-A Man With A Mission



Max M. Kampelman, head of the U.S. delegation to Arms Control Talks in Geneva, during exclusive interview with our White House writer, Trude B. Feldman, at Kampelman's home. Photo by M. Chamowitz.

By Trude B. Feldman Israelite's White House Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The negotiations are bound by confidentiality from giving interviews on details of their talks. However, Max M. Kampelman, the head of the U.S. delegation, did agree to tell what it's like to negotiate with the Soviets on issues of war and peace.

"The job is the greatest challenge of my life, albeit the most difficult and grueling," Kampelman said in an exclusive interview. "I am direct and firm about the positions I take and I do not mislead. I need to be tenacious if the Soviets

are to take me seriously.'

He was asked what stirs within him as he negotiates with the Russians. "My feelings are that the process is important," Kampelman replied. "The exploration, as to whether improved relations are possible, is of great value. This negotiating process is vital to managing our relations with the Soviet Union and the managing function can be as vital as the particular solution to a specific problem.

"It isn't simply two people talking to each other. I am trying to see what if anything, can reduce tensions. The Soviets are well-trained people with much experience. I, of course, treat them like human beings. They are."

Last January, President Reagan asked Kampelman to lead the three-track negotiating team, which includes former Senator John Tower (R. Texas), who handles negotiations on strategic nuclear arms, and Maynard W. Glitman, a career foreign service officer, who is responsible for intermediate-range nuclear forces. Kampelman's main responsibility is to oversee negotiations on defense and space weapons.

He said that despite personal and professional sacrifices, he took the assignment because he fully appreciates the urgency of the mission and the enormity of the responsibility.

"We have only one president at a time," he said. "I am public-service-oriented, and this is a chance to do my best to help avoid war without losing our values."

Prior to his current assignment, Kampelman

was appointed by President Jimmy Carter, and reappointed by President Ronald Reagan, as ambassador and head of the U.S. delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The three-year conference was held in Madrid from 1980 to 1983, and led to the only significant agreement between President Reagan and the Soviet Union.

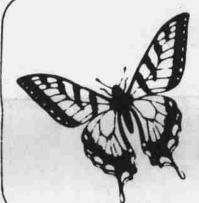
Secretary of State George Shultz said Kampelman had "demonstrated anew the value of patience, firmness and the maintenance of Western unity in East-West negotiations.

"He secured a result in which we can all take pride," Shultz added. "The Madrid concluding document is a major diplomatic and political accomplishment. And Max Kampelman deserves the lion's share of the credit for it -- it could not have been achieved without him. He dominated the interagency policy debate with encyclopedic knowledge and lawyerly skill. He maintained the cooperation of our allies and of the neutral and non-aligned participants with diplomacy and personal warmth. He handled the delicate private negotiations with the Soviets with honor, firmness and good judgment."

The Madrid sessions, Kampelman said, taught him an enormous amount of negotiating strategy. In particular, he learned that patience is the key factor.

"Generally, the Soviets do not get involved in making substantial or serious concessions until the end of negotiations, because they hope we'll make concessions without a requirement to match them," he said. "They want to test our strength and support before they are prepared to set forth concessions. They know that, in the past, our

(Continued on page 17)



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