

more accurate, less verifiable weapons. The superpowers would be glad to get rid of two or three “out-worn old Model T’s” and replace them with a “souped-up modern Ferrari”. But this was not going to bring about a safer world.

Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF)

Wolfgang Behrends, the West German Ambassador to Canada, who was another panelist at the Friday morning session on arms control, agreed with Alton Frye that there had been some welcome movement in the Soviet and US positions on arms control. However, he pointed out that there was still a problem with the Soviet definition of strategic weapons, a problem which had been a major impediment to progress over the last fifteen years.

At the beginning of the SALT I negotiations in 1969, the Soviet Union had said that SS-4 and SS-5 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) should not be included in the SALT negotiations because they could not reach the United States and were therefore not strategic weapons. On the other hand, US forward-based systems — for example, US carrier-based aircraft and the F-111s stationed in the UK — could reach the Soviet Union, so they were strategic weapons and must be included. In order to reach an agreement, all of these “non-central” systems were excluded from the SALT negotiations.

This “concession” to the Soviet Union allowed the deployment of SS-20s as a “modernization” of Soviet intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF). The SS-20s, which were not detected by Western intelligence until deployment had begun,* were seen as a grave threat to Western Europe. In response, NATO leaders in 1979 had agreed to the so-called “two-track policy” of negotiating INF talks with the Soviet Union while preparing for the deployment of new US land-based missiles. When the INF talks broke down, the US began installing intermediate-range Pershing II IRBMs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) in Europe.

The essential point, according to Ambassador Behrends, was that Western Europeans viewed SS-20s as “strategic” weapons because they could reach the homelands of their countries. Even the shorter-range SS-21, SS-22, SS-23 missiles could now be described

* The SS-20 IRBM was a derivative of the SS-16 ICBM, a mobile, three-stage missile prohibited under the SALT treaty. The USSR removed one stage, and the SS-16 ICBM became the SS-20 IRBM.