

Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles

The Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement, signed during the 1988 Moscow Summit, *reflects the continuing interest of the United States and the Soviet Union in reducing the risk of nuclear war as a result of misinterpretation, miscalculation, or accident.*

This Agreement was a product of the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Arms Reductions Talks (START), which began in 1982. During these negotiations both sides proposed advance notification of launches of strategic ballistic missiles. Such flights, which are conducted from time to time, are used for testing or training purposes or to maintain system reliability. The SALT II Treaty, which was never ratified, would have obligated each party to notify the other before conducting any ICBM launch except for single launches not intended to extend beyond national territory. There was no provision in the SALT II Treaty for the notification of SLBM launches.

During the course of the START negotiations, both sides drafted similar launch notification procedures which were incorporated into the Joint Draft Text of the future START Treaty. Given this common approach, Secretary of State Shultz proposed to Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in mid-May 1988 that the launch notification provisions of the Joint Draft Text become a separate agreement. The Agreement was signed in Moscow on May 31, 1988, by Secretary Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and entered into force on the date it was signed.

The Agreement provides that each Party will notify the other, through the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers, no less than 24 hours in advance, of the planned date, launch area, and area of impact for any launch of an ICBM or SLBM. This Agreement expands upon agreements between the sides under the "Accidents Measures"

Agreement and the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers Agreement to provide notification in advance of certain planned ballistic missile launches, and goes beyond what would have been required under the SALT II Treaty.

Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Notifications of Launches of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles and Submarine-launched Ballistic Missiles

Signed at Moscow May 31, 1988

Entered into Force May 31, 1988

The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

Affirming their desire to reduce and ultimately eliminate the risk of outbreak of nuclear war, in particular, as a result of misinterpretation, miscalculation, or accident,

Believing that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought,

Believing that agreement on measures for reducing the risk of outbreak of nuclear war serves the interests of strengthening international peace and security,

Reaffirming their obligations under the Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of September 30, 1971, the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents on and over the High Seas of May 25, 1972, and the Agreement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers of September 15, 1987,

Have agreed as follows

Article I

Each Party shall provide the other Party notification, through the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, no less than twenty-four hours in advance, of the planned date, launch area, and area of impact for any launch of a strategic ballistic missile, an intercontinental ballistic missile (hereinafter "ICBM") or a submarine-launched ballistic missile (hereinafter "SLBM")

Article II

A notification of a planned launch of an ICBM or an SLBM shall be valid for four days counting from the launch date indicated in such a notification. In case of postponement of the launch date within the indicated four days, or cancellation of the launch, no notification thereof shall be required.

Article III

1 For launches of ICBMs or SLBMs from land, the notification shall indicate the area from which the launch is planned to take place

2 For launches of SLBMs from submarines, the notification shall indicate the general area from which the missile will be launched. Such notification shall indicate either the quadrant within the ocean (that is, the ninety-degree sector encompassing approximately one-fourth of the area of the ocean) or the body of water (for example, sea or bay) from which the launch is planned to take place

3 For all launches of ICBMs or SLBMs, the notification shall indicate the geographic coordinates of the planned impact area or areas of the reentry vehicles. Such an area shall be specified either by indicating the geographic coordinates of the boundary points of the area, or by indicating the geographic coordinates of the center of a circle with a radius specified in kilometers or nautical miles. The size of the impact area shall be determined by the notifying Party at its discretion

Article IV

The Parties undertake to hold consultations, as mutually agreed, to consider questions relating to implementation of the provisions of this Agreement, as well as to discuss possible amendments thereto aimed at furthering the implementation of the objectives of this Agreement. Amendments shall enter into force in accordance with procedures to be agreed upon

Article V

This Agreement shall not affect the obligations of either Party under other agreements

Article VI

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of its signature

The duration of this Agreement shall not be limited

This Agreement may be terminated by either Party upon 12 months written notice to the other Party

DONE at Moscow on May 31, 1988, in two copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic

**FOR THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA**

George P. Shultz

**FOR THE UNION OF SOVIET
SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:**

Eduard A. Shevardnadze