

Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on measures for reducing the risk of outbreak of nuclear war (Washington, 30 September 1971)

Caption: On 30 September 1971, in Washington, the United States and the Soviet Union sign an agreement in an effort to reduce the risk of outbreak of nuclear war.

Source: Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee: A retrospective view of the political year in Europe 1971. November 1972. Paris: Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee. "Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on measures for reducing the risk of outbreak of nuclear war (Washington, September 30, 1971)", p. 264-265.

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Agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on measures for reducing the risk of outbreak of nuclear war (Washington, September 30, 1971)

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

Taking into account the devastating consequences that nuclear war would have for all mankind, and recognising the need to exert every effort to avert the risk of outbreak of such a war, including measures to guard against accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons;

Believing that agreement on measures for reducing the risk of outbreak of nuclear war serves the interests of strengthening international peace and security, and is in no way contrary to the interests of any other country;

Bearing in mind that continued efforts are also needed in the future to seek ways of reducing the risk of outbreak of nuclear war,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

Each party undertakes to maintain and to improve, as it deems necessary, its existing organisational and technical arrangements to guard against the accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under its control.

Article 2

The parties undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of an accidental, unauthorised or any other unexplained incident involving a possible detonation of a nuclear weapon which could create a risk of outbreak of nuclear war. In the event of such an incident, the party whose nuclear weapon is involved will immediately make every effort to take necessary measures to render harmless or destroy such weapon without its causing damage.

Article 3

The parties undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of detection by missile warning system of unidentified objects, or in the event of signs of interference with these systems or with related communications facilities, if such occurrences could create a risk of outbreak of nuclear war between the two countries.

Article 4

Each party undertakes to notify the other party in advance of any planned missile launches if such launches will extend beyond its national territory in the direction of the other party.

Article 5

Each party, in other situations involving unexplained nuclear incidents, undertakes to act in such a manner as to reduce the possibility of its actions being misinterpreted by the other party. In any such situation, each party may inform the other party or request information when, in its view, this is warranted by the interests of averting the risk of outbreak of nuclear war.

Article 6

For transmission of urgent information, notifications and requests for information in situations requiring

prompt clarification, the parties shall make primary use of the direct communications link between the Governments of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

For transmissions of other information, notifications and requests for information, the parties, at their own discretion, may use any communications facilities, including diplomatic channels, depending on the degree of urgency.

Article 7

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 further implementation of the purposes of this agreement.

Article 8

This agreement shall be of unlimited duration.

Article 9

This agreement shall enter into force upon signature.

Done at Washington on 30th September 1971, in two copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.