

prohibit only their actual deployment. The Reagan Administration stated that it believed this broad interpretation to be legally valid.

The interpretation of the ABM Treaty has, therefore, become an issue of considerable debate, centring on how ABM systems based on new technologies are dealt with by the Treaty. The key to the debate lies in Article V of the Treaty which states that:

Each Party undertakes not to develop, test, or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based.

Proponents of the broad interpretation maintain that the systems and components referred to in Article V are defined by Article II. The use of the phrase "currently consisting of" as part of the definition of a system in Article II, according to this interpretation, means that *only* systems based on 1972 technology (current at the time the Treaty was signed) are banned. This would mean that systems based on new technology in the basing modes listed were not affected.

The narrow interpretation holds that Article V clearly bans *all* sea-based, space-based or mobile land-based systems and components, whether they are based on 1972 technology or not. The phrase "currently consisting of" was used in Article II only to demonstrate the functional nature of the definition, not to exclude future technologies.

The Soviet Union has stated that it believes the narrow interpretation to be the only valid interpretation of the Treaty. Indeed, until 1985 this was the only interpretation held by the United States. The Soviets have stood by this position at the Defense and Space Talks, insisting that the testing of ABM systems and components must be restricted by the traditional interpretation. The general approach of the United States at the Defense and Space Talks consists of discussing the effects of the relationship between offence- and defence-based systems on the strategic balance, negotiating a smooth transition from an offense-dominated to a defence-dominated military structure, and resolving concerns over possible Soviet violations of the ABM Treaty. Specifically, the United States has stated that it will not conclude any further strategic arms control agreements with the Soviet Union until the Soviets dismantle a radar site at Krasnoyarsk, which Washington insists is a violation of the ABM Treaty.

Both sides have used the 10 December 1987 Joint Statement from the Washington Summit as the basis for an agreement in negotiations that have taken place since. At Washington, they agreed to have their negotiators work out "...an agreement that 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." Intensive discussions on strategic stability were to begin not later than three years before the end of the specified non-withdrawal period. Failing agreement in these discussions, each side would be free to pursue its own course of action once the non-withdrawal period was over. The general wording of the Joint Statement, however, left open the question of the narrow versus the broad interpretation of the ABM Treaty.

At present the United States has not specified a time-period for non-withdrawal, though its proposals from the Reykjavik Summit suggesting that the period last until 1996