

# Bush, Gorbachev sign historic treaty, plan Mideast conference

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MOSCOW — Having eased nuclear tensions with the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, President Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on Wednesday intensified their joint bid to forge a lasting peace in the war-torn Middle East.

"Different winds are blowing," Gorbachev noted.

Though still lacking a commitment from Israel, the U.S. and Soviet leaders announced plans to convene a Mideast peace conference in October at an as yet undetermined site.

Israelis, Arabs and Palestinians all have agreed in concept to participate in the

☐ Joint space venture planned/A-12

☐ Bush pushes business reforms/B-1

conference, but Israel remains reluctant to join in any process that includes Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. Bush is sending Secretary of State James Baker to Jerusalem today to try to resolve the issue with Israeli leaders.

"We believe there is an historic opportunity right now to launch a process that can lead to a just and enduring peace and to a comprehensive settlement in the middle East. We share the strong conviction that this historic opportunity must

Please see **SUMMIT, A-15**





Associated Press

**Using pens cast from melted-down missiles, Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty at the Kremlin on Wednesday.**

## **SUMMIT: Bush, Gorbachev sign arms accord**

**From A-1**

not be lost," Bush said in a joint news conference with Gorbachev following the signing of the landmark START treaty.

As an inducement, Soviet officials announced they are prepared to resume diplomatic relations with Israel if it agrees to participate in the conference. Soviets severed the ties in 1967.

Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh pledged to personally deliver the normalization papers to Israel as soon as the conference is set.

The pressure from superpower leaders puts Israel in the position of being branded as the obstacle to peace if it refuses to participate.

Huge hurdles remain in the Middle East, but Wednesday was a landmark day for Houston's resident president and he and Gorbachev — appropriately armed with pens cast from metal melted down from U.S. and Soviet mid-range missiles — signed the first ever agreement to substantially reduce long-range nuclear stockpiles.

Each nation's arsenals will be cut by roughly a third overall, but the United States and Soviet Union will retain about 9,000 and 7,000 nuclear warheads respectively — more than enough to obliterate each other several times over. Plans already are afoot for even deeper cuts.

The treaty also mandates unprecedented verification procedures designed to allow each side to assure the other is sticking to its word. In past negotiations, there has been a constant concern by U.S. officials that Soviets were fudging on their numbers.

"I happen to believe that the winners on this are the young people, not just in the Soviet Union,

not just in the United States, but all around the world," Bush declared.

He called the 700-page document "the most complicated of contracts governing the most serious of concerns."

The treaty took almost a decade to hammer out. Negotiations were started by former President Reagan's administration, and Bush made note of that during the signing ceremony.

Gorbachev described the agreement as "a moral achievement and a major breakthrough in our country's thinking . . . Our next goal is to make full use of this breakthrough to make disarmament an irreversible process."

But Bush and Gorbachev agreed that elimination of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals may forever be a dream unfulfilled.

When the question was raised at a news conference, Bush said it is impractical to give "a utopian answer."

Asked whether he is concerned about freedom-minded Soviet republics gaining control of nuclear missiles, Bush replied, "I wouldn't suggest that a breakaway republic is going to use a nuclear weapon against the United States, but I would suggest that we have every reason in the world to be concerned about renegades . . . getting hold of nuclear weapons."

Therefore, he said, it's vital for the United States to maintain a nuclear deterrent.

Gorbachev agreed that nuclear arms should be kept "as an element of deterrence." However, on the occasion of a historic arms reduction treaty signing, he said the world should be rejoicing that the days of the United States and Soviet Union trying to top each other's stockpiles are over.

"Yes, we got involved in the

arms race in a very serious way," Gorbachev said.

"Thank God, as we say in Russian, that we stopped this and turned it back. And this is a great accomplishment because we understood where we were headed," he said.

Bush and Gorbachev held their last extensive talks of the summit at the Soviet leader's retreat outside of Moscow. There, they met almost five hours, focusing not just on matters of war and peace, but largely on economic issues facing the Soviet Union as it continues its dramatic political and social reforms under Gorbachev.

Both leaders proclaimed their relations to be close and warm, providing the basis for cooperative measures that seemed unattainable just a few short years ago when U.S. officials still referred to the Soviet Union as the "evil empire."

In a toast to his counterpart during dinner Wednesday night, Bush proclaimed, "Our new relationship will be built not just by politicians and bureaucrats in Washington and Moscow, but in a more profound way by our people in Seattle and Sverdlovsk, Houston and Stavropol, by Americans in California's Silicon Valley and Russians in your great universities and scientific institutes."

Bush is in the Soviet Union not only to enhance his relations with Gorbachev, but also with leaders of the democracy-minded Soviet republics. He had several brief encounters with Boris Yeltsin, president of the republic of Russia and a Gorbachev rival, and today travels to Kiev in the Ukraine before returning to Washington late tonight.

After catching up on various matters in Washington, Bush will head to his Kennebunkport, Maine, vacation home next week.