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Statement by Richard Burt  
Chairman, Special Consultative Group

In accordance with its mandate, the NATO Special Consultative Group met today for the eighth time this year to review developments related to INF arms control.

The Special Consultative Group reviewed the prospects for arms control involving intermediate-range nuclear forces in light of the upcoming meeting in Geneva on January 7-8 between United States Secretary of State Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. They welcomed this development, and supported the United States' determination to pursue, in a serious and flexible way, negotiations leading to balanced, meaningful and verifiable reductions and limits on these systems.

The members of the Special Consultative Group took special note of their governments' determination, most recently expressed in the communique of the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Session of December 13 and 14, to continue the scheduled deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles, in accordance with NATO's December 1979 decision, in the absence of concrete results in negotiations. At the same time, they stressed their belief that equitable reductions and the eventual elimination of these systems by means of an arms control agreement would serve the best interests of the countries of both East and West. To this end the Alliance is prepared to halt, reverse, modify or dispense altogether with these deployments, as part of an equitable and verifiable arms control agreement.

With the approach of a new, and it is hoped, productive phase in the arms control dialogue, Allied governments are committed to maintaining close and regular consultations. The SCG is an important and indispensable instrument in this process. Its members continue to attach utmost importance to the achievement of equitable, effective and verifiable arms control limitations involving intermediate-range nuclear forces. They will continue to consult regularly and intensively on their efforts toward that end.