

offensive arms by one-quarter as an opening move leading to deeper mutual cuts, and a ban on all cruise missiles with a range of over 600 km. The United States had suggested limits of 5000 ballistic missile warheads, 400 heavy bombers, and 850 ballistic missile launchers.

At their 19 to 21 November 1985 Summit in Geneva, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev agreed in principle to fifty percent reductions in their strategic nuclear arsenals, together with effective measures of verification.

On 15 January 1986, General Secretary Gorbachev made a public statement outlining a Soviet proposal to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Reductions would occur in three stages over a fifteen-year period, culminating in a universal accord to prevent such weapons from coming into existence again.

At the second Summit meeting between the two leaders, in Reykjavik, Iceland, on 11 and 12 October 1986, the Soviet Union proposed to eliminate all nuclear weapons over a ten-year period. The United States proposed the elimination of all ballistic missiles within ten years. There was agreement that in the first five years each side would reduce to 6000 their strategic warheads and to 1600 their strategic launchers. The summit talks broke down, however, over the issue of strategic defence, which the Soviets linked to any possible accord on offensive arms.

Some limited progress on the strategic forces issue was made at the 7 to 10 December 1987 Washington Summit. At its close, the superpowers agreed on the following points: a fifty percent reduction in strategic offensive arms; a 6000-warhead ceiling with no more than 1600 intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (ICBMs and SLBMs) and bombers; a sub-ceiling of 4900 ICBM and SLBM warheads; a fifty percent cut in the number of Soviet "heavy" ICBMs to 154, with ten warheads each; a ceiling on the aggregate throw-weight of ICBMs and SLBMs at fifty percent of the Soviet level current at that time; a separate ceiling (outside the 6000 warhead limit) on long-range, nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs); and certain methods of verification of an accord. In addition, the two sides agreed on the "counting rules" for determining how many warheads would be assumed to be carried by each type of ballistic missile.

Some hope existed that an accord could be reached in 1988, though many officials were pessimistic. President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev met in Moscow in late May for their fourth summit, but it was clear some time in advance that a START agreement would not be reached at the meeting. Verification, counting rules and sub-limits continued to be major stumbling blocks on the way to an accord.

The tenth round of the talks began on 12 July 1988 and closed on 16 November. Little progress was reported and a number of critical issues remained in dispute, including:

- the numerical limits on SLCMs, as well as their verification, given the difficulty in differentiating between nuclear and conventionally armed missiles;
- the question of warhead sublimits, with the Soviets willing to agree to the US proposal for an ICBM warhead sub-limit of 3300 only if a sublimit of 3300 also applies to SLBM warheads;