

sides would consider other issues, of which perhaps the most important was the status of intermediate-range nuclear launchers based in and around Europe. President Reagan, however, wanted not a third round of SALT, but a radically different approach. He called for deep reductions in strategic weapons, to include both launchers and warheads, to be discussed in a new forum entitled the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). At the commencement of these talks, in June 1982, the United States tabled proposals calling for deep cuts in certain categories of strategic forces, but particularly in land-based ICBMs. This provision was aimed at the Soviet SS-18s, which, within the SALT limits, had been MIRVed with 10 warheads, and were believed to be a serious threat to the survivability of US land-based ICBMs.

Apart from the break with the SALT process, the START negotiations were soon complicated by two additional issues. The first concerned intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), and the second the implications of the President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

In 1977 the Soviet Union began deploying a new missile targeted primarily on Western Europe. The SS-20 is a mobile, three-warhead launcher with a range of 5,000 kilometres. Although it replaced older and highly vulnerable Soviet missiles (the SS-4s and -5s), this qualitative improvement in Soviet forces led to considerable anxiety amongst the European NATO allies. As a consequence, and after protracted debates, in 1979 the North Atlantic Council approved a plan to deploy US Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) as a counter to the SS-20s. The decision also stressed negotiation with the Soviet Union on intermediate-range forces. These negotiations began in 1981, but broke down in 1983 when, as threatened, the Soviet Union left the talks following the initial deployments of the Pershings and GLCMs.

Although the ABM Treaty is not strictly connected with SALT II, and even less with the START proposal, since 1983 the SDI research programme and related developments in anti-satellite technology have been viewed by the Soviets as directly linked to the negotiation of arms reductions. Specifically, the question of what research is permissible under the ABM Treaty, and the broader question of adherence to the Treaty, have become an integral part of the negotiations on strategic arms control.

When the two powers finally resumed discussions at Geneva in March 1985, therefore, they confronted a more comprehensive set of negotiating issues than had been faced in either of the preceding SALT negotiations. As a consequence, the Geneva negotiations are conducted in three groups: Strategic Forces, Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces, and Defence and Space Arms.

I. STRATEGIC FORCES

Although the present round of Geneva negotiations adopted a new name when they began in March 1985 — the Nuclear and Space Arms Talks — in respect to strategic forces it effectively continued the START process initiated in June 1982. Together with the INF negotiations, these talks were broken off by the Soviets in December 1983, following the beginning of US deployments of Pershing II and GLCMs in Europe. At the time, relatively little attention was directed towards the proposals on strategic forces. When the present round of Geneva talks began in March 1985, therefore, the US negotiating position on strategic forces was essentially unchanged from the START negotiations.

At the core of the START negotiations lay the US claim that the Soviet Union enjoyed an overwhelming and destabilizing advantage in land-based ICBMs.

Table 1 USSR and US Strategic Forces

USSR	Launchers	% of Total	Warheads	% of Total
ICBM	1,398	55%	6,420	64%
SLBM	983	39%	3,159	32%
Bombers	160	6%	440	4%
	<u>2,541</u>		<u>10,019</u>	
US	Launchers	% of Total	Warheads	% of Total
ICBM	1,005	52%	2,175	19%
SLBM	640	33%	5,632	50%
Bombers	278	15%	3,554	31%
	<u>1,923</u>		<u>11,361</u>	

Sources: IISS, *Military Balance, 1986-87* and *World Armaments and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook, 1986*

As Table 1 indicates, the Soviet Union has developed its strategic forces with a heavy emphasis on land-based missiles, in contrast to the United States, which has emphasized a more balanced triad of forces in which land-based strategic warheads are only about one-fifth of the total force.

Preoccupied with the increasing accuracy and destructive power of Soviet ICBMs, particularly the SS-18s, in 1982 the United States proposed a reduction in strategic warheads to 5,000, with no more than 2,500 on land-based ICBMs. As can be seen from Table 1, this would have meant a much larger than 50% reduction in Soviet ICBM warheads, leaving the US free to keep all or any portion of its own ICBM warheads.