



[Records on The President's Nuclear Initiative \(PNI\)](#)

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Scope and Content Note:

The materials in FOIA 2021-0031-F are a selective, not necessarily all inclusive, body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. FOIA 2021-0031-F contains records materials in relation to the President's Nuclear Initiative (PNI). Near the Cold War's end, leaders in Washington and Moscow made reciprocal unilateral pledges to substantially limit and reduce their nuclear weaponry, most notably their tactical or "battlefield" nuclear weapons, such as nuclear artillery shells. President George H.W. Bush initiated these commitments, collectively known as the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs), in September 1991 in recognition of the breakup of the Eastern bloc and out of concern for the Kremlin's ability to maintain control of its vast nuclear arsenal as political changes swept the Soviet Union. President Bush pledged to end foreign deployments of entire categories of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons; specifically, to withdraw to the United States all ground-launched short-range weapons deployed overseas and destroy them along with existing U.S. stockpiles of the same weapons; and cease deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on surface ships, attack submarines, and land-based naval aircraft during "normal circumstances." Implicitly, the United States reserved the right to redeploy these arms in a crisis. President Bush hoped that leaders in Moscow would follow suit; and they did, at least in part. On Oct. 5, 1991, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev responded to Bush's speech with reciprocal Soviet measures. Specifically, Gorbachev committed to eliminate all nuclear artillery munitions, nuclear warheads for tactical missiles, and nuclear mines, and to remove all tactical nuclear weapons from surface ships and multipurpose submarines. These weapons would be stored in central storage sites along with all nuclear arms assigned to land-based naval aircraft; and to separate nuclear warheads from air defense missiles and put the warheads in central storage. A "portion" would be destroyed. Furthermore, on Jan. 29, 1992, Russian President Boris Yeltsin reaffirmed Gorbachev's commitments and expanded on them in response to a second round of unilateral U.S. nuclear weapons cutbacks focused on strategic forces. Following the Soviet Union's December 25, 1991 collapse, Russia assumed responsibility for the Soviet Union's nuclear complex and arms control commitments. Yeltsin said Russia would eliminate a third of its sea-based tactical nuclear weapons and half of its ground-to-air nuclear missile warheads; and halved its airborne tactical nuclear weapons stockpile. Pending reciprocal U.S. action, the other half of this stockpile would be taken out of service and placed in central storage depots. As a result, all Soviet nuclear weapons were reportedly successfully consolidated on Russian soil.

Processed by: Staff Archivists, May 2022. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.