

ARMS CONTROL DIGEST



INF Agreement at Summit

■ On 8 December at their summit meeting in Washington, President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev signed a treaty banning all of their land-based intermediate-range nuclear missiles (INF) – those of a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometres. Under the agreement, shorter-range missiles, with a range of five hundred to one thousand kilometres (SS-23s and SS-12/22s on the Soviet side, Pershing Is on the American) will be destroyed within eighteen months of the Treaty's ratification. Longer-range missiles (SS-4s and SS-20s on the Soviet side, ground-launched cruise missiles and Pershing IIs on the American) will be destroyed within three years. Of missiles currently deployed in Europe and Asia, the USSR will be forced to destroy 857, carrying over 1,700 warheads; while the US will dismantle 429 single-warhead missiles. In addition, West Germany will rid itself of seventy-two Pershing IA missiles designed to carry American warheads. Because missiles in storage are also banned, a total of 1,752 Soviet missiles and 859 American ones will be destroyed in all.

A "zero-option" on longer-range INF missiles had first been proposed by President Reagan in November 1981, but was refused by the USSR and deemed unrealistic by most arms control analysts on the grounds that the Soviets already maintained a large force while the US had not yet deployed any. Last July, General Secretary Gorbachev announced that the USSR would accept the global elimination of both longer- and shorter-range INF missiles. Since that time, negotiations have focused on verification.

As finalized at a meeting between Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in Geneva on 24 November, the verification provisions are unprecedented. All installations where INF missiles have been stored, repaired, based and deployed, as well as one factory on each side producing launchers for ground-launched cruise missiles, will be open to short-notice, on-site inspection by the other side. This includes both US bases in Europe and the bases for Soviet long-range SS-25 missiles where SS-20s have also been deployed. Each side will be limited to twenty such inspections per year during the first three years, dropping to fifteen per year for the next five years, and ten per year for a further five years. Other inspections would be conducted to check the data provided by each side about the current size of its forces, and to "close out" bases from which missiles have been removed. Finally, for a full thirteen years, each side will station inspectors outside one missile production site on the other's territory – in the US case, a Soviet factory in Votkinsk used to assemble both SS-20s and SS-25s; and in the Soviet case, a former Pershing II production plant in Utah.

The agreement has already been criticized from both right and left. Critics on the left point out that it covers only a small fraction of the total nuclear warheads possessed by the superpowers (variously estimated at between three and five percent); that the targets of the missiles to be destroyed can be hit by the longer-range, strategic missiles no longer limited by the Strategic Arms Limitations agreements; and that NATO is already talking of "compensating" for the INF reductions by deploying additional nuclear weapons systems in Europe. Critics on the right – including most of the Republican Party's 1988 Presidential contenders – argue that the verification provisions are still insufficient, given what they consider to be a Soviet

penchant for cheating; and that the withdrawal of the US missiles will weaken Western Europe's security, given the perceived superiority of Soviet conventional forces.

Supporters of the Treaty consider it a historic breakthrough in eliminating, for the first time, an entire class of nuclear weapons; and incorporating the most far-reaching verification measures ever negotiated by the two sides. They hope that the latter will serve as a model for other arms control negotiations, particularly those covering strategic (long-range) nuclear forces.

Krasnoyarsk Visit

■ From 5 to 6 September a group of eight Americans – including three Congressmen, four electronics and military experts, and a journalist – were allowed to tour a controversial Soviet radar under construction near Krasnoyarsk, in central Siberia. The Reagan Administration charges that the radar is for anti-ballistic missile (ABM) battle-management, in violation of the 1972 ABM Treaty; the USSR maintains that it is for space-tracking (unrestricted by the Treaty); and most independent experts believe it is intended for early warning of ballistic missile attack. If the latter, according to the Treaty, it should be located "along the periphery of its national territory and oriented outward." Yet the Krasnoyarsk site is over six hundred kilometres from the nearest border and faces northeast across five thousand kilometres of Soviet territory.

During the visit, the group was allowed to video tape the site and to take more than a thousand photographs. In a report to Congress afterwards, it stated that, because of a lack of hardening against nuclear blast or independent power generation, as well as an inappropriate operating frequency, the probability of the radar being for battle-management

was "extremely low." It could not decide whether the radar was for early-warning or space-tracking (former weapons engineer Anthony Battista judging it as "not very good" for either purpose). However, it estimated that the facility was at least two years from completion, and therefore "not a violation of the ABM Treaty at this time." Other arms control experts maintain that, if indeed an early-warning radar, its location and orientation make it a violation even before being "turned on." However, they agree that it is only a technical violation, without much military significance because of its vulnerability to attack.

Soviet officials have offered to "mothball" the radar if the US does likewise with two similar facilities in Greenland and Britain which Moscow considers (with some backing from Western experts) to be violations of the Treaty. In a letter to President Reagan in mid-September, General Secretary Gorbachev asked him to permit Soviet inspection of the Greenland radar (in operation since June), but was refused. During Secretary of State Shultz's visit to Moscow in late October, Gorbachev announced a one-year moratorium on construction at Krasnoyarsk, while noting that he expected the US to reciprocate with its UK radar. Shultz rejected the idea.

New Talks on Nuclear Testing

■ In Washington on 17 September, Shultz and Shevardnadze announced new talks on nuclear test limits. According to a joint statement, the two sides will begin by negotiating additional verification measures to enable ratification of the 1974 Threshold Test-Ban and 1976 Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaties, which limit underground nuclear testing to a yield of one hundred and fifty kilotons. They