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THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INF TREATY

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APR 4 1990

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On 8 December 1987 in Washington, DC, US President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev signed the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles, also known as the INF Treaty. The INF Treaty represents the culmination of six years of on-again, off-again negotiations between the two countries, and embodies some important firsts in the arms control world. It is the first time the two superpowers have agreed to major reductions in their nuclear arsenals; to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons; and to implement on-site inspections as a means of verification.

On the political side, the INF Treaty brought an end to a long and often divisive debate within NATO about the necessity and effect of deploying Pershing and ground-launched cruise missiles in Europe. At the same time, the Treaty has brought to the forefront a debate on the role and status of conventional weapons in both Eastern and Western European alliances, and another on the future of short-range nuclear forces (SNF) in Europe. This paper will describe the terms and requirements of the Treaty and its implementation process. The new concerns that have arisen within NATO as a result of the successful completion of the Treaty will also be addressed.

THE TREATY

The Treaty officially entered into force on 1 June 1988. It affects land-based ballistic and cruise missiles which can travel distances between 1000 km and 5500 km, known as intermediate-range, as well as those which can cover distances

between 500 and 1000 km, called shorter-range missiles. Under the terms of the Treaty, the US and the Soviet Union have agreed to completely eliminate all their land-based intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, as well as the launchers, operating bases, support equipment and facilities associated with them. Shorter-range missiles, launchers and support equipment are to be eliminated within the first eighteen months of the life of the Treaty, and the entire elimination process is to be completed within three years of entry into force.

Flight-testing of shorter-range and intermediate-range missiles, and launches of shorter-range missiles, are completely prohibited. There can be no production of any missiles, missile stages or launchers within the prohibited categories. The complete elimination of all missiles in these categories, and the bans on production and testing, mean that any missile or missile component existing after the elimination period is over constitutes a violation.

The Treaty consists of four parts: the text of the Treaty, a memorandum of understanding, a protocol on the elimination of missiles, and a protocol on inspections. The Treaty itself is made up of seventeen articles and includes the main provisions. The Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Establishment of the Data Base (MOU) contains all the information given in the first data exchange, including missile numbers, technical characteristics and locations. The Protocol on Procedures Governing the Elimination of Missile Systems provides a detailed outline of the procedures to be followed in eliminating

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