NUCLEAR FREEZE: ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS

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There is growing concern amidst the public in general and within Congress about the size of the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union and the future of strategic arms control. Numerous localities across the nation have passed resolutions calling for an immediate end to the strategic arms race, and in favor of renewed efforts to achieve a new arms control agreement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., especially as SALT II remains on the calendar in the Senate without plans for further consideration.

Many Members of Congress have introduced resolutions intended to achieve the same or similar ends, some of which have attracted significant support in both Houses including S.J.Res. 212, which passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on June 9, 1982, and H.J.Res. 521, which passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee on June 23, 1982. The full House considered H.J.Res. 521 on Aug. 5, 1982, and voted not to accept the original language, which would have called for an immediate negotiated freeze, voting instead in favor of substitute language in favor of a freeze after the U.S. and U.S.S.R. have sharply reduced their strategic forces to equal levels. President Reagan had endorsed a proposal similar to that approved by the House as part of his call for reductions in nuclear forces. Also, on May 9, 1982, the President revealed his two-stage START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) proposal. He called for reductions, during the first phase, of ballistic missile warheads to equal levels at least one-third below current levels, with no more than half of the remaining warheads to be landbased. The second phase provides for equal ceilings on other elements, including ballistic missile throwweight.

Heightened public and congressional concern, and the various proposals themselves, raise the following questions:

-- What are the reasons for this growing concern?
-- What effect might a freeze have on the defense budget and on the budget deficit?
-- What are the possible effects on President Reagan's strategic force modernization program?
-- What are the possible effects on the capabilities and survivability of U.S. strategic forces and on the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance?
-- Could a freeze be successfully monitored?
-- What are the possible effects on the U.S. negotiating position in Strategic Arms Reduction Talks?
-- What are likely Soviet reactions?
Strategic arms control has been an ongoing process since the beginning of the SALT negotiations in 1969. The first fruit of these negotiations was the so-called SALT I agreement (1972), in reality a dual agreement consisting of: (a) the ABM Treaty, which, with its associated 1974 protocol limits the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to one anti-ballistic missile system each with 100 launchers; and (b) an Interim Agreement, which set ceilings on the aggregate number of ICBM and SLBM launchers for both powers (1,710 for the United States; 2,348 for the Soviet Union).

SALT I was controversial, in and of itself, in terms of the negotiating techniques used by the Nixon Administration, especially by Henry Kissinger; the disparity in the number of launchers in favor of the Soviet Union (offset by a U.S. advantage in warheads because of MIRV -- Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles -- technology employed by the U.S.); and subsequent issues surrounding Soviet compliance and U.S. verification.

Despite these issues, both powers entered into a second phase of negotiations, which resulted in the SALT II treaty, signed in June 1979. Unlike its predecessor agreement, SALT II set ceilings on the overall inventory of strategic arms (2,250 launchers, which would have reduced Soviet launchers significantly, U.S. launchers minimally), as well as sublimits in specific categories of weapons -- overall numbers of launchers and MIRVed ballistic missiles. Also, SALT II included restrictions on qualitative improvements in strategic systems.

Although considered by the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services
Committees, SALT II became embroiled in other issues, including the presence of a Soviet brigade in Cuba and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This last issue proved to be most significant, as it led President Carter to ask the Senate to suspend consideration of SALT II pending resolution of the Afghan situation. This suspension has continued since President Carter's request in January 1980. The SALT I Interim Agreement had expired before the negotiations for SALT II were complete, but the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. declared they would continue to abide by its terms. After the U.S. suspended consideration of SALT II, it stated publicly that it would not take actions which would prejudice future compliance with SALT II as long as the Soviets exercise similar restraint. The Soviets are also reported to have adopted a similar position on SALT II, although they have not made any public declarations concerning their compliance.

The Reagan Administration came into office highly critical of SALT II, and has not requested that the Senate resume consideration of that agreement. However, it has not changed U.S. policy concerning compliance with SALT II. At the same time, the Administration has not resumed negotiations with the Soviet Union, although the President has announced a different tack, renaming the talks START -- Strategic Arms Reduction Talks -- thus emphasizing reductions rather than limitations. However, the Administration is widely perceived to have taken a long time to complete its preferred negotiating position before resuming the talks, which the President now hopes to begin by the end of June.

The Administration's delay in announcing a strategic arms control proposal left a void that proponents of a nuclear freeze in both Congress and at the grassroots level sought to fill. Congressional action on the nuclear weapons freeze issue intensified in March 1982, with the introduction of a myriad of freeze-related resolutions, the most well known being S.J.Res. 163 (Kennedy-Hatfield) and S.J.Res. 177 (Jackson-Warner). The House counterparts of these resolutions are H.J.Res. 433 (Markey) and H.Con.Res. 297 (Carney), respectively.

The Kennedy-Hatfield resolution calls for an immediate freeze on the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. The Jackson-Warner resolution calls for a freeze at "equal and sharply reduced levels." President Reagan has endorsed S.J.Res. 177. The basic difference between these two resolutions is the perception of the strategic balance they embody. Advocates of the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution believe there is rough parity, therefore now is the time to initiate a freeze. Conversely, proponents of the Jackson-Warner approach believe the Soviet Union has advantages in key areas that must be rectified before a freeze is enacted. In addition to these two resolutions, there are many resolutions which are variations on the freeze idea, resolutions which call for specific reductions, as well as resolutions calling for compliance with or ratification of SALT II.

Congressional Action

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on these resolutions during the end of April and beginning of May, and reported out an original joint resolution, S.J.Res 212. This resolution commends the Reagan START proposal, and calls for sharp reductions to equal levels of ICBMs, SLBMs, and their warheads. It also calls on the U.S. to refrain from undercutting SALT I or II. The new resolution passed the committee by a vote of 12-5 on June 9, 1982. This resolution does not mention a "freeze," and has been
interpreted as favorable to the Administration.

In September 1982, the Subcommittee on Separation of Powers of the Senate Judiciary Committee issued a report on S.J.Res. 212, in which it found "that the proposed resolution is an unconstitutional exercise of congressional power" and that it "should be rejected by the Senate."

On June 23, 1982, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed an original joint resolution, H.J.Res. 521, by a vote of 28-8. This resolution urges that START result in a "mutual, verifiable freeze on the testing, production and further deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles, and other delivery systems," and then proceed to "substantial, equitable and verifiable reductions." The resolution also states that the U.S. "shall promptly approve the SALT II agreement provided adequate verification capabilities are maintained."

On Aug. 5, 1982, the House debated H.J.Res. 521. Opponents of the resolution offered substitute language in favor of sharp reductions in U.S. and Soviet strategic forces to equal levels followed by a freeze. The House voted 204-202 to accept the substitute language, and then voted 175-229 not to recommit the resolution to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Finally, the House passed H.J.Res. 521 as amended, 273-125.

Reasons for Growing Public and Congressional Concern

The initial impetus for congressional nuclear weapons freeze initiatives has come from a grassroots movement which has grown dramatically over the past several months. The main force behind this movement appears to be a growing realization of the dangers of nuclear war and a belief that the likelihood of such a war is increasing, perhaps related to the absence of strategic arms negotiations.

The roots of the nuclear freeze movement in the United States can be traced to Massachusetts, where Randall Forsberg, founder and director of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies, wrote a memorandum in 1980 entitled "Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race," which has become the fundamental document of the freeze movement. The memorandum puts forth a freeze proposal, calling on the United States and the Soviet Union to freeze the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. This has become the basis for various freeze resolutions adopted across the country.

The freeze movement has spread significantly since initial referenda were passed in state senatorial districts in western Massachusetts in Nov. 1980. According to the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign's National Clearinghouse, organized freeze efforts are ongoing in 50 states and a majority of congressional districts. Numerous New England town meetings, various city councils and seven state legislatures have passed freeze resolutions to date. Freeze resolutions were on 28 State or local ballots in Nov. 1982, winning in 25 of them.

In addition to the general concern over the effects and likelihood of nuclear war, other concerns have apparently played a role in the freeze movement. One is the size and scope of President Reagan's defense build-up, which represents the largest peacetime defense increase in real terms, and specifically marks funds for an array of strategic improvements or modernizations. Some critics find these plans incompatible with sincere arms
control efforts. Concern has also been expressed by some over comments by members of the Administration about limited and survivable nuclear war. Finally, some concern has also focused on the size of the defense budget versus curtailed domestic programs, and also the potential relationship between defense spending and the large estimated Federal deficit.

A final factor which may have influenced the U.S. movement is the recent wave of anti-nuclear demonstrations in Western Europe. While these demonstrations were largely against the deployment of intermediate range nuclear forces in Europe, the general concerns were similar, and there may have been some spill-over effect in the United States.

Effects on the Defense Budget and the Budget Deficit

As noted, concern over the size of the proposed defense budget ($258 billion Total Obligational Authority, $215 billion outlays for FY83, with a 5-year projection of $1.6 trillion) and the large projected deficit are factors which may be prompting support for some of the freeze/moratorium proposals. Some proponents argue that if the strategic component of the defense budget were eliminated by a freeze this savings could be translated into a direct reduction of the budget deficit for FY83. The Reagan Administration now calculates that FY83 deficit to be around $101.9 billion; the CBO baseline projection is $182 billion.

However, the FY83 request for budget authority for strategic forces is $23.1 billion, of which at least $14.47 billion would be affected by a freeze. Thus, for FY83 the savings within the defense budget, or as a sum free to be applied against the deficit, would be significant but quite limited. The amount of money freed up by a freeze would be substantial over the course of the entire Reagan strategic modernization program. The total projected cost, FY82-FY87, would be $180.2 billion (in constant FY82 dollars), not all of which would be affected by a freeze.

Effects on the Reagan Strategic Force Modernization Program

On Oct. 2, 1981, President Reagan announced a program to modernize and upgrade U.S. strategic forces. The overall purpose of the program is to overcome perceived vulnerabilities and shortcomings and to improve the survivability of U.S. forces, thus maintaining their capability as a deterrent. There are five major elements to the program: manned bombers, MX basing, command systems (C3), submarines, and strategic defense. [For more detail see MB 81254: The Reagan Plan for U.S. Strategic Forces: Issues for Congress.]

Of these five elements, for at least three -- manned bombers, MX basing and submarines -- growth and modernization would be suspended by the proposals for a freeze. Some strategic defense programs involving nuclear weapons would also be included. President Reagan opposes the proposals for a freeze at current levels, arguing that this would deny the U.S. any opportunity to close the "window of vulnerability" (discussed in next section). The proposal which the President has endorsed, H.Con.Res. 297 (Carney), S.J.Res. 177 (Jackson-Warner), would implement a freeze only after mutual reduction to equal levels, allowing the U.S. to pursue these new strategic programs pending the outcome of negotiations. Critics note that at the same time the Soviet Union would also be free to continue its strategic arms growth, thus making reductions more difficult. However, given the
President's endorsement of this proposal it would appear that the freeze concept itself has become less of a debating issue than the sequence of implementation, i.e., freezing now and then seeking reductions, or freezing once reductions are achieved.

Elements of the Reagan strategic program have also encountered opposition in Congress not related to arguments on freeze proposals. On Mar. 23, 1982, the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces voted 9-0 not to fund manufacture and silo deployment of the MX missile until the Administration decides on a suitable basing mode. The full committee endorsed this position on Mar. 29, 1982. Other programs, such as the B-1 bomber and two Trident submarines, may also face some congressional opposition.

**Effects on U.S. Strategic Forces and the U.S.-Soviet Balance**

Much of the debate over the various freeze proposals centers on the perceived strategic vulnerability of the U.S. and the nature of the current strategic balance.

The most often discussed term is the "window of vulnerability," i.e., the vulnerability of U.S. strategic forces based on certain Soviet strategic weapons capabilities. The exact meaning of this vulnerability has become uncertain in recent weeks. The usual description of the "window" is that the Soviet MIRVed ICBMs present the danger of a potentially successful Soviet first strike against U.S. ICBMs, while leaving the Soviets with a sufficient second strike or residual forces to deter a U.S. counterattack. Critics of this perception have countered that even in such an instance the U.S. would have sufficient residual forces -- manned bombers and SLBMs -- that could retaliate against Soviet targets. Those who feel that the "window of vulnerability" is a credible threat respond in turn that these remaining U.S. forces do not have the accuracy of ICBMs to attack hardened military targets, leaving the U.S. in the position of having to attack Soviet cities rather than military targets, inviting Soviet retaliation in kind. The main concern is perhaps less over an actual Soviet attack than that this capability could be translated into political leverage against the U.S. and its allies.

However, in his press conference of Mar. 31, 1982, President Reagan stated that the Soviet advantage lies in their ability to absorb a U.S. retaliatory strike and then strike at the U.S. a second time. This is a different formulation than the first strike concern, and has prompted criticism, even from some who give credence to the "window of vulnerability" hypothesis.

There is no definitive solution to the vulnerability issue, which remains, in part, a perceptual argument. Furthermore, asymmetries in the U.S.-Soviet force structure make direct comparisons difficult. In broad terms, the U.S. has current advantages in ICBM accuracy, potential SLBM accuracy with the Trident D-5 missile, and in the total number of warheads. The Soviet Union has an advantage in the total number of launchers, particularly ICBMs with large throwweights (i.e., the amount of payload the missile can carry, roughly translatable into a larger number of warheads), overall throwweight capabilities and the related number of MIRVs per ICBM, and megatonage (total destructive power) in their ICBM force. The Soviets also have an advantage in that their force has been modernized more recently, which could be important in a freeze as it would mean that U.S. systems would be more susceptible to uncertainties brought on by aging. A freeze at current levels would make more permanent these relative advantages and disadvantages. Given
the fact that each of the freeze proposals is dependent on successful
negotiations, the chance of implementing a freeze before reductions depends
on the willingness of both parties to accept the advantages and disadvantages
of the current asymmetrical balance. Similarly, a freeze after reduction
would have a greater chance of success if both powers were willing to accept
first force structures of more comparable composition.

Monitoring a Freeze

An important concern in all arms control proposals is the ability of the
parties involved to monitor compliance successfully. Monitoring is the first
technical step in the verification process.

To a certain degree verification requirements have been as much a
determinant in the shaping of arms control agreements as they have been
safeguards after implementation. SALT I, and to a large extent SALT II, set
limits on the number of launchers rather than weapons as the deployment of
launchers is more easily monitored and counted by national technical means.
However, the major freeze proposals would also include limitations on the
production and testing of weapons as well as their deployment. This imposes
monitoring requirements far beyond those under SALT I and II.

Of the three major attributes being frozen, deployment is presumably the
easiest to monitor and adequately verify by national technical means, given
the types of noticeable activity associated with weapons deployment. Testing
of entire systems (i.e., launch, separation of RVs and their reentry), is
also readily monitored. However, testing at the component level has been and
remains a serious problem, although component testing does not allow the same
confidence in the reliability of a weapon system to be achieved. Therefore,
while monitoring is more difficult, the potential for a military threat
arising from undetected component testing activity is also lessened. Some
problems could be encountered in ambiguities between military missiles and
missiles used for peaceful, i.e., scientific, purposes.

Production, regardless of the level of reliability of the system, is also
difficult to monitor, especially if the weapons are not moved to launch sites
or are produced near launch sites. This could be a potential problem with
Soviet SS-17 and SS-18 missiles, which are "cold launched," i.e., in which
the missile is fired above the silo, thus leaving the silo reusable for a new
missile. However, the time required for a successful launch, reload and
second launch remains in dispute.

One suggested means around some of these monitoring problems has been
on-site inspection (OSI). This concept has often been resisted by the Soviet
Union and would need to be worked out in detail. ACDA Director Eugene Rostow
has already expressed interest in "cooperative measures" in connection with
the Reagan Administration's approach to strategic arms control, which
emphasizes reductions rather than limits. Thus, it can be assumed that
either major variant of the freeze proposals would impose new monitoring and
verification requirements, some of which may fall short of adequacy in
certain respects, or have, in the past at least, been unacceptable to the
Soviet Union.

Effects on U.S. Negotiating Position in INF and START

The United States is already engaged in talks with the Soviet Union on the
reduction of intermediate range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe and hopes to begin START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) in the summer of 1982. Administration officials have expressed concern that these various resolutions will adversely affect these negotiations. This argument is made on two grounds. First, some major freeze proposals would include INF and strategic forces, thus combining those two talks and, according to the Administration, adding to their complexity. (Two other resolutions, H. J. Res. 443 (Zablocki) and S. J. Res. 171 (Percy), specifically call for the strategic arms and INF talks to be combined.) Second, the Administration argues that the proposals for a freeze first limit the flexibility of the U.S. position in any negotiations, in part by giving the Soviet Union an idea of what Congress is most likely to accept, or perhaps by encouraging the Soviets to appeal directly to Congress and the U.S. public during the course of negotiations. Administration spokesmen point out that there can be no similar pressure effectively exerted on the Soviet government.

A third argument advanced by the Administration is the need to proceed with the strategic force program while also pursuing negotiations in order for the U.S. to have as strong a negotiating position as possible and to give the Soviets incentive to negotiate. As noted, this position has been attacked by advocates as fallacious, and some critics argue that building weapons as "bargaining chips" wastes resources or makes reductions more difficult.

Soviet Reactions

The Soviet Union has welcomed the rise of the nuclear weapons freeze movement in the United States. Since the introduction of the Kennedy-Hatfield resolution in March, the Soviet press has given extensive coverage to the freeze movement. The two main themes of this coverage have been praise for the proponents of an immediate nuclear weapons freeze and criticism of the Reagan Administration for rejecting this course. The Soviets cite disagreement with the Administration's "militarist" policies as the driving force behind the freeze movement: "In a matter of six months this idea has gained immense popularity among ordinary Americans, who are seriously alarmed by the militarist hysteria being whipped up by the White House." [Izvestia, August 24.] The Soviet Union portrays itself as the ally of the movement: "the Soviet Union is in the vanguard of the peace movement." [Izvestia, June 10.]

Soviet criticism of the Administration on the freeze issue was especially sharp after the House defeated the freeze resolution on Aug. 5. The Soviet news agency TASS, on Aug. 7, commented on the outcome of the vote:

As is known, the Reagan Administration has, by raw political bargaining, undisguised scare tactics and blackmail, succeeded in getting the House of Representatives to vote down that document [freeze resolution] and adopt a resolution in support of its unconstructive position at the Soviet-U.S. talks on limiting and reducing strategic arms.

The Soviet Union has not officially endorsed any specific U.S. freeze resolution, but has put forth its own freeze proposal. Soviet President Brezhnev first announced the Soviet proposal in a May 18 speech to the Komsomol Congress:
It is...very important to effectively block all the channels for the continuation of the strategic arms race in any form. This means that the development of new types of strategic weapons should be either banned or restricted to the utmost...

We would be prepared to reach agreements that the strategic armaments of the USSR and the U.S. are frozen already now, as soon as the talks [START] begin. Frozen quantitatively. And that their modernization is limited to the utmost...

An Aug. 19 TASS release summarized the reasons for Soviet support of a freeze:

The mutual freezing of nuclear arsenals would be an important first step in stopping the nuclear arms race. This would rule out the possibility of the building up of nuclear armaments and create favorable conditions for the speediest adoption of effective decisions to reduce and limit nuclear arms.

Although the Soviet proposal called for a freeze at the time the START talks were to begin (June 29), the start of those talks has not hampered Soviet calls for a freeze. The Soviets are still concerned about the Reagan rearmament program and, therefore, are still seeking "a freeze on nuclear weapons while the talks are in progress." [Moscow World Service, July 1, 1982.]

LEGISLATION

H.J.Res. 521 (Zablocki et al.)
States that START should result in a "mutual verifiable freeze" on testing, production and deployment, followed by "substantial, equitable and verifiable reductions," and that the U.S. approve SALT II. An original resolution, passed by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, 28-8, June 23, 1982, and reported July 19, 1982 (H.Rept. 97-493). Amended so as to favor sharp reductions in U.S. and Soviet forces to equal levels followed by a freeze, 204-202; and then passed, 273-125, Aug. 5, 1982.

S.J.Res. 212 (Percy)
Commends President Reagan's START proposal, and states that a new arms control agreement should "sharply reduce" numbers of missiles and warheads; that U.S. should not undercut SALT I and II; and suggests mutual confidence building measures. An original resolution, passed by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 12-5, June 9, 1982, and reported July 12, 1982 (S.Rept. 97-483).

(Only those bills on which some action has been taken are noted here. See printed Appendix for a tabular comparison of the various legislative proposals.)
HEARINGS


REPORTS AND CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENTS


At head of title: Committee print.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

11/02/82 -- Freeze resolutions won in 25 out of 28 jurisdictions where they appeared on ballots.

09/22/82 -- Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Separation of Powers issued a report finding S.J.Res. 212 to be unconstitutional and recommending it not be passed by the Senate.

08/05/82 -- House voted 204-202 to amend H.J.Res. 521 in favor of sharp reductions of U.S. and Soviet forces followed by a freeze, and then voted to pass the amended resolution, 273-125.

06/23/82 -- House Foreign Affairs Committee approved, 28-6, H.J.Res. 521, calling for a "mutual verifiable, ...substantial, equitable and verifiable reductions," and approval of SALT II by the United States.
06/09/82 -- The Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported out an original joint resolution, by a vote of 12-5, commending President Reagan's START proposal, calling for reductions to equal levels of missiles and warheads, and asking the U.S. not to undercut SALT I and II. The resolution does not mention a "freeze."

05/13/82 -- President Reagan said the United States would not undercut "existing strategic arms agreements" as long as the Soviet Union did the same.

05/18/82 -- Soviet President Brezhnev responded to President Reagan's START proposal by welcoming the desire to negotiate but criticizing the specifics of the proposal. Brezhnev proposed a U.S.-Soviet freeze on strategic weapons to take effect "as soon as the talks [START] begin."

05/05/82 -- President Reagan proposed a two-step reduction of strategic nuclear forces: (1) reductions of ballistic missile warheads to equal levels, with no more than half of the remaining warheads to be land based; (2) equal ceiling on other elements, including ballistic missile throwweight.

03/31/82 -- President Reagan called for reductions in nuclear arms and endorsed the Jackson-Warner-Carney freeze proposal.

03/16/82 -- President Brezhnev offered a moratorium on deployment of Soviet medium-range nuclear missiles in the European part of the Soviet Union.

11/18/81 -- President Reagan announced his "zero-option," calling for the elimination of all intermediate-range nuclear forces from Europe.
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**APPENDIX**

**COMPARISON OF ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS - 98TH CONGRESS**

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<td>H.Con.Res. 24 (Neal)</td>
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<td>H.J.Res. 13 (Zablocki)</td>
<td>All testing, production &amp; deployment of nuclear warheads, missiles &amp; other delivery systems</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Substantial &amp; equitable, via numerical ceilings or annual % or other means</td>
<td>Incorporate START &amp; INF negotiations</td>
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<td>H.J.Res. 34 (Neal)</td>
<td>All testing, production &amp; deployment of nuclear warheads missiles &amp; other delivery systems</td>
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<td>Substantial &amp; equitable via numerical ceilings or annual % or other means</td>
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<td>Reagan Strategic Arms</td>
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<td>Reduction in two phases: (a) ballistic missile warheads to equal levels at least 1/3 below current levels (to approx. 5000), with no more than 1/2 (2500) on ICBMs, with a total of 850 ICBMs and SLBMs; (b) equal ceiling on other elements of strategic forces, including ballistic missile throw weight</td>
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<td>INF</td>
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