

ceilings on delivery vehicles pose certain problems for modernization, particularly in the case of the United States. Essentially, if a nation deploys multi-warhead missiles the ceiling of 6,000 warheads will be reached much earlier than the ceiling of 1,600 delivery vehicles. To maximize deployments under both ceilings, it is necessary to deploy a considerable number of missiles with one or few warheads. The Soviets will be able to do this as long as they continue to deploy the mobile, single-warhead SS-25. On the other hand, the Pentagon has all but terminated work on the *Midgetman*, having concluded that it is not cost-effective to deploy single-warhead missiles. The disparity between defence plans for cost-effective, war-fighting strategic nuclear forces and those for arms control constraints is a subject of continuing debate within the US administration.

#### *Moscow Agreements*

Although the main business of the Moscow summit remained unsettled, two lesser agreements are of note. First, the leaders agreed to create a nuclear risk-reduction centre to facilitate exchanges of information, of particular value in times of crisis. Second, as a further confidence-building measure, they agreed to provide advance notice of ballistic missile test launches.

#### **ABM DEFENCES AND SPACE WEAPONS**

Prior to the summer of 1987, most discussion of the arms control aspects of President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) concerned the future of the ABM Treaty. Specifically, debate centred on the Administration's announcement in 1985 that it considered the "broad" interpretation of the treaty to be legal, thereby paving the way for the testing and development of "exotic" ABM systems and components. This issue tended to centre the debate both between the superpower signatories of the treaty, and, within the United States, between the proponents and critics of "Star Wars."

During 1987, however, the focus gradually shifted. First, in April 1987 a debate took place within the US administration on possible compromises between the apparently irreconcilable approaches of the Soviet Union and the United States. Paul Nitze, drawing on suggestions made by a number of arms control specialists outside the government, suggested in public speeches that it might be possible to reach agreement on testing limits without entering the debate about the ABM Treaty interpretation. This would require a series of technical agreements, for example, to restrict the size of mirrors in space or the power of lasers. Nitze's suggestion was sharply resisted by the Pentagon, and both Weinberger and then Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle publicly repudiated the approach as an indirect attempt to circumscribe the SDI programme.

The administration itself, however, showed diminishing interest in continuing the debate about the "broad" versus the "narrow" interpretation of the treaty, in part perhaps

reflecting the impact of two congressional resolutions to deny funds to SDI experiments which did not conform to the narrow interpretation of the treaty. In early September 1987, for example, the legal advisor to the State Department, Abraham Sofaer, produced the final part of his report on the ABM negotiating record, but, in contrast to the earlier study supporting the broad interpretation of the Treaty, the September publication occasioned little comment or debate.

Finally, at the end of October 1987 the Soviets also appeared to signal a shift in their position. With the INF Treaty now imminent, both sides had stressed that they were anxious to move ahead with a START treaty. In Washington on 31 October, Shevardnadze placed less emphasis on the need for strict limits to research, and on SDI as a barrier to progress in START, stressing instead the importance of adherence to the ABM Treaty. This was widely interpreted as meaning that the Soviets would settle for an agreement on permissible research, including some experiments in space, broadly compatible with the narrow interpretation of the treaty. Shevardnadze also suggested that the two sides should commit themselves not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for a period of ten years.

These shifts in position were confirmed in the communiqué issued after the December summit. The two leaders instructed their delegations "to work out an agreement which would commit the sides to observe the ABM Treaty, as signed in 1972, while conducting their research, development and testing as required, which are permitted by the ABM Treaty, and not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for a specified period of time."

Although the ambiguous language of this declaration was immediately evident, it suggested that the two leaders did not wish the continuing dispute over ABM defences to stall the pursuit of a START treaty. One objective of the declaration, therefore, appeared to be to frame the problem in less confrontational language. When the Geneva meetings resumed in January 1988, however, it quickly became apparent that profound differences remained. On 15 January 1988 the Soviets tabled a draft protocol to the START treaty which committed both sides to the ABM Treaty for a period of ten years. As agreed at the Washington summit, the protocol also required the parties to begin discussions on strategic stability not later than three years prior to the end of the protocol.

The United States agreed neither to the ten-year commitment to the ABM Treaty, nor to the restriction on research and development implied in the Soviet protocol. On 22 January, the US delegation tabled a four-page draft treaty on "the Cooperative Transition to the Deployment of Future Strategic Ballistic Missile Defenses," which, amongst other things, would have committed the parties to abide by the ABM Treaty for a "specified period of time" (previously US negotiators had suggested commitment to the treaty until 1994). The US proposed to discuss permis-