference as a pretext to fly to Russia to try, one more time, to lobby the Russians in Moscow into an agreement on banning anti-ballistic missile systems.

The conference turned out to be rather dull, except for a lunch with the famous mathematician Leon Pontrjagin. Blinded by an accident in his teens, he had nevertheless made major contributions to new fields of mathematics, including topological groups. He was considered, along with the American John von Neumann and the Soviet Andrei Nikolayevich Kolmogorov, to be among the three greatest mathematicians of their generation. He was also, regrettably, known as one of the foremost academic anti-Semites in Russia.

Senator Mike Gravel, Democrat of Alaska, and the Exchange Bill

Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska was elected in 1968, and soon after my arrival in Washington in February 1969, I drafted his maiden speech on the floor—an attack on the ABM system. We became friends, and later, on hearing that I would be in Moscow in the fall and that I could show him around, he decided to visit at the same time.

His reaction to the decrepit nature of Moscow confirmed my

"EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY"

view that having politicians visit the Soviet capital would be extremely valuable. On the spot he decided to introduce a bill that would subsidize visits to Moscow by congressmen, senators, governors, and some others. This bill was later introduced with the slogan "Saints and devils thrive on distance."

A subsequent review of two centuries of reports of Westerners visiting Russia confirmed my view that after taking the tour, the hawks would be tranquilized by the poverty and the doves made more vigilant by the lies. In testimony he presented, Gravel took my line that a closeup view of the Soviets would lead the politicians to "trust them less and fear them less."

After Gravel left Moscow, I was asked by an intermediary whether I would meet with Sergei Khrushchev, the son of the retired premier, Nikita Khrushchev; Sergei had a sick sister, Lena, and wanted someone to take a blood sample to America for diagnosis. The disease lupus erythematosus was suspected. We readily agreed, but the blood sample was not ready by the time we left. When it did arrive, we took it from the Soviet Embassy in Washington to Johns Hopkins, to be analyzed there by an expert on lupus, Dr. A. McGehee Harvey.

I had always felt a certain sympathy for Khrushchev, who seemed to me to be a pre-Gorbachev who wanted change. My wife and I decided to arrange a doctor's visit. We told Harvey that we could not fund a suitable medical fee. But if he and his wife wanted a week in Moscow, we could pay for their ticket and the Khrushchevs—who had rubles—could fund the return ticket with payment in their own currency. I asked him to observe medical ethics and not to disclose the family name of the patient. He readily agreed, and he kept his part of the bargain.

The daughter did have lupus and did eventually die. On our return to Moscow in 1970, I learned that Harvey and his wife had been strip-searched by the KGB. But why? The mystery persisted for twenty years, until Sergei Khrushchev wrote his memoir, *Khrushchev on Khrushchev*. In that book Sergei Khrushchev revealed

Return to Mathematics, to Moscow, and to Washington

that he had been stunned at our offer to send a doctor, but Lena's illness was so severe that he appealed to the foreign minister, Gromyko, who telegraphed the Soviet ambassador to the United States, Dobrynin, to provide help and visas. But the KGB evidently thought that my interest in helping the Khrushchevs was linked to an effort by the CIA to smuggle Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs out of the country. (In fact, of course, I knew nothing of the memoir.)

When Sergei took the Harveys to meet his father—without the Intourist guide—the KGB's suspicions were confirmed. Later, at the Harveys' hotel, the KGB pounced and searched everything, taking films and finding nothing. Still they told Sergei that Harvey was a CIA agent—and Sergei apparently partly believed it.

I was falsely accused also. In his memoir Sergei reports that he was told that “Stone and Harvey are veteran intelligence agents” and that he should report any contacts with them to the KGB.³⁴ (Harvey, when told of this twenty years later, advised me “not to worry; when I was in India, people regularly accused me of being a CIA agent.” In fact, Harvey was just America's greatest expert on lupus!)

According to Sergei, many people suffered from this incident, even including “totally innocent people who filled out the Harveys' visa forms in our Washington embassy.” His relations with Yuli Vorontsov—then the minister-counselor at the Soviet embassy (and now the ambassador)—who had turned over the blood sample to me, were broken. The mathematician Revaz Gamkrelidze, who had arranged my meeting with Khrushchev, was no longer allowed to go abroad. According to Sergei Khrushchev's memoir, “nor was Stone particularly welcome in the Soviet Union.”



Premier Nikita Khrushchev with the Russian mathematician Revaz Gamkrelidze on July 3, 1971, in the last photo taken of Khrushchev before his death

"EVERY MAN SHOULD TRY"

(Khrushchev was later told that Stone was an "out-and-out spy" and an "active CIA agent").³⁵

Twenty years later, Sergei Khrushchev wrote to explain why he had released our joint secret in his book ("Now it seems to me, has come a time to reveal secrets") and to thank me ("I am extremely grateful to you for your humanitarian part in the fate of my sister and for your silence in those not very happy years.")³⁶

In retrospect, it seems inevitable to me that persons reaching across the barricades would be accused of being spies—not just on one side but on both. Whole agencies were organized as watchdogs to bark at any unusual sign. In fact, I was admitted to the Soviet Union the next year, in 1970—and again when I applied in 1975. But there were always long waits at the internal border, which in retrospect I assign to the time required for the Soviet system to position someone to follow me around.^[37] (In fact, the only thing I ever spirited out of the Soviet Union was a poem by Evgeny Yevtushenko concerning Robert Kennedy.)³⁸

My fellowship with the Social Science Research Council having terminated in 1969, I had secured an International Affairs Fellowship from the Council on Foreign Relations for 1969–1970. And I had persuaded the council to let me live in Washington and visit New York only for monthly seminars that I would give. This permitted me to continue as arms controller-in-residence on Capitol Hill, which suited me fine. We rented a townhouse within walking distance of Congress, and I prepared to haunt the Hill.