

IPB calls for: Defending the INF Treaty

President Trump's announcement that he plans to withdraw the United States from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty marks a dangerous escalation on the path to creating a 21st century U.S.-Russian Cold War. It again demonstrates that ignorance, the will and need to dominate others and the news cycle, and nuclear weapons make an extremely dangerous cocktail for renewed and extremely dangerous arms racing that endangers human survival.

The Russian military may be in technical violation of the Treaty by testing new medium-range cruise missile (which is yet to be proven.) And a joint commission is currently discussing possible U.S. violations of the INF Treaty with its deployment of a Missile Defence System in Romania. In these circumstances, as Mikhail Gorbachev stated, Trump's announcement was not the work "of a great mind."

More significantly, as Gorbachev wrote and many in recent years have urged, "with enough political will, any problems of compliance with the existing treaties could be resolved" and "there will be no winner in a 'war of all against all' – particularly if it ends in a nuclear war." We note that Russia's Foreign Ministry has said that "there is still room for dialogue." This should encourage popular forces to demand that the U.S. engage in negotiations leading to renewed commitments to the INF Treaty.

The INF Treaty's entry into force in 1987 marked the end of the Cold War. It provides for elimination and permanent renunciation of future deployment of all US and Russian nuclear and conventional ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles with ranges of 300 to 3,500 miles. It greatly reduced, but did not completely eliminate, the danger of Europe becoming the primary theatre and victim of a U.S.-Soviet (now Russian) nuclear war.

Abandoning the Treaty, combined with the possible expiration of the New START Treaty if it is not soon extended, will eliminate all nuclear arms agreements between the world's two largest and most dangerous nuclear powers, opening the way for an unrestrained nuclear arms race. While both great powers dangerously use their nuclear arsenals to reinforce or expand their imperial spheres of influence, nuclear arms racing also increases the dangers of nuclear war as a consequence of accidents and miscalculations.

The decision to abandon the Treaty is apparently an expression of President Trump's vision of "America First" U.S. world dominance, including the self-defeating campaign to weaken and contain China, as well as his and National Security Advisor John Bolton's disregard for treaties and international cooperation. While it is a dangerous escalation on its own terms, it builds on two decades of increasingly aggressive U.S. military policies: NATO expansion initiated during the Clinton Administration, withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty by the Bush II-Cheney Administration, the Obama Administration's commitment to spend \$1.2 trillion to develop a new generation of U.S. nuclear weapons and

their delivery systems, deployment of missile defences which Moscow fears could be converted into nuclear-armed first strike missiles, and the decision to deploy upgraded and “more usable” U.S. nuclear weapons to five European NATO nations.

Committed to MAD – Mutually Assured Destruction – President Putin has reiterated Russia’s commitment to maintain the balance of forces with the United States. Nuclear-capable missiles have been deployed to Kaliningrad in the heart of Central Europe. To evade or overwhelm U.S. missile defences, Russia is deploying a new long-range multiple warhead missiles, hypersonic cruise and other missiles capable of flying up to five times the speed of sound, and has pledged the deployment of a nuclear-powered “unmanned underwater vehicle” capable of destroying port cities with nuclear weapons.

The last thing the world needs is a new Cold War that most immediately threatens European life and security and ultimately human survival. We urgently appeal for advocacy and actions calling for negotiations leading to the preservation and reinforcement of the INF Treaty, opposition to the deployment of new nuclear weapons based in or targeted against Europe, adoption of and adherence to no first use doctrines, renewed commitments to fulfilling the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty’s obligation for “good faith” negotiations by the nuclear powers for the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and for the redirection of funds currently being wasted on preparations for nuclear annihilation to funding essential human needs.

We call on all European countries, and especially NATO member States, to use all political and diplomatic means to defend the INF treaty. They should be working towards removing all nuclear weapons from European soil and joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The call of nine living former chairs of the Social Democratic Party in Germany to stop Trump's arms' race policies is a first good sign.

We call on the peace movement all over the world: start more and intensive actions for nuclear disarmament, support the TPNW and work towards a world free of all nukes.

Lisa Clark & Reiner Braun

Florence & Berlin, 29th of October 2018

Presidents of International Peace Bureau