**PRESIDENT REAGAN AND THE NUCLEAR WAR SCARE OF 1983**

*“I turn back to your ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if, if we’re the generation that’s going to see that come about”* Ronald Reagan October 28,1983

*“If word ever came, that they had pushed the button, yes, we would have had to set all of ours in motion”* Ronald Reagan *1989*

*“We listened to the hourly circuit verification signal and believed we could recognize a release order. Under the conditions when we detected NATO actually preparing to launch, we would want to pre-empt your launch with our own nuclear strikes”* General-Lieutenant Gelii Viktorovich Betenin First Deputy Chief of the Soviet General Staff

**MAD MUTUAL ASSURED DESTRUCTION DETERENT – The rise and fall of Detente**

* C3 + (Command Control Communication) the circulatory system for the transmission and execution of nuclear war orders – only President (or designate) can order nuclear weapon use
* DEFCON LEVELS--five graduated levels of readiness (or states of alert) for the U.S. nuclear military – DEFCON5 is normal lowest – DEFCON1 is nuclear war
* DEFCON2 (2 times) during the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis resolved by Jack & Bobby Kennedy (only other time DEFCON2 is on January 15, 1991, start of the Persian Gulf War)
* DEFCON3 (3 times) during October 1973 Yom Kippur War in Middle East, August 1976, Operation Paul Bunyan with the axe murder of two Americans by North Korea and the September 11, 2001 Terrorist attacks on New York and Washington
* May 29, 1972, SALT Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty Nixon Brezhnev limits number of ICBM’s, a second SALTII was supposed to create nuclear parity, but Afghan War ends that negotiation
* October 31, 1979, Soviet Union invades Afghanistan starting Afghan-Soviet War 1979-1989, Soviets now spending 60-70% on military weapons-Russian queue for food but vodka plentiful
* November 4, 1979, Iran Hostage Crisis-52 US diplomats held in Tehran for a year
* November 4, 1980, US Presidential Race Ronald Reagan charges Pres Jimmy Carter has been weak regarding the Soviets and the Iran Hostages – Reagan wins election over an incumbent President and the hostages are released January 20, 1981 after RR oath of office

**RONALD REAGAN THE COLD WARRIOR**

* President Ronald Reagan (1911-2004), religious mother, credited reading book That Printer of Udells: A Story of the Middle West by Harold Bell Wright at age 11 with inspiring him to be a Christian, saved 77 lives as lifeguard one summer, Hollywood actor, President of Screen Actors Guild (1947-54), First marriage Jane Wyman divorce, second to Nancy Davis, Ambassador for GE, Governor of California (1967-75), “*Rendezvous with Destiny*” at Republican Convention 1964
* January 20, 1981 RR takes Oath of office, March 30, 1981 John Hinckley assassination attempt
* Alexander Haig (1924-2010) Secretary of State *“I am in Control*”, about nuclear football (**heavy metal briefcase containing the communication information and nuclear release codes which allow the president to launch nuclear weapons** & Biscuit (the president must be positively identified by using a special code issued on a plastic card, nicknamed the “biscuit”) – *Dr Strangelove* should not be possible
* RR builds up US Navy, USAF Bombers, new missiles & tanks, seen by Soviets as provocations, a buildup they cannot match
* August 1980 Solidarity (Polish Trade Union) Lech Walesa, Poland is major concern for Soviets
* May 13, 1981, Pope John Paul II Polish, anticommunist shot in Rome by Turk Mehmet Ali Agca
* June 8, 1982 In a speech to the [British House of Commons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_House_of_Commons) RR said *"freedom and democracy will leave* [*Marxism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxism) *and* [*Leninism*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leninism) *on the ash heap of history"*.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash_heap_of_history#cite_note-9)
* November 10, 1982, Leonid Brezhnev dies, replace by hardliner Yuri Andropov (1914-1984) KGB Chairman, who has heart and kidney health problems – YA sees RR as a warmonger planning to attack USSR with nuclear weapons in a first strike, soviet paranoia is increasing
* March 8, 1983, speech delivered by RR to the [National Association of Evangelicals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Association_of_Evangelicals) he referred to the [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) as an "evil empire" and as "the focus of evil in the modern world", this further convinces Soviets of his plan to attack them, official Soviet response is “*Confrontation and bellicose, lunatic anti-communism*”-RR response, *“they are an evil empire and its time to shut it down” –* Christian Crusafe?
* March 23, 1983, The **Strategic Defense Initiative** (**SDI**), nicknamed the "***Star Wars* program**", was a proposed [missile defense](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missile_defense) system intended to protect the United States from attack by [ballistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballistic_missile) [strategic nuclear weapons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategic_nuclear_weapon) ([intercontinental ballistic missiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercontinental_ballistic_missile) and [submarine-launched ballistic missiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarine-launched_ballistic_missile)) – RR did not agree with MAD and wanted a system to defensively protect US – Soviets saw SDI as a way to protect US as it First strike USSR (an offensive weapon)
* March 29-April 17, 1983, FleetEx 83 large Navy exercise in Pacific the purpose of the mission was to intentionally provoke the Soviet Union into responding so that the US forces could study their response, tactics, and capabilities as well as demonstrate the effective operations of a three-carrier battle force

**ABLE ARCHER 83**

* September 1, 1983, due to a navigational mistake made by the Korean Air Lines KAL007 crew the airliner deviated from its original planned route and flew through Soviet [prohibited airspace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibited_airspace) around the time of a US [aerial reconnaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aerial_reconnaissance) mission and was shot down, 269 killed.
* September 26, 1983, Lt Col Stanislav Petrov (1939-2017) Soviet radar showed 5 ICBM launched by US attacking USSR – Petrov made the decision the satellite data was wrong and Soviets stopped their launch, later concluded it was reflection of sun off high level clouds
* October 23, 1983, a suicide bomb truck blew up the Marine barracks in Beirut Lebanon killing 307 marines in the peacekeeping force
* October 25, 1983, US invades island of Grenada in response to civil strife and threat to US citizens
* November 7-11 1983, Able Archer NATO exercise  introduced nuclear tipped artillery and B52 Bombers, several new elements not seen in previous years, including a new, unique format of coded communication, [radio silences](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_silence), and the participation of [heads of government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_government). This increase in realism, combined with [tense relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War_%281979%E2%80%931985%29) between the US and the Soviets and the anticipated arrival of [Pershing II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pershing_II) nuclear missiles in Europe, led some members of the Kremlin to believe that Able Archer 83 was a [***“maskirovka”***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruse_of_war)obscuring preparations for a genuine nuclear [first strike](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-emptive_nuclear_strike)-November 7 was Soviet Holiday October Revolution Day 9 -In response, the Soviets readied their nuclear forces and placed air units on alert & began loading nuclear warheads onto combat planes preparation war

**EPILOUGE**

* February 9, 1984, Yuri Andropov dies of Kidney failure, followed by Konstantin Chernenko (1911-1985) followed by Mikhail Gorbachev (1931- )
* RR hears of scare, amazed, he takes a more conciliatory tone, with Gorbachev, he meets him face to face to ensure no misunderstanding can happen again
* After fall of Soviet Union records showed how close Nuclear War came from Able Archer 83

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