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Deployed and Non-Deployed Launchers

BUREAU OF VERIFICATION, COMPLIANCE, AND IMPLEMENTATION
Fact Sheet
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Key Point: The New START Treaty contains different rules than the START Treaty regarding when a launcher of ICBMs or SLBMs is considered to be deployed or non-deployed. The New START Treaty rules provide considerable flexibility to the Parties in structuring their forces within the overall limits established by the Treaty, while requiring meaningful and verifiable elimination of strategic delivery vehicles.

START Treaty: Under the rules of the START Treaty most ICBM launchers and all SLBM launchers on submarines were always “considered to contain” an ICBM or SLBM, respectively. Thus, almost all ICBM and SLBM launchers were counted as deployed launchers until they were eliminated.

- The START counting rules resulted in some implementation anomalies, such as:
 - after the Peacekeeper ICBM was deactivated, empty Peacekeeper silos continued to be counted as “deployed ICBM launchers” under START;
 - 96 former SLBM launchers, which were no longer capable of containing SLBMs, on four Trident submarines that had been converted into SSGNs continued to be counted as “deployed SLBM launchers” under START;
 - some SLBMs in storage bunkers were considered “deployed” while other SLBMs stored next to them were considered “non-deployed,” depending on the total number of “deployed SLBM launchers” installed on SSBNs; and
 - ICBM and SLBM launchers awaiting elimination, which did not contain missiles and in many cases were not capable of launching missiles, were still counted as deployed launchers.

New START Treaty Limits: The New START Treaty counts:

- deployed strategic ballistic missiles contained in (or on) their launchers toward the aggregate limit of 700 provided in paragraph 1(a) of Article II for deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers;
- all strategic ballistic missile launchers other than soft site launchers* toward the aggregate limit of 800 provided in paragraph 1(c) of Article II for deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, deployed and non-deployed SLBM launchers, and deployed and non-deployed heavy bombers; and
- all reentry vehicles emplaced on deployed ICBMs and SLBMs toward the aggregate limit of 1,550 provided in

paragraph 1(b) of Article II for warheads on deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs and counted for deployed heavy bombers.

New START Treaty Counting Rules: Rather than using the START Treaty concept of a launcher being “considered to contain” an ICBM or SLBM, the New START Treaty counts as deployed only those ICBM and SLBM launchers that actually contain an ICBM or SLBM. Any ICBM launcher or SLBM launcher that does not contain an ICBM or SLBM is considered to be a non-deployed launcher. However, the New START Treaty preserves the START rule that test launchers, silo training launchers, and launchers at space launch facilities are considered non-deployed whether or not they contain an ICBM or SLBM.

- Unlike START, under the New START Treaty there is always a one-to-one relationship between deployed ICBMs and deployed ICBM launchers and between deployed SLBMs and deployed SLBM launchers.
- Compared to START, the New START Treaty counting rules more directly coincide with the commonly recognized meaning of deployed and non-deployed launchers and provide a more meaningful representation of the true status of a Party’s strategic forces.
- The New START Treaty approach will require notifications every time an ICBM or SLBM is removed from or installed in (or on) a launcher, which, combined with the use of unique identifiers on every ICBM and SLBM that are continuously tracked in the Treaty’s database, will provide much greater transparency into the operational and maintenance practices of the Parties.
- The limit of 800 for deployed and non-deployed launchers and heavy bombers is intended to limit the ability of the Parties to “break out” of the Treaty limits by constraining the number of non-deployed ICBM and SLBM launchers and non-deployed heavy bombers available for deployment.
 - Each Party will have to operate within this aggregate limit as it considers whether to build and store new systems, and whether to eliminate, convert, or retain older systems.
- Each Party has the flexibility to structure its forces as it sees fit but must make force structure decisions in consideration of all three central limits of the New START Treaty. The limits allow the United States considerable flexibility regarding how to configure U.S. strategic forces in light of normal U.S. operational practices.
 - For the life of the Treaty, the United States expects to have up to two U.S. Trident submarines in long-term refueling overhaul at any given time. When a U.S. SSBN goes into overhaul the SLBMs are removed from its launch tubes and:
 - all removed missiles become non-deployed SLBMs and will not count toward the limit of 700 for deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers; and
 - all onboard SLBM launchers become non-deployed SLBM launchers and continue to count toward the 800 limit for deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, deployed and non-deployed SLBM launchers, and deployed and non-deployed heavy bombers.
 - When an ICBM is removed from a silo launcher for maintenance a similar situation prevails: the silo launcher and the ICBM become non-deployed: the launcher continues to count under the 800 limit.

* Soft site launchers are defined as “any land-based fixed launcher of ICBMs or SLBMs other than a silo launcher.” The United States does not possess any soft site launchers.

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