

Still, there have been no negotiations or agreements since 1945 which seek to deal exclusively with naval weapons, especially the large numbers of conventional naval weapons. The large size of the superpower navies and the proliferation of weapons at sea, especially tactical nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered ships has prompted some countries to propose that naval arms control measures be pursued. For a number of years, the Soviet Union has proposed a variety of measures relating to naval activities. These have included confidence-building measures in certain regions such as the North Atlantic and the Arctic, bilateral confidence-building measures between the US and the Soviet Union such as declarations of which naval ships are carrying nuclear weapons, and a separate forum for discussing naval limits. In 1988, the Soviet Union made public details of its naval force deployments as a confidence-building measure. The US has been consistently opposed to naval arms control and has not responded positively to any of the Soviet or other international proposals. Other members of NATO, particularly the UK, have supported the US position.

At the United Nations, the question of naval arms control was before the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) from 1987 to 1990. Work at the UNDC included discussion of possible confidence-building measures, regulations for nuclear-powered ships, and strengthening existing multilateral agreements. A Secretary-General's Group of Experts report on naval arms control in 1985 outlined two objectives for further action. First, effective measures of reducing nuclear weapons at sea and second, developing measures which reduce conventional arms at sea.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of an unchanging negative attitude towards naval arms control on the part of the US administration, there has been discussion of naval arms control within the US government. In April 1988, Paul Nitze, then an advisor to the President on arms control, proposed that the US and the Soviet Union agree to a complete ban on all nuclear weapons based on surface ships. This proposal, however, did not become part of the formal US position.

In response to a Congressional request, in April 1991, the US Department of Defense submitted a report to Congress on naval arms control prospects. The report concluded that naval arms control would restrict the US ability to carry out its global commitments and would be difficult to verify. The Pentagon report did note that confidence-building measures were the most promising naval arms control option, although it came out against a ban on tactical nuclear weapons and limits on submarines. Specific support was given to unilateral measures such as a proposal for the publication of data on the procurement and production of naval weapons.

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<sup>1</sup>Department of Disarmament Affairs, Report for the Secretary-General. *The Naval Arms Race*. Study Series 16. New York: United Nations, 1986.