

Slovakia Begins Dismantling SS-23s

- [Arms Control Today](#)

In a move Slovak officials have termed a sign of goodwill to the West, Slovakia began scrapping its technologically defunct SS-23 missiles in mid-May. Under the auspices of a memorandum signed in late April, the United States will provide approximately \$385,000 to finance the destruction of the six remaining SS-23s and two remaining mobile launchers, an operation that is expected to be concluded by October.

The SS-23 has a range of 400 to 500 kilometers and is capable of carrying a nuclear payload. Slovakia acquired its SS-23s following the 1993 dissolution of Czechoslovakia, which had received the missiles from the Soviet Union. Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary all liquidated their SS-23 systems years ago. The Soviet Union dismantled all its SS-23s under the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which eliminated all ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. The Slovak SS-23s reached the end of their service lives in 1998, but Slovakia did not have the financial resources to dispose of the missiles.

Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan told U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright of the plan to scrap the missiles during a visit to Washington in late April. Kukan also reiterated Slovakia's desire to join NATO, a goal that Albright assured Kukan would receive full U.S. support. Slovakia joined nine Central and Eastern European countries May 19 to lobby collectively for admission to NATO.

Source URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/node/3006>