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Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II

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Strategic Arms Limitation Talks I

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I) resulted in a treaty limiting antiballistic missile (ABM) systems and an agreement limiting strategic offensive arms. These talks were signed on May 26, 1972, after two and a half years of negotiation between the United States and the USSR. A number of “agreed statements” that clarified specific provisions or parts of the negotiating history were attached.

The ABM Treaty sought to preclude the development of national missile defense systems. This treaty is of unlimited duration but allows either party the right to withdraw on six-months notice if it believes its national interests are jeopardized.

Two ABM deployment areas were allowed for each nation and were so restrictive that a nationwide ballistic missile defense system could not be developed. Each side was allowed a system to defend its capital and another to protect an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launch site. These systems must be at least 1,300 kilometers away from each other, and each could have one hundred interceptor missiles and one hundred interceptors. New generations of early-warning radars may be deployed, but they must be sited along the periphery of each country and directed outward so as not to facilitate an ABM defense.

As agreed, the ABM Treaty is reviewed every five years.

A protocol to this treaty was signed on July 3, 1974, reducing the number of ABM deployment areas to one for each nation. The ABM Treaty was criticized by conservatives in the United States for terminating the Safeguard ABM system, which was to be deployed in twelve locations throughout the United States to protect ICBM sites, and for erasing the U.S. lead in ABM research and development. It was further criticized for encouraging the Soviet Union to create a counterforce capability that threatened U.S. land-based deterrent forces.

The agreement was to remain in force for five years, and was a stopgap measure to limit the offensive strategic arms race while further negotiations would be carried out under SALT II. Under this agreement, strategic land-based ballistic missile launchers, including those under construction, were frozen at current levels. Further, submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) could be increased to greater levels only if accompanied by the destruction of an equal number of older ICBM or SLBM launchers. Soviet strategic force ceiling levels were set at 1,618 ICBMs and 950 SLBMs (740 then existed). U.S. strategic force ceiling levels were set at 1,054 ICBMs and 710 SLBMs (656 then existed).

Although mobile ICBMs, multiple-independently-targetable-reentry-vehicle (MIRV) ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers, of which the United States enjoyed an advantage, were not covered in the Interim Agreement, it was criticized for conceding to the USSR an advantage in strategic ballistic missile launchers in return for the continuation of East-West arms control negotiations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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SEE ALSO Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks II

Second stage of strategic arms limitation talks (SALT II) between the USSR and the United States. The primary focus of these talks was the replacement of the SALT I Interim Agreement of May 26, 1972, with a more complete and balanced treaty.

These talks resulted in the signing on June 18, 1979, of a Treaty, Protocol, and Joint Statement of Principles that were never ratified by the U.S. Senate. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that year, President Jimmy Carter withdrew the treaty from Senate consideration, where it had come under considerable opposition. The Reagan administration, in turn, never resubmitted the treaty because of Soviet violations, such as the Krasno-
yarsk radar site and the development of the SS-25 ICBM, and growing tensions as the Cold War heightened.

The treaty would have provided for an initial overall limit of 2,400 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles for each nation and a limit of 1,300 multiple-independently-targetable-reentry vehicles (MIRV) carrying ballistic missiles. The protocol would have banned the deployment of air-to-surface ballistic missiles (ASBMs) and ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs and SLCMs) with ranges in excess of 600 kilometers, while the Joint Statement of Principles would have provided for subsequent SALT III negotiations.

Still, the SALT II accords were observed by both the USSR and the United States on a voluntary basis until May 1986, when President Ronald Reagan announced that the United States would no longer be bound by its ceilings. In the meantime, a new round of arms control negotiations had already been initiated by the Reagan administration in July 1982 under the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START I).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SEE ALSO Strategic Arms Limitation Talks I; Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

Arms control talks (START I) between the USSR and the United States that replaced the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT). These talks were carried out from June 1982 until July 1991, resulting in the Treaty Between the United States and the USSR on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.

These talks were initially conducted by the United States with the goal of reducing large numbers of Soviet multiple-independently-targetable-reentry-vehicled (MIRVed) intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), while at the same time keeping intact U.S. submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and air-launched-cruise-missiles-(GLCM)-based strategic forces. Soviet delegates countered these proposals with their own demands, which included a total ban on all long-range cruise missiles. These talks were broken off by the USSR in November 1983. They resumed only in March 1985, under the bilateral Nuclear and Space Talks forum, after an easing of tensions over U.S. basing of ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and Pershing IIs in Western Europe. The START I Treaty was finally reached on July 31, 1991. The Russian Federation, Republic of Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan—four successor states of the former Soviet Union—became parties to this treaty with the signing of the Lisbon Protocol in May 1992.

In this treaty an agreed limit of 1,600 “deployed” strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVs) and 6,000 “accountable” warheads (that is, warheads on the SNDVs) was set. For these warheads, limits were set at 4,900 for deployed ICBMs/SLBMs, 1,100 for deployed mobile ICBMs, and 1,540 for deployed heavy ICBMs. Reductions to the agreed upon limits were to take place in three phases over the course of seven years. The treaty itself would be in force for fifteen years, at the end of which an option for extension exists.

The first phase of reductions took place no later than thirty-six months after treaty entry into force and witnessed a lowering of SNDVs to 2,100 and warheads to 9,150 (of which only 8,050 could be deployed on ICBMs/SLBMs). The second phase of reductions was slated to take effect no later than sixty months after the treaty’s entry into force and would achieve a lowering of SNDVs to 1,900 and warheads to 7,950 (of which only 6,750 could be deployed on ICBMs/SLBMs). The third phase of reductions would take place no later than eighty-four months after the treaty’s entry into force and represents the target numbers agreed upon in this accord. Separate agreements to this treaty limited SLCMs with ranges above 600 kilometers at 800 for each nation and limited Soviet Backfire bombers to 500.

Three major criticisms of the START I Treaty exist. First, it fails to take into account immense Soviet ICBM/SLBM reload capabilities (i.e., strategic SNDV reserves). Second, the lack of parity between Soviet and U.S. SNDVs was not given consideration. The Soviet ICBM force was far more lethal than its U.S. counterpart, yet both sides’ ICBMs were counted equally. Last, the concept of “accountable” warheads deployed on SNDVs is flawed. Photoreconnaissance suggests that the Soviet SS-18 force, which represented most of the Soviet’s ICBM throw weight, was capable of being outfitted with additional warheads per missile in violation of treaty terms.