



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

9 DECEMBER 1987

The Government welcomes the agreement that has been reached on intermediate range nuclear forces.

The agreement is unique in that it provides for the elimination of a complete class of nuclear weapons.

It will be crucial to the prospects for future arms control agreements that this agreement can be fully and effectively verified so that the compliance of the two sides, and their good faith, can be unambiguously demonstrated to each other.

In this regard I feel the deepest satisfaction at the role Australia will play in helping to verify Soviet compliance with the terms of the agreement through the operations of the joint defence facilities in Australia.

As I stated in the Parliament on 6 June 1984, these facilities contribute to verification of arms limitation arrangements between the US and USSR and are also able to provide information about missile launches.

As the INF agreement allows the USSR to destroy some of the missiles covered by the agreement by launching them, and also prohibits the USSR from using those launches for developmental or testing purposes, the ability of the US to monitor this activity including through the joint defence facilities in Australia will be fundamental to the successful implementation and continuing operation of the agreement.

The process of verifying the INF agreement, including the important verification function of the joint facilities here in Australia, will provide invaluable experience in relation to verification of a START agreement.

The Government urges both the US and USSR to build on the precedent established by the INF Treaty arrangements in their other arms control negotiations, especially in respect of strategic nuclear weapons and chemical weapons.