

War and had earlier that year announced its intention to deploy a "thin" antiballistic missile system (ABM) to counter an identical system around Moscow. The ABM systems brought sharply divided views on the possible effects on the nuclear arms race. Threats raised by development of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and the ABMs set up in defense of them finally caused the opening of the first round of SALT talks in Helsinki, Sweden in November 1969.

Soviet and American weapons systems were far from symmetrical. The USSR, which had lagged behind the U.S. in ballistic missiles, caught up during the years of SALT negotiations. Its landbased ICBMs rose from around 1,000 to 1,500 and were deployed at a rate of some 200 annually. Soviet submarine based launchers had quadrupled. The U.S. had not increased its deployment of strategic missiles since 1967 — that year its ICBMs numbered 1,054, and its submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) 656 — but it was conducting a vigorous program of substituting single-target missiles with MIRVs, which were multiple warheads loaded onto individual missiles and aimed at separate targets. One SLBM submarine armed with MIRVs was capable of destroying every major city in the Soviet Union. MIRVs gave the U.S. a lead in numbers of warheads and it retained a lead in longrange bombers, still in use as nuclear weapons carriers.

The U.S. had also shifted from its earlier plan for a "thin" ABM system of certain American cities and was deploying ABMs around two landbased missile sites. The full U.S. program called for 12 ABM complexes. The USSR had only a limited ABM curtain around Moscow.

Defense perceptions and commitments of the superpowers differed considerably. The U.S. was involved in several webs of overseas treaties, which included Western Europe, Southeast Asia and Japan, while the Soviet Union's allies were its near neighbors, captive to the Soviet realm since the end of World War 2 (the so-called 'Warsaw Pact'). These circumstances made it difficult to equate specific weapons or categories of weapons, and in defining overall strategic equivalence.

Two initial disagreements nearly shackled the talks. The Soviets sought to define as "strategic" any U.S. or Soviet weapons system capable of reaching the territory of the other side. This would have included U.S. forward-based systems, chiefly short-range or medium-range bombers on aircraft carriers or based in Europe, but would have excluded, for example, Soviet intermediate-range missiles aimed at Western Europe. The U.S. position was that weapons under negotiation comprised intercontinental systems, and to accept the Soviet approach would jeopardize its alliances. The Soviets then sought to restrict negotiations to ABM systems, maintaining that limitation on offensive systems should be deferred. But the U.S. said it was essential to at least begin the process of limiting offensive systems.

After two and one-half years of such haggling, the first round of SALT finally ended May 26, 1972 when President Richard Nixon and General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev signed the ABM Treaty and Interim Agreement on Strategic Offensive Arms.

The basic provisions of each SALT 1 agreement differed in their duration and inclusiveness. The ABM Treaty was to be of unlimited duration, yet each superpower could withdraw on six months notice if it decided its interests were compromised. The Interim Agreement was for a five year span and covered only certain major aspects of strategic weaponry.

The ABM treaty specified that each of the belligerents could have only two anti-missile deployment areas, which were subsequently reduced to one area apiece. This was to be so restricted and so located that neither superpower would be able to provide a nationwide missile defense or form the basis of developing one, which left penetration of offensive missiles into either virtually unchallenged. The intent was to limit development of nuclear weapons specifically designed for deployment against ABM systems. The Soviet Union chose Moscow, which was already curtained, as its ABM site, and the U.S., which originally planned to protect Washington, D.C., selected instead an IBM site in North Dakota.

At each ABM site there were to be no more than 100 interceptor missiles and 100 launchers for those missiles. Both parties agreed to not develop, test or deploy ABM launchers capable of launching more than one interceptor at a time or modify existing launchers for this capability, and systems for rapid reload of launchers were also banned. Interceptor missiles with more than one warhead were taboo. Early warning radars were not forbidden but were to be located only along the territorial boundaries of each superpower and pointed outward so as to not contribute to an effective ABM defense of the interior.



ROBERT ARNESON

The second SALT 1 accord was the Interim Agreement on the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons, which was confined in duration and scope and intended to remain in force only five years. It was a holding act designed to complement the ABM treaty by restricting competition in offensive strategic arms and provide time for further negotiations, which culminated in the SALT 2 talks. The Agreement essentially froze the number of strategic ballistic missile launchers, operational or under construction, at existing levels on each side. It also permitted an increase in submarine missile launchers up to an agreed level for each party only with the dismantling or destruction of a corresponding number of older ICBMs or SLBM launchers, conveniently allowing for development of newer generations of missiles and launchers by scrapping obsolescent ones.

The SALT 1 treaty was signed in Moscow, May 26, 1972 and entered into force on October 3 that year. At the date of signing the U.S. had an arsenal of 1,054 landbased ICBMs with none under construction. The Soviet Union had an estimated 1,618 operational and under construction. Neither superpower was to start construction of additional fixed landbased ICBM launchers during the five year period of the Interim Agreement, but mobile ICBMs were not covered. The Soviet Union held that since neither side had such systems a freeze should not apply, and opposed banning them in the future. The U.S., however, was concerned about verification and wanted them banned.

A year after SALT 1 an Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War was signed by Nixon and Brezhnev in Washington, D.C. The U.S. and USSR promised to make the removal of the threat of nuclear war and the use of nuclear weapons an "objective of their policies," to practice restraint in superpower relations and toward all other countries, and to pursue a policy toward stability and peace. The agreement basically covered two areas:

The first outlined general conduct of the superpowers toward each other and toward third countries regarding the avoidance of nuclear war.

The second was the agreement of both superpowers to consult with each other in case of nuclear confrontation either as a result of policies toward each other or of problems elsewhere in the world. These consultations were to be communicated to the United Nations. Article VI stipulated that nothing in the agreement would affect formal alliances or "the inherent right of countries to defend themselves."

Six months after SALT 1 was signed talks began on SALT 2. The purpose was to replace the Interim Agreement with

a long-term comprehensive treaty. SALT 2 was to provide parity, to begin the process of reduction of nuclear delivery vehicles and to impose crucial restraints on the incredibly rapid evolution of nuclear weapons.

Initial discussions focused on weapons systems and parity factors, which were to take into account important differences between the superpowers. Because of the extreme variance between them, it took two years before both sides agreed to a basic framework for the talks. These included a 2,400 aggregate limit on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles of the two sides; a 1,320 aggregate limit on MIRV systems; a construction ban on new landbased ICBM launchers; limits on deployment of new types of strategic arms; and incorporation into the SALT 2 agreement vital elements of the SALT 1 Interim Agreement.

The SALT 2 treaty restricted the U.S. and Soviet Union to an equal overall total of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles, which redressed an imbalance in favor of the USSR that had existed since prior to signing SALT 1. The units included under this ceiling were landbased ICBM launchers, heavy bombers and air-to-surface ballistic missiles (ASBMs) with ranges over 600 kilometers, or about 350 miles. A number of subceilings were placed on specific types of nuclear systems.

The initial ceiling of all ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, heavy bombers and ASBMs was to be 2,400, to be reduced by 150 by the end of 1981. The Soviet Union, which was at a level of about 2,520 in 1979, would be required to remove 270 while the United States, at a 1979 level of about 2,060 operational systems, was allowed to increase its nuclear arsenal. Each superpower was to be allowed a combined total of 2,250 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles of all types within three years.

Of those 2,250, neither superpower would be permitted more than a combined total of 1,320 of the following types: launchers of MIRVed ICBMs and SLBMs, heavy bombers equipped for long-range cruise missiles, and MIRVed ASBMs.

Of the 1,320, neither side was allowed more than a combined total of 1,200 launchers of MIRVed ICBMs and SLBMs, and MIRVed ASBMs.

Of the 1,200, no more than 820 launchers of MIRVed ICBMs would be allowed to either side.

The construction of additional fixed ICBM launchers was banned and neither superpower was permitted to increase the number of its fixed launchers for heavy ICBMs — which were defined as ICBMs with a launch-weight (weight of the total missile) or throw-weight (weight of the useful payload of the missile) greater than that of the Soviet SS-19 missile.

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## GROUND ZERO

BY M. L. GRAHAM

More brilliant than a thousand noonday suns the flash and racing inferno poured down from the sky, and in an instant a countryside turned to ash. Little girls with delicate skin were cremated in pink dresses. Old men on park benches vanished. Gone also were the benches and the shade trees flared into burning forests. Shadows were burnt into the ground the instant bone and blood burned away. Seeds that had contained such promise were scorched to lifeless pits by a cosmic zephyr traveling at the speed of death. Love and hope, in its way, were disintegrated.

The giants of war had flung their spears. With unyielding and pitiless menace they had squeezed a formula for horror out of the Earth, then shaped laws around bombs that turned the simple atom into the destroyer of worlds. The bombs quickly became the intent of laws, and the laws became hopelessly snarled with the laws and bombs of enemies. The drift to the final war was inevitable because zero was done to prevent it.

A shower of radiation particles fell gently like an invisible snow upon the charred land, covering the smoking rubbish piles that had been alive moments before. There was silence. A crazy kind of silence.

M. L. Graham lives in Arch Cape and is the fire marshal there. He wrote 'Ground Zero' for the NCTE in 1980.

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(503) 325-5069