

ARMS CONTROL DIGEST



Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START)

■ At their summit in Washington from 30 May to 3 June, Presidents Bush and Gorbachev signed a "joint statement" declaring that the "basic provisions" of a START Treaty had been agreed to, and reaffirming their determination to have it completed and signed before the end of the year. Two of the major outstanding issues had been solved during US Secretary of State Baker's visit to Moscow from 16 to 19 May. First, the US accepted the Soviet preference for 600 km as the range over which air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) would be subject to START limits, in return for Soviet agreement to exempt conventionally-armed ALCMs, including the US anti-radar missile known as "Tacit Rainbow," that are distinguishable from nuclear-armed ALCMs. On the number of nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) with a range of over 600 km, the two sides agreed on a "politically-binding" limit of 880 for the duration of the Treaty (15 years), but in an attached declaration rather than in the Treaty itself.

Further progress on START was announced at the summit, when the two sides agreed on a "sub-limit" of 1,100 on mobile ICBM warheads – a compromise between the initial Soviet proposal of 1,600 and the US preference for 800. The two Presidents also signed a joint statement agreeing to begin follow-on START II negotiations "at the earliest practical date" following the signing of START I.

Pacific Security Initiative

■ In a speech in Victoria on 17 July, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark called for a new "North-

Pacific security co-operation dialogue," to explore the possibility of European-style confidence- and security-building measures for the region. Composed of the US, USSR, the two Koreas, Japan, China, and Canada, the forum would seek "to identify those proposals that have serious merit and to make serious counter-proposals." Mr. Clark mentioned specifically "information exchanges, military manoeuvre notification and Open Skies regimes." Broaching the highly sensitive subject of naval arms control, he went on to say that "if the dialogue on conventional forces in Europe develops into a dialogue on naval forces, the Pacific Ocean is an obvious locus of concern and action." Mr. Clark repeated his proposal in talks with government leaders in Tokyo a week later but reportedly received little support, although the Japanese were said to be considering similar ideas.

Chemical Weapons (CW) Agreement

■ At their Washington summit on 1 June, Presidents Bush and Gorbachev signed a bilateral "executive agreement" to destroy at least eighty percent of their CW stockpiles independent of negotiations on a global CW ban. Under the agreement, at least fifty percent of each country's declared stocks are to be destroyed by the end of the century, beginning in 1992, while stocks are to be reduced to 5,000 tons each (representing an 80% cut in current US stocks) by 2002.

The US had sought Soviet support for its desire to retain two percent of its stocks (500 tons) even after a global CW Convention went into effect, until all CW-capable states had joined it. The bilateral agreement of 1 June commits the parties to reduce their stocks further to a maximum of 500 tons each by the eighth year after a global Convention enters into force, at which time they propose to hold a special conference

"to determine whether participation in the convention is sufficient to complete the elimination of chemical weapons stocks over the following two years."

Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE)

■ Little progress was reported at the CFE negotiations until late June, when agreement was reached on a French-Polish proposal regarding definitions and limits for tanks and other armoured combat vehicles. The Final Declaration of the NATO summit meeting in early July called for the CFE talks to remain in continuous session until an agreement was reached, and for the latter to be followed immediately by further negotiations (CFE II). Most important from the Soviet perspective, it also noted that "a commitment [would] be given at the time of signature of the C.F.E. Treaty concerning the manpower levels of a unified Germany."

Perceived Soviet "stalling" on CFE had been widely attributed to their insistence on limiting German forces prior to accepting a CFE agreement. This critical stumbling-block was finally overcome with the announcement by West German Chancellor Kohl and Soviet President Gorbachev on 16 July that a future unified German defence force would be limited to 370,000 troops, with reductions beginning after CFE I comes into effect. The only other major obstacle to the treaty concerns combat aircraft, particularly the Soviet desire to exclude land-based naval aircraft from the limits. In the wake of the Kohl-Gorbachev agreement, most observers were optimistic that a treaty would be concluded before the end of the year.

Short-Range Nuclear Forces (SNF)

■ At the beginning of May, President Bush cancelled modernization programmes for the Lance short-range nuclear missile and US nuclear artillery based in Europe. At the same time, he pro-

posed and won NATO acceptance of an accelerated timetable for SNF arms control negotiations, calling for them to begin shortly after the signature of a CFE Treaty, without awaiting its implementation as previously stipulated by the West.

In early June, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze announced the unilateral withdrawal of sixty of the USSR's 1,400 tactical nuclear missile launchers in Central Europe, as well as over 250 pieces of nuclear-capable artillery and 1,500 of its estimated 8,000 nuclear warheads there. US Secretary of State Baker welcomed the announcement as "something that we had been seeking for quite some time because the Soviet Union has a significant advantage in these types of weapons." A few days later, a Soviet proposal to begin SNF negotiations even before conclusion of a CFE agreement was rejected by Washington.

At its summit meeting in early July NATO agreed that, once SNF negotiations began, it would propose the mutual elimination of all nuclear artillery shells in Europe.

Short Notes

■ The Budapest round of the Open Skies Conference adjourned without an agreement on 10 May. According to chief Canadian delegate John Noble, the main stumbling-block remained a Soviet refusal to allow overflights of its territory by foreign aircraft. The negotiations may resume later in the year.

■ During their Washington summit, the US and Soviet presidents signed verification protocols to the 1974 Threshold Test-Ban and 1976 Peaceful Nuclear Explosions treaties, which limit underground nuclear explosions to 150 kt in yield. The US had made its ratification of the treaties contingent on a strengthening of their verification provisions, and the agreements will now be submitted to the US Senate for ratification. □

— RON PURVER