

With the launching of another new Trident submarine in May 1986, the Reagan Administration re-evaluated the compliance situation and possible American responses. Reagan announced that the United States would dismantle two older Poseidon submarines, thus keeping the US technically within the limits of the SALT II Treaty. The President stated, however, that the submarines were being dismantled for economic reasons, (the submarines had reached the end of their useful life) and not because of SALT limits. He also indicated that because of continued Soviet violations of the Treaty, the United States would make future force structure decisions based on the nature of the Soviet threat and not on the basis of SALT limits. The next force structure decision for the United States will occur in the fall of 1986 when continued American deployment of air-launched cruise missiles on strategic bombers will take it above SALT limits unless a decision is made to compensate for these deployments.

Current Canadian Position

In a statement to the House of Commons on 23 January 1986 the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, outlined the government's position on treaty compliance:

To deviate from a policy of full compliance is to threaten the credibility, and hence the viability of arms control. Canada firmly supports the regime created by the ABM treaty and the existing SALT agreements on limiting strategic forces...We will continue to urge the parties to these treaties to do nothing to undermine their integrity, but rather work to reinforce their status and authority.²

Responding to the American decision on SALT II in his opening comments at

² Commons Debates, 23 January 1986, p. 10101.