

Italy and Spain before the Geneva negotiations get underway, including an October visit to Paris by Mr. Gorbachev). In the face of the Soviet wedge-driving campaign, it is notable that Mr. Reagan has so far succeeded in maintaining support in principle from his principal allies for the US project. While reaffirming its view of the "prudence" of conducting research in this area, Canada announced on September 7 that it would not participate as a government in the project, although Canadian firms might do so.

As the London-based *Economist* said, "Most people in the world believe that fewer is better when it comes to missiles and megatons. Most people would therefore be glad that a lever has been found that might push Russia towards lower numbers, and they should not be asking Mr. Reagan to throw the lever away." Indeed all of the scenarios described above, based on the results of SDI research, suggest that it might be possible to put a cap on the nuclear arms race with the help of this new element in a way that would not have been possible without it.

### What lies ahead?

That the Soviet and US negotiators achieved little in their first two sets of talks from March to July 1985 is not surprising for the reasons indicated above. A third set began on September 19, but in reality any hope for further significant progress is now pinned on the Reagan/Gorbachev summit to take place in Geneva in November.

In the meantime, the two sides have traded some proposals, which are not altogether new but are seen as being cast in a somewhat more forthcoming and friendly tone. First, the Soviet declaration on April 7 that they would cease adding to their already extensive inventory of intermediate-range weapons in Europe until after the Summit in November is, as before, a reflection of a status quo which happens to favor the Soviet Union. Secondly, Gorbachev announced a unilateral ban on nuclear weapons testing beginning August 6, the fortieth anniversary of Hiroshima, and continuing to the end of this year. This is another example of Soviet all-or-nothing proposals, rather than aiming simply for a reduction in nuclear tests under adequate supervision, such as might be acceptable to both sides. However, the proposal was sufficiently interesting to catch the personal attention of President Reagan who exclaimed at a press briefing that the US would support such a ban at the right time! The US, on the other hand, offered the Soviets the opportunity to witness an underground test in the United States as a prelude to mutual and expanded measures of international inspection to which the US attaches much importance. In the same vein, an American proposal last September for an exchange of US and Soviet scientists to measure the yield of tests has been ignored by the USSR.

This, then, is the scene prior to the first Soviet-US summit in six years. On it are focussed the hopes of those who seek some sign of progress toward a safer and more peaceful world. □

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