

Nevertheless, early news from the final pre-summit meeting between Shultz and Shevardnadze in Geneva May 11 and 12 indicated that remaining differences between the superpowers had been resolved. Shultz is quoted as saying: "I think when the Senators see it [the agreement] they will see we've answered the questions properly."

Defence and Space Arms

By the beginning of May, no progress had been reported on the critical question of limiting the testing of ballistic missile defences in outer space. Following each of the monthly Shultz-Shevardnadze ministerial meetings, negotiators were instructed to accelerate efforts to draft a joint text of a separate agreement based loosely on the December 1987 Washington summit communique. The problem was then, and continues to be, that the two sides cannot agree on precisely what is permitted by the Anti-ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. In particular, the Reagan Administration has adopted, but not yet put into effect, a controversial reinterpretation of the treaty that would permit unrestricted testing in outer space of so-called "exotic" defences, such as lasers.

The US was reported to have rejected Soviet proposals to carry over the vague language of the December 1987 communique, on the grounds that "reasonable clarity" was necessary to avoid future misunderstandings. At the March ministerial meeting in Washington, the US proposed a number of new ideas on space testing, including exempting space-based sensors from the ABM Treaty and permitting the testing of a limited number of space weapons within a designated "space testing range." However, the latter idea was later reported to have been dropped, in favour of a "less restrictive approach" requiring each side simply to "give the other side notice about the nature of the test after launching a missile carrying test devices."

On 31 March the USSR introduced a detailed proposal on inspection of space launches to verify

a ban on weapons in space. It included provision of advance information to an International Space Inspectorate; the "permanent presence of inspector groups at all sites for the launching of space objects to verify all such objects irrespective of launch vehicles"; inspections at "agreed-upon depots, industrial enterprises, in laboratories and test centres"; and "verification of unannounced launchings from undeclared launch sites through snap on-site inspections."

Early Warning

June-August:	Summer session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Geneva
July 25 - August 5:	CD Group of Seismic Experts' meeting
Before October 2:	Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty Review Conference

As this column was going to press, US officials indicated that they did not intend to present any new proposals of their own at the final pre-summit meeting in mid-May.

Nuclear Testing

Following their February meeting in Washington, Shultz and Shevardnadze called on their negotiators to complete the drafting of verification protocols for the 1974 Threshold Test Ban (TTB) and 1976 Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNE) treaties for consideration at the next ministerial meeting. The treaties, imposing a limit of 150 kilotons on underground nuclear explosions, have never been ratified. The US has insisted that their verification provisions be improved, and last year the USSR agreed to do so in the context of talks looking to a total ban on nuclear testing.

Early hopes that Gorbachev and Reagan would be able to exchange instruments of ratification during the Moscow Summit were soon dashed. On 9 March, the US was reported to have introduced more stringent verification requirements for the TTBT than previously, including a right to on-site observation of all tests over 50 kilotons or, if no tests were conducted above that level, to inspect the two largest tests below 50 kilotons. Each side

would be permitted, prior to detonation, to observe the excavation of holes, placement of canisters, and sealing of holes with approved material.

Another contentious issue concerned whether detailed verification provisions would have to be accepted before, or after, the planned joint verification experiment (described in the last issue of *Peace&Security*). The US believed that the USSR had agreed to the former during the February ministerial meeting, but this was denied

by the Soviets, who preferred to conduct the experiment first and take it into account in finalizing the verification provisions. The March ministerial meeting resolved this issue through an agreement to prepare a joint draft of the TTBT protocol "by the time of the joint verification experiment, to be finalized through the conduct and analysis of the joint verification experiment."

At their April meeting, the ministers approved the text of an agreement on the holding of the joint verification experiment, but noted that a supplement to the agreement still had to be concluded before it and the agreement itself could be signed. They also instructed their negotiators to prepare an "appropriate protocol" to the PNET "for signing at the Moscow Summit."

Naval Arms Control

In a speech to the Yugoslav Federal Assembly on 16 March, Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev proposed that the USSR and US: (1) freeze the number of their ships and "the potential of the[ir] naval forces" in the Mediterranean, beginning 1 July, 1988, and (2) provide each other,

as well as all Mediterranean countries, with advance notice of, and invitations to observe, "the sending of naval ships and military exercises." He also called for "the development by Mediterranean and other interested countries of principles and methods of ensuring the safety of lanes of intensive shipping, especially in international straits," suggesting a conference of Mediterranean states "and other interested countries" to "put all these proposals together, bring them to a system, [and] determine the rational sequence and order of their implementation." The NATO countries have staunchly resisted similar proposals in the past, including recent Gorbachev initiatives on the Arctic and Pacific, arguing that unrestricted naval mobility is essential to Western defence.

A week later, after meeting with US Secretary of State Shultz in Washington, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze revealed that the USSR had called for an international naval conference, initially involving only the US, USSR, UK, and France, to discuss a treaty on reducing naval forces worldwide.

Surprisingly, it was reported in the *New York Times* of 6 April that US arms control adviser Paul Nitze had proposed the abolition of nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles, nuclear depth charges, and nuclear torpedoes, as well as, possibly, nuclear bombs carried by carrier-borne aircraft. His reasoning was said to be that Soviet naval tactical nuclear weapons threatened what would otherwise be the unquestioned superiority of the US Navy at sea. However, strong opposition to the idea was reported from the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, together with doubts that it would ever be tabled as a formal proposal.

According to William Arkin of the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies, each of the superpowers maintains about 2,000 sea-based nuclear weapons, not including submarine-launched ballistic missiles. □

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