

feasible than a quota)

- a freeze on the number of US bombers deployed in Europe and on aircraft carriers, in exchange for which the Soviets agreed not to include these forces in the strategic count
- a mutual pledge not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for 15-20 years.

In this new exchange several departures from previous negotiating positions are noteworthy. On the Soviet side, the June proposal abandoned the initial attempt to ban all long-range (over 600 km) cruise missiles. The increased ceiling on nuclear charges (8,000) now included both ALCMs and, importantly, submarine-launched cruise missiles. Since the US is committed to the ALCM programme, the Soviet concession on this point was perhaps inevitable. With regard to SLCMs, however, the Soviet position opened a new area of discussion. SLCMs had not figured at all in the US proposal, and only generally (as 'nuclear charges') in the October 1985 Soviet proposal. As a weapon with strategic potential entirely unrestrained by the SALT negotiations (in contrast to the ALCMs, which in SALT II are included in the ceilings for MIRVed launchers), SLCMs offer the opportunity for rapid expansion of the superpower arsenals, and also pose severe problems of verification should they be included in an arms control agreement. By including submarine- but not ship-launched SLCMs, the Soviets offered a first approach to restraining that part of the SLCM development most amenable to existing techniques of verification.

The US response came in August 1986; it was not officially announced but was reliably reported in the US press. In comparison with the November proposal, the major changes were as follows:

- an increase in the warhead ceiling to 7,500, with no more than 5,500 on ballistic missiles and 2,000 on ALCMs
- a ceiling of 1,600 on all nuclear delivery systems, including a sub-ceiling of 350 heavy bombers
- a limit of 3,300 (up from 3,000) on land-based ICBM warheads
- an acceptance of mobile ICBMs, subject to satisfactory negotiations on verification procedures.
- a limit of 50% of land-based warheads on SS-18s, on missiles with more than 6 warheads, and on long-range mobile missiles (in the Soviet case, the SS-24 and SS-25).

It will be noted that the proposal did not address the issues of SLCMs, which, in the US scheme, still remain outside the negotiations. While approaching the Soviet figures in terms of overall warheads and the land-based sub-ceiling, the US negotiating position once again reflected its concern with counterforce-capable Soviet ICBMs: the land-based sub-ceiling (50% of 3,300) was

aimed directly at the most modern Soviet ICBMs, particularly the SS-18, but also the new SS-24s, each of which is thought to carry 10 warheads. From the US viewpoint, acceptance of the sub-ceiling would possibly eliminate the Soviet capability to double-target all US missile silos with highly accurate warheads; from the Soviet viewpoint, however, it was unlikely to be accepted since it cut into the most modern part of the Soviet strategic forces while leaving intact the most accurate US forces (the land-based MX and the Trident D-5 SLBM).

On mobile missiles, there was a clear shift in the US position. Since the Soviets had begun deployment of the SS-25s, the proposed ban on mobility could hardly have been appealing to the Soviet negotiators. However, following the proposed ban on mobility in its November 1985 package, the Reagan Administration came under severe pressure, particularly from Congress, which continued to assert strong support for the Midgetman, a terrain-mobile small missile considered by many to be the solution to the problem of ICBM vulnerability. While conditioned by the insistence on verification, therefore, the US response offered the possibility of a compromise on the issue of mobile ICBMs.

Reykjavik

The discussions at Reykjavik must be treated with care since some ambiguity persists about the precise nature of the proposals made. In the case of strategic forces, however, attention focussed initially on an agreement to reduce all strategic forces by approximately 50% over a five-year period to an equal level of 1,600 delivery vehicles and 6,000 warheads. Soviet statements indicate that Gorbachev proposed an across-the-board reduction of forces "taking into account the historically-formed features of the parties' strategic forces," while US statements emphasized the need for a specific ceiling on Soviet ICBMs.

Thereafter, there was a major difference of opinion. US spokesmen claim that, in the second five-year phase, only ballistic missiles would be further reduced to zero. Soviet statements, supported in part by released segments of the discussions in which Reagan spoke of 'nuclear weapons', claim that, in the second phase, all strategic nuclear delivery systems were to be eliminated. Subsequent assessments clearly indicate that the Reykjavik discussions became more confused and, on the US side, more unplanned as this subject unfolded. In particular, as subsequent comment indicated, the proposal to eliminate all ballistic missiles in a ten-year time frame had been approved neither by the NATO allies nor by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and has since dropped quietly off the arms control agenda of the United States.

However, at Reykjavik both the complete elimi-