

negotiations (23 April 1985), the Soviet Union had suggested a freeze on the nuclear arsenals of both sides. A reduction of strategic 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.

On 30 September 1985 the Soviet Union presented a new proposal calling for a 50 per cent reduction in strategic launchers and a 6000-warhead ceiling, with no more than 60 per cent of the warheads allowed on any one leg of the strategic triad (air-, land- and sea-based weapon systems).

The United States presented a counter-proposal on 1 November calling for ceilings of 4500 on ballistic missile warheads, 1500 on air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), 3000 on ICBM warheads, and 350 on heavy bombers, together with a 50 per cent cut in the Soviet Union's aggregate throw-weight (the total weight that can be thrust over a given range by a ballistic missile). Both sides agreed that reductions would take place over a period of five to eight years.

At their 19-21 November 1985 Summit in Geneva, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev agreed in principle to 50 per cent 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.