

N – Bilateral Measures

Announcement of Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty

[Statement by the White House Press Secretary,
13 December 2001]

The circumstances affecting U.S. national security have changed fundamentally since the signing of the ABM Treaty in 1972. The attacks against the U.S. homeland on September 11 vividly demonstrate that the threats we face today are far different from those of the Cold War. During that era, now fortunately in the past, the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in an implacably hostile relationship. Each side deployed thousands of nuclear weapons pointed at the other. Our ultimate security rested largely on the grim premise that neither side would launch a nuclear attack because doing so would result in a counter-attack ensuring the total destruction of both nations.

Today, our security environment is profoundly different. The Cold War is over. The Soviet Union no longer exists. Russia is not an enemy, but in fact is increasingly allied with us on a growing number of critically important issues. The depth of United States-Russian cooperation in counter-terrorism is both a model of the new strategic relationship we seek to establish and a foundation on which to build further cooperation across the broad spectrum of political, economic and security issues of mutual interest.

Today, the United States and Russia face new threats to their security. Principal among these threats are weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means wielded by terrorists and rogue states. A number of such states are acquiring increasingly longer-range ballistic missiles as instruments of blackmail and coercion against the United States and its friends and allies. The United States must defend its homeland, its forces and its friends and allies against these threats. We must develop and deploy the means to deter and protect against them, including through limited missile defense of our territory.

Under the terms of the ABM Treaty, the United States is prohibited from defending its homeland against ballistic missile attack. We are also prohibited from cooperating in developing missile defenses against long-range threats with our friends and allies. Given the emergence of these new threats to our national security and the imperative of defending against them, the United States is today providing formal notification of its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. As provided in Article XV of that Treaty, the effective date of withdrawal will be six months from today.

At the same time, the United States looks forward to moving ahead with Russia in developing elements of a new strategic relationship.

- In the inter-related area of offensive nuclear forces, we welcome President Putin's commitment to deep cuts in Russian nuclear forces, and reaffirm our own commitment to reduce U.S. nuclear forces significantly.
- We look forward to continued consultations on how to achieve increased transparency and predictability regarding reductions in offensive nuclear forces.
- We also look forward to continued consultations on transparency, confidence building, and cooperation on missile defenses, such as joint exercises and potential joint development programs.
- The United States also plans to discuss with Russia ways to establish regular defense planning talks to exchange information on strategic force issues, and to deepen cooperation on efforts to prevent and deal with the effects of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

The United States intends to expand cooperation in each of these areas and to work intensively with Russia to further develop and formalize the new strategic relationship between the two countries.

The United States believes that moving beyond the ABM Treaty will contribute to international peace and security. We stand ready to continue our active dialogue with allies, China, and other interested states on all issues associated with strategic stability and how we can best cooperate to meet the threats of the 21st century. We believe such a dialogue is in the interest of all states.

Statement by Russian President Vladimir Putin Regarding the Decision of the Administration of the United States of America to Withdraw from the Antibalistic Missile Treaty of 1972

[Moscow, 13 December 2001]

The US Administration today announced that it will withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty in six months' time.

The Treaty does indeed allow each of the parties to withdraw from it under exceptional circumstances. The leadership of the United States has spoken about it repeatedly and this step has not come as a surprise to us. But we believe this decision to be mistaken.

As is known, Russia, like the United States and unlike other nuclear powers, has long possessed an effective system to overcome anti-missile defense. So, I can say with full confidence that the decision made by the President of the United States does not pose a threat to the national security of the Russian Federation.

At the same time our country elected not to accept the insistent proposals on the part of the US to jointly withdraw from the ABM Treaty and did everything it could to preserve the Treaty. I still think that this is a correct and valid position. Russia was guided above all by the aim of preserving and strengthening the international legal foundation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons.

The ABM Treaty is one of the supporting elements of the legal system in this field. That system was created through joint efforts during the past decades.

It is our conviction that the development of the situation in the present world dictates a certain logic of actions.

Now that the world has been confronted with new threats one cannot allow a legal vacuum to be formed in the sphere of strategic stability. One should not undermine the regimes of non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons.

I believe that the present level of bilateral relations between the Russian Federation and the US should not only be preserved but should be used for working out a new framework of strategic relations as soon as possible.

Along with the problem of anti-missile defense a particularly important task under these conditions is putting a legal seal on the achieved agreements on further radical, irreversible and verifiable cuts of strategic offensive weapons, in our opinion to the level of 1,500-2,200 nuclear warheads for each side.

In conclusion I would like to note that Russia will continue to adhere firmly to its course in world affairs aimed at strengthening strategic stability and international security.

Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty

[Signed 24 May 2002, reproduced from:
White House Press Release, 24 May 2002]

The United States of America and the Russian Federation, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

Embarking upon the path of new relations for a new century and committed to the goal of strengthening their relationship through cooperation and friendship,

Believing that new global challenges and threats require the building of a qualitatively new foundation for strategic relations between the Parties,

Desiring to establish a genuine partnership based on the principles of mutual security, cooperation, trust, openness, and predictability,

Committed to implementing significant reductions in strategic offensive arms,

Proceeding from the Joint Statements by the President of the United States of America and the President of the Russian Federation on Strategic Issues of July 22, 2001 in Genoa and on a New Relationship between the United States and Russia of November 13, 2001 in Washington,

Mindful of their obligations under the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms of July 31, 1991, hereinafter referred to as the START Treaty,

Mindful of their obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of July 1, 1968, and

Convinced that this Treaty will help to establish more favorable conditions for actively promoting security and cooperation, and enhancing international stability,

Have agreed as follows:

Article I

Each Party shall reduce and limit strategic nuclear warheads, as stated by the President of the United States of

America on November 13, 2001 and as stated by the President of the Russian Federation on November 13, 2001 and December 13, 2001 respectively, so that by December 31, 2012 the aggregate number of such warheads does not exceed 1700–2200 for each Party. Each Party shall determine for itself the composition and structure of its strategic offensive arms, based on the established aggregate limit for the number of such warheads.

Article II

The Parties agree that the START Treaty remains in force in accordance with its terms.

Article III

For purposes of implementing this Treaty, the Parties shall hold meetings at least twice a year of a Bilateral Implementation Commission.

Article IV

1. This Treaty shall be subject to ratification in accordance with the constitutional procedures of each Party. This Treaty shall enter into force on the date of the exchange of instruments of ratification.

2. This Treaty shall remain in force until December 31, 2012 and may be extended by agreement of the Parties or superseded earlier by a subsequent agreement.

3. Each Party, in exercising its national sovereignty, may withdraw from this Treaty upon three months written notice to the other Party.

Article V

This Treaty shall be registered pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Done at Moscow on May 24, 2002, in two copies, each in the English and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.