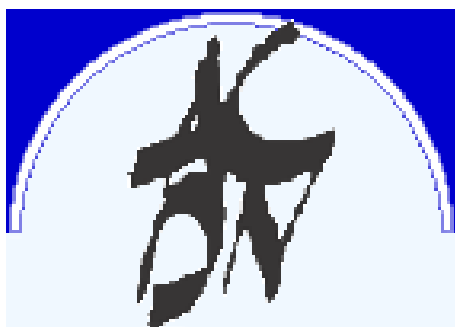


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**Statement by the President of
Russia on the unilateral
withdrawal of the United States
from the Treaty on the
Elimination of
Intermediate-Range and
Shorter-Range Missiles**

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On February 1, 2019, the United States of America launched a procedure to withdraw from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. The six-month period set forth in the Treaty's withdrawal clause has expired. When one of the parties withdraws from the Treaty, it ceases to have effect automatically. Therefore, as of August 2, 2019 the INF Treaty no longer exists. Our US colleagues sent it to the archives, making it a thing of the past.

It is with regret that Russia states that the unilateral withdrawal by the United States from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles under a far-fetched pretext and the dismantlement of one of the last fundamental arms control treaties creates major complications for world affairs and brings about serious risks for everyone. Let me emphasise that all the responsibility for what has happened rests with the United States. Instead of engaging in a meaningful discussion on international security matters, the United States opted for simply undercutting many years of efforts to reduce the probability of a large-scale armed conflict, including the use of nuclear weapons.

Russia cannot ignore the current state of affairs or satisfy itself with hollow peace-loving declarations made by its American colleagues or their allies.

In this context, considering the current situation, I instruct the Defence Ministry, the Foreign Ministry and the Foreign Intelligence Service to monitor in the most thorough manner future steps taken by the United States to develop, produce and deploy intermediate-range and medium-range missiles.

If Russia obtains reliable information whereby the United States completes the development of these systems and starts to produce them, Russia will have no option other than to engage in a full-scale effort to develop similar missiles. Of course, this will take time. Until the Russian army deploys these weapons, Russia will reliably offset the threats related to the withdrawal by the United States from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles by relying on the means that we already have: the X-101 and the Kinzhal air-launched missiles, the Kalibr sea-launched missile, as well as future weapons systems, including Tsirkon-class hypersonic systems.

At the same time, Russia maintains the unilateral commitments it has assumed, and will act only when it has to respond. This applies to developing, producing and deploying land-based intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. We will not deploy them in any given region until US-made intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles are deployed there.

Despite the recent developments, Russia still hopes that common sense prevails, and that our US colleagues and their allies have a sense of responsibility toward their people and the entire international community. It is our belief that the actions taken by the United States that brought about the dismantlement of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles will inevitably devalue and shatter the foundations of the global security architecture, including the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

This scenario could signal a new start for an unfettered arms race. In order to avoid chaos with no rules, restrictions or laws, we need to once more weigh up all the dangerous consequences and launch a serious and meaningful dialogue free from any ambiguity.

Russia considers that it is necessary to revive without delay meaningful talks on ensuring strategic stability and security. We are ready to engage in these efforts.

Vladimir Putin