

Countries Meet to Present Progress in Ballistic Missile Reduction

- [Arms Control Today](#)

More than 100 countries aim to share information on their ballistic missile programs by the end of September, but it is uncertain whether some countries, including the United States, will present their reports by that time.

Meeting June 24-25 in Vienna for the first time since last November's establishment of the International Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, the 106 participating countries in the voluntary initiative set September 30 as the target date for the first of what are to be annual reports on their ballistic missile programs. Thereafter, the nonbinding reporting goal will be July 31.

A State Department official interviewed at the end of July said the United States might not meet this year's September date, explaining that it was not a deadline.

In the annual reports, countries are to detail their ballistic missile and space launch vehicle policies, as well as provide information on any types of ballistic missiles or space launch vehicles fired or tested during the preceding year. Countries are still working out some of the specifics on what the reports will cover, such as whether the minimum range of a ballistic missile to be reported on should be 300 or 500 kilometers, according to one diplomat. The reports will not be made public.

The code also calls upon participating countries to provide advance notice of their ballistic missile or space launch vehicle launches and test flights. A pre-launch notification system has yet to be established.

Development of the system is on hold until a U.S.-Russian pre-launch notification process is up and running. The U.S.-Russian project is to serve as the foundation and model for the broader code system. Washington and Moscow agreed in 2000 to exchange information on pending launches, but actual implementation of the agreement has been delayed because the Kremlin wants the United States to pay taxes and assume liability for the notification system's setup and operation in Russia—a demand the United States rejects.

The next meeting of countries subscribing to the code is scheduled for October in New York, at which it is expected that the status of the annual reports and pre-launch notification system will be discussed. How to expand participation in the code to countries not currently involved, such as China, India, and Pakistan, will also likely be on the agenda.

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