US-Soviet dialogue on nuclear risk reduction

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What is nuclear risk reduction?

- Is decreasing the possibility that nuclear weapons are used, whether deliberately or inadvertently (UNIDIR, 2019)

- Is any action, statement, or agreement, whether unilateral, bilateral, multilateral or omnilateral, which reduces the risk of use of a nuclear weapon (NTI, 2019)
Anti-nuclear movement and nuclear risk reduction

St. Louis Baby Tooth Survey, 1959-1970

Luckless “Lucky Dragon”
Anti-nuclear movement and nuclear risk reduction [2]

Soviet Peace Committee

B. Efimov “No to the nuclear war!”, 1973
Communication is a key

A. Sakharov

IPPNW
Nuclear risks during the Cold War

- Change of the territorial status quo in sensitive areas by military means (escalation)
- Accidental launch
- Nuclear build-up
Nuclear risk reduction policy during the Cold War

Technical measures

• Incidents at Sea Agreement
• ABM Treaty
• INF Treaty
Nuclear risk reduction policy during the Cold War

Political measures

• Hot line agreement
• Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War
• Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War
• Helsinki ”Final Act”
• Reagan-Gorbachev statement
• Establishment of Nuclear risk reduction centers
Was it a success?

The nuclear risk reduction is rooted in the anti-nuclear movements. The American anti-nuclear movement was more active and diverse in comparison with the Soviet one. It could be explained both by cultural characteristics and by general political situation within the country.

By 1970s Moscow and Washington formed a single interpretation, based on which agreements began to be built. Two areas in which the joint work went: technical (practical) measures to reduce the risk of mistakes and political measures of a comprehensive nature (building confidence, reducing confrontation, increasing transparency, limiting the arms race, maintaining strategic stability).

The Cold War nuclear risk reduction policy is a unique phenomenon when two rivalry states could find compromises and common point for cooperation.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!