

United States Withdraws from INF Treaty, Torpedoing Global Arms-Control Structure

Russia and China Call Security Council Meeting to Confront New Threats to International Peace and Security

By [Carla Stea](#)

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Region: [Asia](#), [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)
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Ambassador Matjila, South Africa:

“It is indeed deeply troubling that a long-established arms control instrument such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has unraveled, placing not only the region of Europe but the whole world at risk of a nuclear war and catastrophe.”

On Thursday, August 22, 2019, Russia and China called a UN Security Council meeting to address the perils resulting from the US withdrawal from the INF treaty. The High Representative on Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu noted:

“The recent collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty removed one of the few constraints on the development and deployment of destabilizing and dangerous classes of missiles.”

Dmitri Polyanskiy, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation stated:

“On August 2, a very sad and important event took place—the United States withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which, in no small measure, played a key role in building both the regional and global security architecture. ...The INF Treaty was crucial for international détente....With time it became increasingly clear that the Treaty, like other disarmament and arms-control agreements, had become inconvenient for our American partners, who were convinced of their exceptionalism and became increasingly determined to impose their inequitable unilateral schemes of international relations on others....To be frank, today it is not our American partners that we are primarily addressing, because their views are clear. But we are very surprised by the stubborn position that is being adopted by our European colleagues... Are they aware that, because of the geopolitical ambitions of the United States, we are all just one step away from an uncontrolled, unregulated arms race?..... according to publically available data, the US military budget is about \$700 billion, while the budget of NATO amounts to \$1.4 trillion. These are just approximate figures. For reference, the military budget of Russia, which is allegedly a threat to us all, is about \$60 billion, that is, more than 20 times lower than that of NATO....Just think about how much we could have done if the money that our Western colleagues have been allocating for military purposes had been spent to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and help less developed and developing countries.”

There is a sense of déjà vu about this development of a new arms race, which seems to be an inexorable component of capitalist economies. Several years ago both China and Russia were alarmed by the US threat to deploy THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) missiles in the Republic of Korea. THAAD posed an existential threat to both Russia and China. On August 22, 2019 Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun described the current threat resulting from the US withdrawal from the INF treaty in terms clearly reminiscent of the dangers and alarm expressed by Russia and China regarding THAAD:

Ambassador Zhang:

“The United States withdrawal from the INF treaty is another negative act in the pursuit of unilateralism and the shirking of international obligations by the United States. Its true intention is to render the Treaty no longer binding and seek a unilateral, absolute military advantage. China has always pursued a national defense policy that is defensive in nature. China’s land-based intermediate-range missiles are all deployed within Chinese territory. They are for defence purposes only and pose no threat to any other country. China firmly opposes the United States attempts to deploy land-based intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region and hopes that the United States will exercise restraint and be rational in that regard.”

The US seems to have an irresistible attraction to the Asia-Pacific region (among others regions, including Latin America) and an uncontrollable desire to place missiles on the territory of that region, which would facilitate dominance over the entire area, its peoples, and its resources. Decision seems to remain with Japan and the Republic of Korea, theoretically staunch allies of the US and NATO, as to whether or not to permit their territories to host placement of these missiles, which contain the potential to exterminate all living creatures in that area of the world – and, inevitably, beyond. This is the among the greatest of all threats to international peace and security.

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