

ARMS CONTROL DIGEST



Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

Spring began with reaffirmations of the hope, expressed at the December Washington Summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev, that a START Treaty could be readied in time for signature at the June Summit in Moscow. However, by the end of April, little progress had been made and officials had all but ruled out the signing of a formal treaty at the Moscow Summit.

The joint draft texts of two protocols, one on inspection and one on weapons conversion or elimination, and a memorandum of understanding on data exchange were prepared in time for the Shultz-Shevardnadze meeting in late March. However, according to US Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway, the number of brackets (indicating points of disagreement) was "almost beyond counting." On other outstanding issues, there were the following developments:

- *SLCM verification*: senior Soviet officials have described controls on sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) as the key remaining obstacle to an agreement. In March the Soviets proposed a joint test in the Mediterranean of a "remote-sensing" system to detect the presence of nuclear-armed SLCMs aboard ships. The US refused, on the grounds that such a system "simply won't work";
- *Mobile ICBMs*: the Soviets have proposed a sub-limit of 800 warheads to be carried on such missiles, as compared to continued US insistence on an outright ban. As a means of verifying the numbers of mobile ICBMs, the Soviets

have proposed limiting their operating areas and production, as well as periodically displaying them for satellite observation;

- *ALCM limits*: the US is now willing to attribute ten (rather than six) air-launched cruise missiles to each cruise missile-equipped bomber, for purposes of counting under the overall ceiling of 6,000 strategic warheads. The USSR continues to insist on counting the number actually carried, which, in the case of American aircraft, ranges from twelve for the B-52G to as many as 22 for the B-1B. As for the difficulty of distinguishing between nuclear- and conventionally armed versions of the ALCM, the US has proposed that all existing long-range ALCMs be considered nuclear, while new types of ALCMs incorporate features (so-called "functionally related observable differences," or FRODs) to distinguish between nuclear and conventional versions. Under the US plan, nuclear ALCM-carrying aircraft would also have to have distinguishable features and be kept at separate bases. The initial Soviet reaction to the proposal, made at the April meeting between Shultz and Shevardnadze, was reported as "skeptical."

Considering the slow pace of the negotiations, senior Soviet officials in late April were predicting that a START Treaty would not be signed until after a new American Administration takes over in early 1989.

(See the cover story in this issue of *Peace&Security* for more on the strategic arms talks.)

Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty Ratification

- As the date of the Moscow Summit fast approached, ratification of the INF Treaty signed at last December's Washington Summit ran into some unexpected roadblocks. The US Administration had been strongly urging the Senate to approve the Treaty before the Moscow Summit, President Reagan warning that it would otherwise "put a strain on" that

meeting. Attempts led by Senator Jesse Helms to add so-called "killer amendments" to the Treaty – requiring renegotiation with the USSR – were defeated at the Committee stage. All three Senate committees that have held hearings on the Treaty (Foreign Relations, Armed Services, and Intelligence) voted overwhelmingly to approve it, as did the House of Representatives – a purely symbolic move, as it has no formal role in treaty ratification.

At one point it appeared that Committee chairmen had agreed that the only "condition" to accompany ratification was one which would prohibit the President from reinterpreting the treaty in the future without Senate approval. The condition would be binding on the US administration but would not require Soviet agreement. This issue arose as a result of the Reagan Administration's attempt to "reinterpret" the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972.

In addition, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn, raised the issue of whether the treaty's prohibitions would apply to so-called "futuristic" technologies, e.g., intermediate- or shorter-range weapons that would destroy their targets by means of lasers, particle-beams, microwaves, or kinetic kill, rather than nuclear or conventional explosives. The Administration succeeded in obtaining a letter from Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze affirming that the USSR shared the US interpretation that such weapons were indeed banned. However, this failed to satisfy Senator Nunn who, as late as 29 April was still proposing that an amendment be attached to the treaty for this purpose.

Meanwhile, differences over the treaty's detailed verification provisions arose in April during technical talks between the two countries on implementation of

the agreement. The most important issues were said to be:

- (1) whether Americans would be allowed to inspect structures and vehicles large enough to conceal small rocket stages, but not entire missiles;
- (2) whether inspectors would be allowed access to the entire area within boundaries drawn around Soviet installations, or only to designated buildings within the area;
- (3) whether one side would have a right of veto over the use of certain monitoring equipment at inspection sites, such as cameras; and
- (4) the nature of US inspection rights outside the Soviet missile assembly plant at Votkinsk.

On April 29 Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd announced that he was willing to bring the treaty to the Senate floor on 11 May, provided that the Administration could resolve four outstanding issues: (1) the differences over verification provisions; (2) written clarification from the USSR that the ban applied to futuristic weapons, as well as a more precise definition of "weapon"; (3) the verifiability of a ban on "futuristics"; and (4) an Administration commitment to upgrade the satellite surveillance systems used in verification of the Treaty.

On 8 May Soviet Ambassador Dubinin delivered a formal response to nine separate verification issues raised by the State Department. The next day, after members of the Intelligence Committee had been briefed on the response, they described it as "unsatisfactory." Apart from failing to endorse the US interpretation on every issue, the Soviets had reportedly made entirely new demands, such as the right to inspect old West German Pershing IA missiles stored in the US but not mentioned in the Treaty. As this column was going to press, Senate floor action on the Treaty had been postponed once again, this time with White House approval.