

ness, and the prospect of early implementation. The longer the debate about the freeze continued, the more it looked like the 'traditional' arms control debates it was supposed to circumvent, and the less like a dramatic and creative step forward. In fact, the critics of the freeze disputed both its simplicity and its soundness. It is therefore salutary to note that, perhaps as the homage paid to virtue, the counter-proposals to the freeze, and indeed, President Reagan's official position, also supported the *principle* of the freeze — though at a later point, and after other major arms control negotiations had taken place. The comprehensive freeze, in other words, was pushed off into a distant and indeterminate future.

The doubts and opposition to the freeze can be classified under the following headings:

- concern about the force 'imbalance'
- challenges to verifiability
- the problem of negotiability

1) *The Force Imbalance*

At the time the *Call to Halt the Arms Race* began to gather steam, the American Administration was heavily involved on two fronts in major new weapons programmes. The first part was strategic weapons, where support was given to the B-1 Bomber, the Trident submarine and the MX ICBM. The second front was the INF deployments of ground launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and the Pershing II in Europe. These weapons — a response to the Soviet deployment of the SS-20 — had been agreed to at the NATO Council meeting of December 1979, but only after a difficult and delicate diplomatic struggle within NATO.

Was there a force imbalance at the strategic level which made the MX deployment a prerequisite to any freeze on strategic missile deployments? The Reagan Administration clearly believed so, arguing that there was a 'window of vulnerability' created by the imbalance between Soviet land-based ICBM forces and American land-based ICBMs. Repeated studies since the initial Reagan claim, including the authoritative study requested by the President (the Scowcroft Commission), have recognized a Soviet advantage in land-based ICBMs but not to a degree which was obviously destabilizing. (It is the other way around in other strategic systems, especially sea-based systems). The Scowcroft Commission nevertheless recommended deployment of the MX to help restore a balance in land-based ICBMs, while other studies have, with strong evidence, argued that no such deployment was necessary. There are two points to be drawn from this. The first is that, freeze or not, a major weapons system in an ad-

vanced stage of development (and therefore with much money committed to it) is in itself a serious difficulty to any freeze proposal because there is enormous momentum towards deployment. The second point is that the *strategic* force imbalance was sufficiently disputed that it tended *not* to be cited as a powerful argument against the freeze. As a consequence, emphasis was placed increasingly on the European theatre force imbalance, as the debates at the United Nations demonstrated.

As for the European force imbalance, the vehemence of the West European states has already been noted. Was there a force imbalance in Europe? To illustrate the extraordinary difficulties in providing an answer, the following table reproduces the separate assessments of the United States and the Soviet Union at the Geneva talks.

TABLE 1 1981 INF Balance: US and Soviet Views

| U.S. COUNT | | | |
|---|------------|---|--------------|
| U.S. | | Soviet | |
| Missiles | 0 | SS-20 missiles | 250 |
| F-111 fighter-bombers | 164 | SS-4s and SS-5s | 350 |
| F-4s | 265 | SS-12s and SS-22s | 100 |
| A-6s and A-7s | 68 | SS-N-5s | 30 |
| FB-111s (in U.S. for use in Europe) | 63 | TU-26 Backfire bombers | 45 |
| | | TU-16 Badgers and TU-22 Blinders | 350 |
| | | SU-17, SU-24, and MIG-27 fighter-bombers | 2,700 |
| TOTAL | 560 | | 3,825 |
| SOVIET COUNT | | | |
| Western | | Soviet | |
| <i>U.S.</i> | | Land-based missiles (SS-20s, SS-4s, SS-5s) | 496 |
| Fighter-bombers (F-111s, F-4s, A-6s, A-7s, FB-111s) | 555 | Submarine missiles (SS-N-5s) | 18 |
| Pershing IA missiles | 108 | Medium-range bombers (Backfires, Badgers, Blinders) | 461 |
| <i>British</i> | | | |
| Polaris missiles | 64 | | |
| Vulcan bombers | 56 | | |
| <i>French</i> | | | |
| Land-based intermediate-range ballistic missiles | 18 | | |
| Submarine missiles | 80 | | |
| Mirage 4 bombers | 33 | | |
| <i>West German</i> | | | |
| Pershing IA missiles | 72 | | |
| TOTAL | 986 | | 975 |

SOURCE: *The New York Times*, November 30, 1981, p. A12.