

2.24 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.* Done at Washington, Sept. 30, 1971. Entered into force, Sept. 30, 1971. 22 U.S.T. 1590, T.I.A.S. No. 7186, 807 U.N.T.S. 57, reprinted in 10 I.L.M. 1173 (1971)

Article 1 Each Party undertakes to maintain and to improve, as it deems necessary, its existing organizational and technical arrangements to guard against the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons under its control

Article 2. The Parties undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of an accidental, unauthorized 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 systems 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 transmission of other information, notifications and request 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.

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a. This Agreement is one of the four agreements known collectively as "SALT I" See also Basic Documents 2 25, 2 27 and 2 28, *infra*

**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**

The very existence of nuclear-weapon systems, even under the most sophisticated command-and-control procedures, obviously is a source of constant concern. Despite the most elaborate precautions, it is conceivable that technical malfunction or human failure, a misinterpreted incident or unauthorized action, could trigger a nuclear disaster or nuclear war. In the course of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), the United States and the Soviet Union reached two agreements that manifest increasing recognition of the need to reduce such risks, and that complement the central goal of the negotiations.

In early sessions, discussions parallel to the main SALT negotiations showed a degree of mutual concern regarding the problem of accidental war that indicated encouraging prospects of accord. These preliminary explorations resulted in the establishment of two special working groups under the direction of the two SALT delegations. One group focused on arrangements for exchanging information to reduce uncertainties and prevent misunderstandings in the event of a nuclear incident. The other addressed a related topic -- ways to improve the direct communications link between Washington and Moscow. By the summer of 1971, major substantive issues had been resolved, and draft international agreements were referred by the SALT delegations to their governments. Both agreements were signed in Washington on September 30, 1971, and came into force on that date.

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 covers three main areas:

- A pledge by each party to take measures each considers necessary to maintain and improve its organizational and technical safeguards against accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons;
- Arrangements for immediate notification should a risk of nuclear war arise from such incidents, from detection of unidentified objects on early warning systems, or from any accidental, unauthorized, or other unexplained incident involving a possible detonation of a nuclear weapon; and
- Advance notification of any planned missile launches beyond the territory of the launching party and in the direction of the other party.

The agreement provides that for urgent communication "in situations requiring prompt clarification" the "Hot Line" will be used. The duration of the agreement is not limited, and the parties undertake to consult on questions that may arise and to discuss possible amendments aimed at further reduction of risks.

**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**

*Signed at Washington September 30, 1971
Entered into force 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 recognizing the need to exert every effort to avert the risk of outbreak of such a war, including measures to guard against accidental or unauthorized 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 organizational and technical arrangements to guard against the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons under its control

Article 2

The Parties undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of an accidental, unauthorized 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

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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 transmission of other information, notification 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 September 30, 1971, in two copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:
WILLIAM P. ROGERS

FOR THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:
A. GROMYKO