U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Watch, March 20, 2019

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U.S. Plans Flight Tests of INF-Treaty Range Missiles

Defense Department officials told a group of reporters March 13 that the Pentagon is planning to test two types of conventional missiles currently prohibited by the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by the end of this year.

The announcement comes just over a month after the Trump administration announced Feb. 2 that it would withdraw from the treaty Aug. 2 unless Russia returns to compliance with the agreement.

The first missile, a ground-launched cruise missile with a range of roughly 1,000 km (600 miles), will likely be flight-tested in August. It will be a mobile variant of the Navy’s Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missile. Defense officials estimate that the new cruise missile will be ready to be deployed in 18 months. The second missile, a mobile ground-launched ballistic missile with a range of roughly 3,000 to 4,000 km (1,800 to 2,400 miles), is expected to be tested in November. The officials said the new ballistic missile won’t be ready for deployment for at least five years.

The defense officials added that the Pentagon would cancel the tests if Russia returns to compliance with the INF Treaty, but the likelihood of that happening appears low. They also noted that to date there have been no discussions with allies in Europe and Asia about hosting the missiles. One official said the new ballistic missile could be deployed in Guam, a U.S. territory, which would allow the missile to strike targets in mainland China.

The officials did not appear to say how much money for the new missiles is contained in the administration’s fiscal year 2020 budget request released last week. Nor did they provide an estimate of the total cost to develop the missiles.

Russia has reportedly deployed several battalions of the treaty-banned 9M729 cruise missile, some of which can reach European targets. Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered preparations Feb. 2 for the development of a ground-launched adaptation of the Kalibr nuclear-capable sea-launched cruise missile.

Putin also added that Russia would “not deploy intermediate-range or shorter-range weapons, if we develop weapons of this kind, neither in Europe nor anywhere else, until U.S. weapons of this kind are deployed to the corresponding regions of the world.” —KINGSTON REIF, director for disarmament and threat reduction policy and SHERVIN TAHERAN, research assistant

INF TREATY

Russia Gives Formal Treaty Suspension Notice

On March 4, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an executive order suspending Russia’s compliance with the INF Treaty. The order noted that until the United States “rectifies its violations of the said Treaty, or until it expires,” Russia would be suspending implementation of the treaty.

The official announcement was more of a formality, as Putin said Feb. 2—the same day as the U.S. notice of withdrawal and suspension of the treaty—that Russia would suspend its participation in the treaty. The United States first publicly accused Russia of violating the agreement in 2014.

Senior U.S. Military Official: No Plan Yet for Preventing Additional Russian Missile Deployments

Asked by Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) whether the Trump administration has a plan to prevent Russia from building more ground-launched intermediate-range missiles in the absence of
the INF Treaty, General Curtis Scaparrotti, the head of U.S. European Command and the NATO
Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, told the Senate Armed Services Committee March 5 that “I
don’t know that we have a plan today. I know we’re working on what we think that plan might be.”

Scaparrotti added that when dealing with peer competitors such as Russia, “we should look toward
treaty capabilities in order to provide some stability.”

NEW START

STRATCOM Head: New START Critical, but Concerns Loom

Gen. John Hyten, the head of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), emphasized the benefits
that the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) provides to U.S. security at a Feb.
26 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, but expressed concern about Russia’s development
of new strategic weapons which aren’t currently constrained by the treaty.

At the hearing, Hyten noted that he is a “big supporter” of New START. He said the treaty allows him
to “understand what [Russia’s] limits are and ... position my force accordingly,” and provides
“unbelievably important” insight about what Russia is doing through the treaty’s verification
procedures. When asked whether the inspections, data exchanges, and notifications could be
replaced in a timely and cost-effective manner in the absence of the agreement, Hyten noted that
the United States has “very good intelligence capabilities, but there's really nothing that can replace
the eyes-on, hands-on ability to look at something.”

However, Hyten appeared to condition his support for extending New START by up to five years on
Russia’s agreement to discuss its development of several new strategic systems, including a new
underwater torpedo, globe-circling nuclear-powered cruise missile, and hypersonic glide vehicle.

Article V of the treaty states: "When a Party believes that a new kind of strategic offensive arm is
emerging, that Party shall have the right to raise the question of such a strategic offensive arm for
consideration in the Bilateral Consultative Commission."

Hyten said that if Russia is unwilling to put its new systems on the table for discussion, “that causes
me to have concerns.”

The Russian Foreign Ministry was quick to respond to Hyten, noting at a briefing two days later that
the issue of new armaments “outside of the purview of the New START Treaty could be considered in
the context of a strategic dialogue” but “Washington stubbornly avoids this dialogue and prefers to
whip up hysteria in the public space.”

Russia's development of new strategic delivery systems actually strengthens the case for New
START. If the treaty disappears, not only would the United States lose the essential verifiable limits
on Russia's existing deployed strategic nuclear weapons, it would also lose the hook provided by the
treaty to address new kinds of strategic arms.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to allege that the United States has not met its obligations to shrink the
number of its deployed strategic nuclear delivery systems under the treaty. In a March 13 statement,
the Russian Foreign Ministry stated that Washington “has achieved the agreed reduction
levels...through the illegal and unilateral reclassification of about a hundred strategic offensive
systems.”

The statement called this “a serious problem, which must be settled before any discussions on the
extension of the treaty are held.”

Be on the lookout for more analysis on the growing politicization of New START implementation
issues in a forthcoming Arms Control Association Issue Brief.
**S.312** - "Prevention of Arms Race Act of 2019," - Introduced by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.). The bill prohibits funding for procurement, testing, or deployment of an INF Treaty-range ground-launched ballistic or cruise missile until certain requirements are met. It was introduced Jan. 31, 2019. Its original co-sponsors are: Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.), Kamala Harris (D-Calif.), Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.).

- The House Companion is **H.R. 1231**. It was introduced by Rep. Lois Frankel (D-Fla.), Feb. 14, 2019. Its original co-sponsors are Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), Ro Khanna (D-Calif.), and Mark Pocan (D-Wisc.).

**H.R.1249** - "INF Treaty Compliance Act of 2019" - Introduced by Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii). The bill prohibits the Secretary of Defense from obligating or expending funds for missiles banned by the INF Treaty. This legislation is different from S.312/H.R. 1231 by prohibiting funding for research and development of INF Treaty-range ground-launched missiles as well as procurement, testing, and deployment. It was introduced on Feb. 15, 2019. Its original co-sponsors are Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), and Mark Pocan (D-Wisc.).

- There is no Senate companion.

**S.705** - "Preservation of Arms Control Treaties (PACT) Act" - Introduced by Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.). The bill prohibits funding to take any INF Treaty-prohibited action during the six-month withdrawal period and mandates several reports. It was introduced March 7, 2019. Its original cosponsors are Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Tina Smith (D-Minn.), and Kamala Harris (D-Calif.).

- There is no House companion.

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**April (est)**
The 17th session of the Bilateral Consultative Commission under the U.S.-Russia New START agreement, Geneva.

**April 15**
Arms Control Association 2019 Annual Meeting with keynote Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (2007-2011), Washington, D.C. [Register here.](#)

**April 29-May 10**
Third Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2020 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference, New York.

**Aug. 2**
The date by which the United States will formally withdraw from the INF Treaty if the compliance dispute with Russia is not resolved.

**December 2019**
NATO Heads of State and Government Meeting, London.

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