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NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 278

ESTABLISHING A U.S. NEGOTIATING POSITION ON SRINF MISSILES (X)

The United States' consistent position in the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) negotiations in Geneva has been that any INF Treaty must include concurrent constraints on Shorter-Range INF systems (SRINF), constraints which are global, result in equality between the United States and Soviet Union, apply to only U.S. and Soviet systems, and enhance the security of the NATO Alliance. (X)

Following indications during Secretary Shultz' meetings in Moscow that the Soviets were now prepared to negotiate seriously on these systems, I directed an intensive process of consultation within the NATO Alliance to determine which specific SRINF constraints would best serve NATO interests. Based on a NATO consensus, and the unanimous advice of my senior advisors, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I have decided to formally propose the global elimination of U.S. and Soviet Shorter-Range INF missiles as an integral part of the INF treaty now being negotiated in Geneva. In doing so, I am also reaffirming our long-standing position that cooperative systems, in particular the Pershing Ia missiles belonging to the Federal Republic of Germany, are not and cannot become the subject of U.S.-Soviet INF negotiations. (X)

The remaining portions of our INF position are unchanged. In particular, it will continue to be U.S. policy aggressively to seek the total elimination of Longer-Range INF systems, although, on an interim basis, we are prepared if necessary to accept a treaty based on the formula I agreed to with General Secretary Gorbachev in Reykjavik of an equal global limit of one hundred warheads on each side, with none in Europe. (X)

The United States is committed to NATO's strategy of flexible response, and will not permit the defense of NATO to be decoupled from the American nuclear arsenal. It is a manifestation of this commitment that I directed that the United States take no position on specific SRINF constraints until we had heard the views of our Allies and were confident that they -- like we -- recognize that such an agreement would make NATO safer and more secure. (X)

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