

NEW TIMES

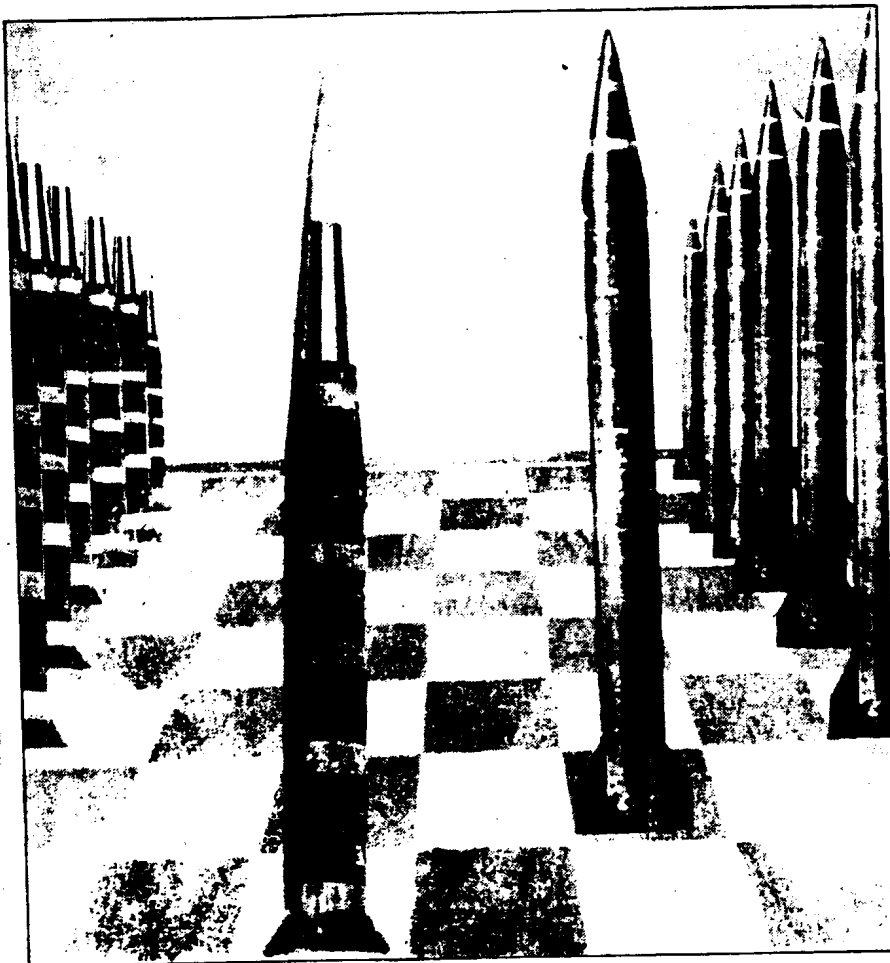
The Jackal is
Hiding in Syria

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Finale is important, not START



Moscow's consent to devise a non-nuclear anti-missile system jointly with Washington is a mistake. The two countries have more promising areas of cooperation

Alexei Arbatov and Thomas Cochran

Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) was signed last July after many years of negotiations. The targets set in the Treaty can hardly inspire even optimists, however.

The slashing of the strategic arsenals of each of the two powers by the year 2000 from more than 10,000 nuclear warheads to 6,000 does not accord much with the widely declared aim of partnership. It can be repeated hundreds of times that Moscow and Washington no longer regard each other as enemies. The bipolar military confrontation will remain a fact, however, if the two powers continue to keep thousands of nuclear warheads aimed at each other.

Semi-partners, semi-enemies

Since the nuclear missile potentials of the Soviet Union and the United States remain at high levels their missiles are aimed at each other simply because there are not so many targets in the rest of the world. The two countries do not have political or strategic reasons to attack each other, and are not expected to have such in the near future.

The White House and the Kremlin obviously see this contradiction, as is evident from President Bush's initiative and Mikhail Gorbachev's reply in September and October which proposes a faster arms

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Superfluous weight

By 1995 the United States could remove two of the three warheads from 400 out of the 500 Minuteman-3 missiles installed in silos and reduce from eight to four the number of warheads on each of the 480 Trident-1 missiles, including those that will go to submarines instead of Trident-2 missiles. It would then have 1,760 warheads on 440 Trident-1 missiles, the five remaining submarines of the Poseidon (Lafayette) class, and 15 new Ohio-class submarines.

The Soviet Union could "unload" 150 silo-based SS-19 missiles to be left after cuts under START. Today it has 300 missiles of this class, with 130 of them in the Ukraine and the rest in Russia, where this system is assembled. The measure would provide for reducing the number of warheads on each missile from six to four. The number of monoblock ground-mobile SS-25 missiles, which are assembled in Russia and deployed in Russia and Byelorussia, is likely to increase from 300 to 400, and 200 more missiles of the same class could be placed in silos.

Together with the removal of obsolete systems from the sea-based forces it would be necessary to "unload" 120 missiles on six already built submarines of the Typhoon class (from ten to four warheads on each missile). The sea-based forces would also retain 80 triple-warhead missiles on five older, Delta-3 submarines (our name Kalmar) and 160 such missiles on ten new, Delta-IV submarines (or Delfin submarines, of which we have seven now) by reducing the number of warheads on them from four to two.

reduction compared with that envisaged by START. It is a half-measure, however.

Washington proposed large-scale measures. One of them is elimination of all ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles with independently targeted warheads which constitute up to 60 percent and about 20 percent of the total in the Soviet Union and the United States respectively. Simultaneously. Washington announced measures for dismantling and placing in depots nuclear arms from heavy bombers, lowering the degree of their take-off readiness, and removing old missiles to be scrapped from combat alertness (four percent reduction in the total amount of warheads).

Instead of going further, Moscow made only a timid half-step by proposing to cut the strategic arsenals of the two countries to 5,000 (not 6,000) nuclear warheads, remove nuclear weapons from bombers, and withdraw slightly more obsolete missiles, to be scrapped under the Treaty, from the state of combat alertness within a shorter time.

An expensive undertaking

In the next ten years it will not be easy to decide on taking deep cuts in the ground- and sea-based ballistic missiles. First of all, the processes of dismantling, elimination and conversion involved in the reduction of weapons are economically expensive and technically complex. Even cuts under START, modest by present standards, will require considerable expenditure.

Secondly, a sharp reduction in the number of warheads will call for a more drastic reduction in the number of carriers, for a large part of missiles have multiple warheads. As a result, the Soviet Union and the United States would retain a small amount of ground-based missile launchers and a considerably shrunken fleet. Mutual vulnerability would increase, thereby undermining strategic stability. The situation could be corrected by way of deploying missiles with monoblock heads instead of multiple warhead missiles with a large part of forces consisting of mobile launchers. It is a very expensive undertaking, however, and it will take much time to implement these measures. The Soviet Union, with its economy in a deplorable state, has little, if any, possibility of putting this idea into effect.

Lastly, a more drastic reduction would call for new talks and, since we are living in the nineties, it would overlap the time limits of START. The finished treaty would be put off again for the sake of a more attractive but unfeasible objective.

The hidden race

There is a way out nevertheless. During the nineties the strategic nuclear forces of the two powers could be reduced not to 6,000 or 5,000 but to 10 percent, to 1,000 warheads for each party, without undermining stability and national security and without additional excessive expenditure, without discarding START, which was worked out with great difficulty.

Signing START in the summer of this year, the two parties intended first of all to cut obsolete armaments while continuing to deploy new expensive systems (multiple-warhead missiles, heavy bombers, mobile land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, both with monoblock and individually targetable heads). As a result, by the year 2000 the two powers would have cut their forces by 30 percent. However, they would have completely modernized them by enhancing their striking power. Moreover, they would have to spend money on the modernization of missiles, the elimination of old ones, and measures of control.

START does not at all envisage the reduction of nuclear weapons in this way. Another approach could be based on two principles. First, it is a qualitative exchange as regards destabilizing systems and, second, a broader use of the method of "unloading": ballistic missiles, that is, removal of some of the warheads from the multiple warhead instead of eliminating missile carriers and their launchers.

Nuclear stumbling block

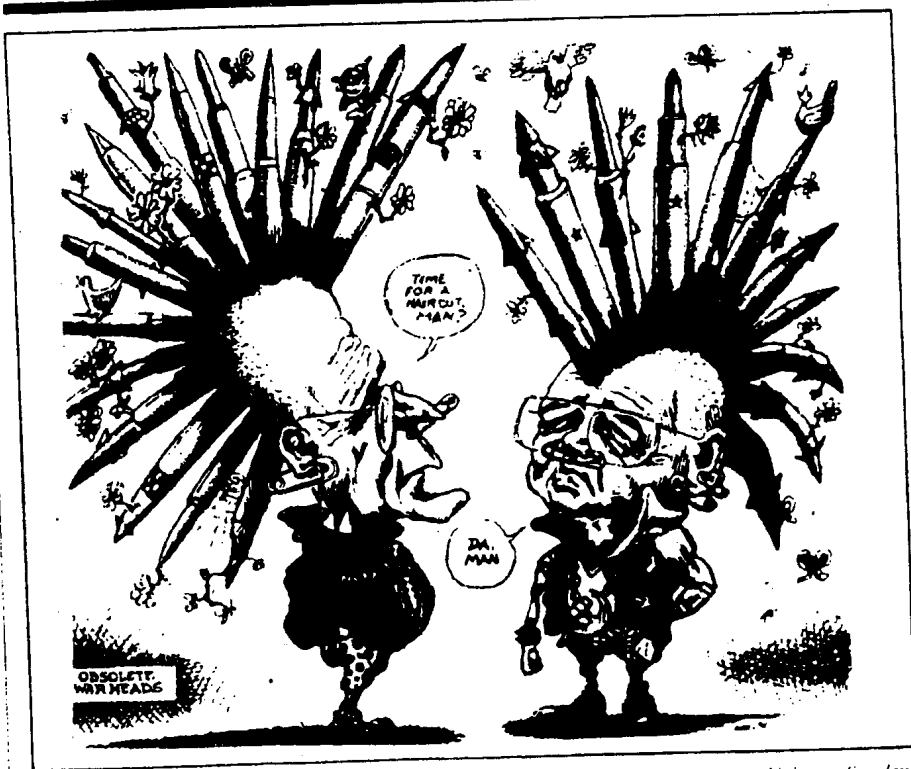
Mutual elimination of destabilizing systems. Moscow should at last agree to a reduction of heavy silo-based SS-18 missiles not by half, as specified in START (to 154 units), but to zero. These missiles, each carrying ten warheads of a megaton class, are a cold-war legacy. They are regarded in the West as silokillers, first strike weapons, particularly because they are not fit for a retaliatory blow since they will not "survive" in their silos. At present 104 SS-18 missiles are deployed in Kazakhstan and the rest 204 on the territory of the Russian Federation. They are produced at the Dnepropetrovsk missile plant in the Ukraine.

Strategic armaments of this type are like a stumbling block in the way of radical disarmament. They impel the United States to develop countersystems: 50 silo-based Peacekeeper missiles, each carrying ten warheads, and 96 Trident-2 ballistic missiles based on submarines. Trident-2 missiles, each carrying eight warheads, are deployed on four new submarines of the Ohio class. Thanks to their high accuracy they are intended to hit Soviet silos.

Soviet SS-24 missiles are similar to the Peacekeeper system. Ten of these missiles (the weapons are produced in Pavlograd) are based in silos in the Russian Federation and 46 in the Ukraine. They would have to be dismantled, too, especially since they are a tempting and vulnerable targets and are fit for the first strike only.

Thus, Moscow would dismantle two systems — 364 missiles (3,640 warheads) and Washington would do the same — 146 missiles (1,268 warheads). Moreover, it would give up plans of deploying 336 more Trident-2 missiles (2,688 warheads) on the other 14 submarines of this class.

The method of complete "unloading" (to zero) could help to withdraw much more quickly and cheaply all the obsolete ground- and sea-based missiles which were to be destroyed under the Treaty. Otherwise, the statements on their removal from the state of alertness cannot be verified. If the parties concerned detach all the warheads from these missiles and put them in storage, agree on additional procedures of control



Drawing from Dagens Nyheter (Sweden)

When missiles "grow thin"

As a result, the United States will retain 110 silo-based monoblock ICBMs of the type of "unloaded" Minuteman-3 or new, Midgetman missiles and 400 missiles in silos, but without warheads. Its naval force would consist of 18 Ohio-class submarines equipped with Trident-IIs (or a missile of a new type), each with two warheads.

The Soviet Union would have 400 ground mobile SS-25 missiles, plus 250 silo-based SS-19 and SS-25 missiles "unloaded" to zero. The missiles on Typhoon submarines would have not four but three warheads each, while the missiles on 13 Delta-IV (Defin) submarines could be "unloaded" from three to one warhead.

In all, the United States will have 18 submarines and 932 missiles in active service (including missiles with removed warheads), and 964 nuclear warheads in firing trim, whereas the Soviet Union will have 19 submarines, 978 missiles and 968 warheads. In other words, the strategic arsenals will be cut by 90 percent (in the number of warheads) while the number of carriers and warheads will be roughly one to one, that is, close to the ideal of stability. The opportunities for a "reverse" will be equal, too.

The reduction of the number of warheads below the 1,000 level is not only of symbolic but also of political-strategic importance. The nuclear weapons of the two countries will become comparable in their amount (while keeping a substantial "unloaded" reserve) with the forces of other nuclear powers. The bipolar nuclear confrontation will cease, and Moscow and Washington will be able to candidly say that they are no longer enemies or opponents in the strategic respect. The other nuclear countries could be drawn into the process of multilateral cuts.

And the last thing. Such measures are possible if strict restrictions are preserved on the deployment of strategic anti-missile defence, including ground- and space-based interception systems. For this reason Moscow's consent in October to devise a non-nuclear anti-missile system seems to be a wrong decision (as if no one knew before that the Strategic Defence Initiative is a non-nuclear programme). The two powers have far more promising areas of cooperation, including cooperation in achieving the aims by which the "joint" anti-missile defence system is justified.

and thereby withdraw them from the nuclear balance, the dismantling of these missiles, silos and submarines could be effected over a longer period. This could be done with less expenditure, and the ways of using the systems for peace purposes could be thought out thoroughly.

The remaining advanced systems should be partially "unloaded." It will be a quick and cheap reduction of the number of warheads, and their concentration and vulnerability will decrease at the same time.

Generals can sleep quietly

In 1995 the United States would have 940 ground- and sea-based missiles, 20 submarines and a total of 2,460 nuclear warheads. The Soviet Union would retain 1,146 missiles, 21 submarines and a total of 2,400 warheads in its strategic offensive arsenal.

In other words, by 1995 (instead of 2000) the two countries would have lessened their arsenals of warheads not by 30 or 50 percent, as Gorbachev proposed in October, but by 75 percent. Without breaking the asymmetry usual for the Soviet General Staff, the United States would have roughly 70 percent of its warheads on the sea and the Soviet Union — about 60 percent of its warheads on land. The Americans will traditionally retain slightly more warheads and the Soviet Union — a few more carriers.

All this can be achieved with less expenditure while strengthening stability and preserving the START structures. Besides, by combining unilateral and reciprocal measures the two parties could maintain the military strategic parity so dear to the hearts of brass hats. True, the vast programmes of modernization will have to be curtailed sharply, but in any case this will be required by the economic situation. Let the military-industrial complexes of the two powers put up with the present situation. The era of militarist bonanza is over.

It is necessary, of course, to weaken the restrictions on "unloading" which are specified in START for fear of uncontrolled "reverse loading." The system of control can be extended considerably. Let inspectors stay permanently at missile bases, airfields and ports. At worst, the two countries will have roughly equal opportunities for a reverse expansion (2,000 to 2,500 warheads and missiles from the stores).

The second stage, covering a period from 1995 to 2000, will call for START-2. There will be time to work out such a treaty in the first half of the current decade. The new treaty could be based on the principle of a further "unloading" of missiles, up to the complete removal of warheads from some portion of missiles. The missiles will remain in their positions while the warheads will be kept in stores under the permanent control of the other party.