

USSR-U.S.

Moscow Gives No Ground on ABM Treaty Adherence, SDI

With a visit by Secretary of State Shultz in the offing later this month, Moscow has remained unyielding in its insistence that continued adherence to the ABM Treaty and limits on SDI represent essential conditions for reaching an agreement on a 50-percent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. While sharply critical of President Reagan's effort to seek Soviet acceptance of a broad interpretation of the ABM Treaty, Moscow has not indicated that failure to resolve this issue would imperil the future Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

Moscow has not retreated since the Washington summit from its warning then that the commitment of the two sides to adhere to the ABM Treaty "as signed" does not give Washington free rein to engage in SDI activity. Moscow has also continued to assert that U.S. efforts to develop space-based ABM systems could jeopardize a strategic arms reduction agreement. In his 14 December address to the Soviet people, Gorbachev rejected claims that the Washington summit had "removed the differences" between the two sides on SDI and what he referred to as subsequent calls for the SDI program to be "stepped up." He said the Soviet Union is prepared to reduce strategic nuclear weapons by 50 percent but on condition that the ABM Treaty be "preserved" in its original form (*Pravda*, 15 December).

More recently, at a 16 January meeting with leaders of a group called the "International Fund for the Survival and Development of Humanity," Gorbachev reiterated Moscow's insistence that SDI is incompatible with strategic arms reductions. He also indicated that Moscow would not proceed toward a 50-percent reduction of strategic offensive arms without limitations on SDI. The Soviet Union, he said, believes that "one cannot engage in disarmament in some spheres and extend the arms race to others." He emphasized that the USSR opposes extending the arms race to outer space as a "matter of principle," asserting that were this to happen it would undermine the entire disarmament process. He added that for U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations to succeed it is essential to preserve the "trust that began to

develop between the partners" during the INF negotiations and to avoid attempts by either of the sides "to somehow outwit its partner" (*Pravda*, 17 January).

Anxious to arouse international and especially U.S. congressional opposition to the Administration's stance, Soviet spokesmen have accused the Administration of backtracking from its commitments while reaffirming the importance Moscow attaches to preserving the ABM Treaty:

- Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, in a 20 January meeting with Spanish Prime Minister Gonzalez, emphasized that a 50-percent reduction of strategic arms was predicated on preserving the ABM Treaty "in the form in which it was adopted in 1972." This, he said, is of "fundamental significance" because reductions in strategic offensive arms can only take place "in conditions that exclude the possibility of a disruption of strategic stability." The ABM Treaty, he added, "is the cornerstone, the guarantee of the preservation of that stability" (*Pravda*, 21 January).
- An authoritative *Pravda* editorial article on 25 January charged that despite the Administration's willingness to formally retain the ABM Treaty, it in fact was insisting on "freedom of action" to develop and test space-based ABM systems so that upon expiration of the agreed adherence period the treaty could simply be "cast aside." Arguing that there exists an "organic link" between offensive and defensive systems, *Pravda* reiterated Moscow's position that there can be no reduction of strategic nuclear arms without limits on defensive systems. It emphasized that in the process of negotiating a 50-percent reduction of strategic nuclear arms the two sides must "proceed from the mandate" of the Washington summit. That, according to the editorial article, means "drawing up an accord" that would obligate both parties to "observe" the ABM Treaty "in the form in which it was signed in 1972"—carrying out only the research, development, and testing of ABM systems allowed under the treaty—and "not to withdraw" from the treaty for an "agreed period."
- In a press conference the following day, Foreign Ministry spokesman Gerasimov sharply criticized a draft treaty covering the ABM issue reportedly submitted by the U.S. delegation in Geneva. He charged that the U.S. proposal was structured in such a way as to "bring to naught" the "formally declared commitment" of both sides "not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for an agreed period" by allowing "any activity regarding systems banned under the ABM Treaty" (Moscow domestic radio, 26 January).

- In a 28 January meeting with U.S. congressional leaders in Washington, reported by TASS, Central Committee official Georgiy Korniyenko complained that the U.S. delegation in Geneva appeared "not very inclined to adhere" to the "instructions" issued by the Washington summit to prepare a strategic arms reduction treaty together with an "agreement to observe the ABM Treaty, as concluded in 1972, and not to withdraw from the treaty for a specified period of time."

Foreign Ministers Meeting Moscow has intimated that it intends to raise the question of adherence to the ABM Treaty during Secretary Shultz's 21-23 February visit. Although Gerasimov, in announcing the visit, did not specifically mention adherence to the ABM Treaty as one of the subjects to be discussed, he said its purpose was to "facilitate" implementation of the "accords that were put on record" in the joint statement of the Washington summit, to "conduct the necessary preparation of the draft treaty on the 50-percent reduction" of strategic nuclear weapons, and to "create conditions" that would ensure a "concrete result" during President Reagan's forthcoming visit to Moscow (TASS, 1 February).

Moscow has frequently stressed the good working relationship between the Secretary and Shevardnadze, and during the INF Treaty negotiations Moscow appeared to rely on ministerial meetings rather than the Geneva negotiations to resolve outstanding issues. This suggests that Moscow may view this forum, rather than the Geneva talks, as offering the best prospects for exploring avenues to resolve differences between the two sides on the ABM issue. (U/FOUO)