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# Helms charges Soviet breach of INF accord

By Mary Belcher and Bill Gertz  
 THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Sen. Jesse Helms has called on the CIA and the National Security Agency for an immediate review of an alleged "major violation" of the U.S.-Soviet accord eliminating medium-range nuclear missiles as the Senate begins its scrutiny of the treaty today.

Mr. Helms, the leading opponent of the treaty, declined to provide details of the alleged breach. But in letters Saturday to CIA Director William Webster and NSA Director Lt. Gen. William Odom with "top secret" enclosures that were not released, Mr. Helms asked that highly classified information on the charge be verified in time for Secretary of State George Shultz's testimony scheduled for today.

"If this information is confirmed," Mr. Helms wrote Mr. Webster and Gen. Odom, "I shall urge Chairman [Claiborne] Pell to ask you to appear on an immediate basis, perhaps as soon as Monday afternoon, before the Committee on Foreign Relations

sitting in closed session in a secure facility."

In an accompanying press release, Mr. Helms said, "If the classified information is accurate, I question whether there should be further Senate action at this time on the proposed treaty."

The move by the North Carolina Republican is the first salvo in the conservatives' fight against the intermediate nuclear forces agreement signed last month by President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

The INF treaty is the subject of three separate sets of hearings this week. Mr. Shultz this morning will be the first of nearly 40 witnesses to testify on the treaty before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, while Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci kicks off parallel hearings by the Armed Services Committee. The Senate Intelligence Committee also will begin a closed-door examination of the pact this week.

A Reagan administration intelligence source said the evidence obtained by Mr. Helms relates to large-scale deployments of hidden SS-20 missiles that were not declared by the Soviets in data used to negotiate the treaty.

At least two-thirds of the Senate must approve the INF treaty for ratification, and Senate leaders have predicted that it will be pass by mid-April.

The INF treaty would eliminate over the next three years 2,611 medium- and shorter-range missiles that can fly from 300 to 3,400 miles. It sets a precedent by requiring an asymmetrical reduction of weapons, eliminating the Soviet stock of 1,752 missiles and the U.S. arsenal of 859 systems. It also for the first time allows U.S. and Soviet observers to visit each other's missile sites to verify treaty compliance.

Mr. Pell, Rhode Island Democrat and chairman of the Foreign Relations panel, wants his committee to vote on the treaty by early March, sending it on to the full Senate.

Armed Services Chairman Sam Nunn will focus his panel's hearings on the NATO alliance and report the findings to Mr. Pell, who has jurisdiction over the legislation. The Georgia Democrat, one of the Senate's most influential defense experts, said he has a generally "positive" attitude toward the INF pact

but has not ruled out the possible need to amend it.

Senate leaders from both parties have vowed to push the treaty toward ratification. Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole of Kansas, after some initial hedging, has endorsed the treaty, and Minority Whip Alan Simpson of Wyoming has promised to vigorously fight for its approval.

Mr. Helms' aim is to win the 34 Senate votes needed to kill ratification or the 51 votes necessary to pass amendments that would require the Reagan administration to renegotiate sections of the treaty with the Soviets.

A 180-page report on the INF treaty, prepared by the minority staff of the Foreign Relations Com-

mittee, suggests that the Soviets may have deployed secret installations for SS-20 nuclear missiles. "The Soviet Union may well possess significantly more SS-20s missiles than are accounted for in the treaty," the report states.

The report — entitled "The Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Weapons. Does It Decrease — or Increase — the Danger of Nuclear War?" — includes arguments by treaty critics and the pact itself, annotated by Mr. Helms with his specific concerns. It also has an introduction by former NATO commander-in-chief Gen. Bernard W. Rogers, a critic of the INF treaty.

Mr. Helms said the report was designed to give senators "hard questions" to ask administration witnesses appearing before them.

A handful of conservatives led by Mr. Helms stands ready to harpoon the INF pact with "killer amendments" to force its renegotiation.

"We will have initiatives and some of them will be amendments, but we wouldn't describe them as 'killer amendments,'" said one Senate source close to the Helms team, who prefers to describe the group as "perfectionists."

Mr. Helms and Republican Sens. Steve Symms of Idaho, Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, Dan Quayle of Indiana, Larry Pressler of South Dakota and possibly others are expected to withhold their support unless the treaty is amended to meet broader demands, possibly requiring renegotiation.

Mr. Wallop, for example, has said he favors a "self-abrogating" treaty if Soviet cheating is revealed. Mr. Quayle wants the Reagan administration to create a "NATO defense initiative" office in Western Europe in exchange for his support.

But Majority Whip Alan Cranston from its estimated triple or quadruple strength.

Mr. Pressler already has introduced an amendment calling for the Warsaw Pact to reduce its conventional forces so that it holds only a 3-2 advantage over NATO, down from its estimated triple or quadruple strength.

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on track by encouraging senators to express their concerns in amendments or reservations not requiring renegotiation.

Senators from a wide political spectrum, however, are wondering how the removal of INF and shorter-range nuclear missiles from Western Europe will affect NATO allies, whose conventional-force strength is numerically inferior to that of the Warsaw Pact. Other leading concerns are over Soviet compliance with past arms control agreements and whether the INF treaty's verification provisions are tough enough.

Opponents and proponents agree that the significance of the INF treaty — which would eliminate only 5 percent of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals — is in the groundwork it lays for talks on long-range strategic weapon reductions

[START], which are expected to be the subject of a Reagan-Gorbachev summit this spring in Moscow.

Taking what a Senate source described as the "high moral ground," Mr. Helms, the senior Republican on the foreign relations panel, will argue that the INF treaty would defeat traditional arms control objectives. Instead of curbing prospects for war, he says the removal of INF missiles from Western Europe leaves NATO allies more vulnerable to attack. To compensate for conventional force imbalance, defense spending must rise.

Mr. Helms also contends that while the INF agreement would eliminate missile systems, it does not eliminate their explosive nuclear warheads, which could be recycled for use in other weapons.

However, even some conservatives recognize that the momentum for treaty ratification is too great to fight.

"We're basically working to make lemonade out of this lemon," said Daniel Casey, executive director of the American Conservative Union. He said the chances that "killer amendments" will be adopted are so "infinitely remote" that his group is interested only in helping shape the debate.

Ideally, Mr. Casey said, the debate will raise public awareness about Soviet compliance problems. Secondly, by forcing the issue of Western European defenses against nuclear weapons, it could sharpen American interest in its own protection, building support for development of the Strategic Defense Initiative.

"Both sides know that the stakes are high in this one," said Kathleen Sheekey, legislative director for Common Cause, one of 111 diverse groups that have coalesced to push for ratification. "For the hard-liners it stirs fear, and in the arms control community it stirs hope."