

the numbers of weapons and warheads, in delivery vehicles, and in ballistic missile throw-weight. Throw-weight was a concept which the Soviet negotiators had never considered to be significant but which the United States considered to be very important.

The United States was also concerned that implementation of the Soviet proposals would prohibit key aspects of the US modernization program while allowing the Soviet programme, which was at a different stage, to proceed; it would allow Soviet deployment of the SS-X-24, SS-25, and the SS-NX-23\*, but might prevent US deployment of the D-5 and the "Midgetman." This seeming inequity needed clarification.

US officials suspected that the new Soviet proposals were designed to further a long-term Soviet goal: the separation of the United States from its European allies, demanding the removal of US systems from Europe while in no way diminishing the threat of Soviet forces targeted on Western Europe.

Another important criterion was verifiability. US negotiators were concerned that some aspects of the Soviet proposals would not be verifiable.

The earlier Soviet pre-condition, that the United States give up SDI research, had impeded progress at Geneva, but there seemed to be some movement on this issue: Marshal Akhromeyev had hinted, in a Moscow press conference, that certain aspects of SDI research were acceptable. Niles argued that the Soviet Union had continued its own strategic defence research for the last 15 years, it believed that strategic defence could work and wanted to be the only country with that capability. The President of United States could not allow such a situation to develop. The United States had experimented with self-restraint, said Niles, in the case of the enhanced radiation weapon (ERW) and in the case of the B-1 bomber under President Carter, but whereas the United States did not proceed with deployment of the ERW, or "neutron bomb", the Soviet Union had such a bomb today. When Carter cancelled the US B-1 bomber program, the USSR did not follow suit. The Soviet Union continued the Backfire bomber programme and immediately moved on to the Blackjack programme — an aircraft which resembled the B-1 and B-1A in many respects.

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\* No longer in the experimental stage, the SS-N-23 is an SLBM deployed on Soviet Delta-class submarines since December 1985.