



U.S. Says Russia Violated INF Treaty With Test

Starting last May, Rose Gottemoeller, the State Department's acting under secretary for arms control and international security, began criticizing Russia's testing of its new ground-launched cruise missile as a violation of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

The *New York Times* reported on January 29 that U.S. officials believe Russia began conducting test flights of the missile as early as 2008. However, noted Fox News, U.S. officials did not have enough information to consider the missiles a compliance issue until much later.



"The United States never hesitates to raise treaty compliance concerns with Russia, and this issue is no exception," the Times quoted Jen Psaki, the State Department spokesperson. "There's an ongoing review process, and we wouldn't want to speculate or prejudge the outcome."

The INF treaty was signed in 1987 by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev (signing shown). At the time, Gorbachev was general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. (An article published in *United Kingdom Materials on International Law 1993* stated, "Russia is now a party to any Treaties to which the former Soviet Union was a party, and enjoys the same rights and obligations as the former Soviet Union.")

"If the Russian government has made a considered decision to field a prohibited system, then it is the strongest indication to date that they are not interested in pursuing any arms control, at least through the remainder of President Obama's term," the Times quoted Franklin C. Miller, who was a special assistant to President George W. Bush and the senior director for defense policy and arms control on the National Security Council (NSC).

Miller is now a principal at the Scowcroft Group, an international business advisory firm managed by Brent Scowcroft, former national security advisor to Presidents George H.W. Bush and Gerald Ford. Both Miller and Scowcroft are members of the Council on Foreign Relations, whose members have long been active in promoting nuclear disarmament.

Fox News reported on January 30 that U.S. concerns about possible Russian treaty violations are based on the operational characteristics of the missile in question, the RS-26. The missile has been tested at both medium-range (which would place it under the terms of the INF treaty) and intercontinental range, which qualifies it as a long-range system under the terms of the New START treaty negotiated in 2009. By definition, medium range missiles are capable of flying from 300 to 3,400 miles and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) have a range beyond 3,400 miles.

Fox noted that Republicans have asked the White House to share any intelligence it has on suspected violations of the INF treaty with Congress. They have also urged the administration to be more aggressive in demanding that Russia comply with the treaty.



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"Briefings provided by your administration have agreed with our assessment that Russian actions are serious and troubling, but have failed to offer any assurance of any concrete action to address these Russian actions," Reps. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-Calif.) and Mike Rogers (R-Mich.) said in a letter sent to President Obama in April. McKeon chairs the House Armed Services Committee, while Rogers chairs the House Intelligence Committee.

Iran's Press TV quoted the following statement from McKeon and three Republican subcommittee chairs: "If the Administration wishfully waves away blatant infractions on current agreements, how are we supposed to trust future pacts?"

"Since 2012, Congress has pushed the Administration to take Russian cheating on nuclear treaties seriously," the committee chairmen said. "We have been ignored, as has Russia's material breach of the central arms control treaty of the nuclear era. Treaties are meaningless unless both sides sign in good faith."

Russia's RIA Novosti news reported on January 30 that Russian media have reported since 2005 that Russia was considering withdrawing from the INF treaty.

Last June, Russian Chief of Staff Sergei Ivanov questioned the value of the INF treaty for his country, since Russia faces many potential threats on its borders and the United States does not.

"The Americans have no need for this class of weapon, they didn't need it before and they don't need it now," Ivanov told state news channel Rossiya-24. "They could theoretically only attack Mexico and Canada with them, because their effective radius doesn't extend to Europe." Technically this is not true, as the United States could base the missiles in western Alaska, within striking range of Russia and North Korea.

RIA Novosti noted that Russia and the United States signed the New START treaty in 2010 that caps the number of long-range missiles and bombers in the countries.

The New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Treaty (which replaced Start I, signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1991 and expired in 2009) was signed between the United States and the Russian Federation in Prague on April 8, 2010. Under the terms of the treaty, the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers would be reduced by one-half.

On May 13, 2010, President Obama submitted the agreement for ratification to the Senate. When the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 14-4 in favor of ratifying New START on September 16, Senator John Kerry and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed optimism that ratification was near. However, it was held up by conservatives led by Senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) The Obama administration made a push to get New START ratified during the 2010 post-election lame-duck session and on December 22 the Senate ratified of the treaty by a vote of 71 to 26.

[The New American](#) warned about the severe pitfalls of New START back in 2010, quoting a report from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* stating that White House and "military leaders have urged ratification of the treaty as soon as possible, claiming that 'every day it's not passed is a day that the United States can't inspect or verify Russia's nuclear weapons cache.'"

The New American pointed out that such an assertion presumes that a piece of paper would guarantee the cooperation needed on the part of Russia's political and military leaders to ensure accurate verification, and that the treaty would reduce both parties' total number of nuclear weapons by one-third and halve the number of strategic missiles. If we complied with the terms of the treaty, our own



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defenses would be weakened, but compliance by our counterpart signer would be subject only to the good will of the Russians.

Russia's current bending of the rules to test its new missiles is a good indication of how much good will the former communist state has.

Furthermore, noted previous TNA articles, though the New START is promoted as a "bilateral" treaty, it serves to fulfill a long-standing plan to place the world's nuclear arsenal under the control of the United Nations. A clear indication of this is reflected by its concluding language: "This Treaty shall be registered pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations."

The plan to turn over our nuclear arsenal has been in the works for decades, at least since September 25, 1961, when President John F. Kennedy presented to the 16th General Assembly of the United Nations a disarmament proposal entitled *Freedom from War: The United States Program for General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World* (State Department Publication 7277).

After outlining the plan's first two stages, the document states:

By the time Stage II [of the three-stage disarmament program] has been completed, the confidence produced through a verified disarmament program, the acceptance of rules of peaceful international behavior, and the development of strengthened international peace-keeping processes within the framework of the U.N. should have reached a point where the states of the world can move forward to Stage III. In Stage III progressive controlled disarmament and continuously developing principles and procedures of international law would proceed to a point where *no state would have the military power to challenge the progressively strengthened U.N. Peace Force* and all international disputes would be settled according to the agreed principles of international conduct. [Emphasis added.]

Faced with Russian cheating on any disarmament treaty we sign with it, and eventual control of our own defense by the UN, we would be better off doing what Russia's Chief of staff Sergei Ivanov did and question the value of the INF and all other disarmament treaties for our country.

Photo: U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signing the INF Treaty

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