

# Meeting with permanent members of the Security Council

Vladimir Putin held a briefing session with permanent members of the Security Council.

August 23, 2019 12:30 The Kremlin, Moscow

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The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko, State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office Anton Vaino, Secretary of the Security Council Nikolai Patrushev, Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, and Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service Sergei Naryshkin.

Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov was also invited to the meeting.

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**President of Russia Vladimir Putin:** Good afternoon, colleagues.

I would like to begin with what you generally know: on August 18, the United States made a test launch of a ground-based cruise missile, which, according to the US military, hit the target at a distance of over 500 kilometres.

Such weapons are prohibited under the 1987 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. In addition, the use of the MK-41 universal launcher during the test fully confirms the validity of the claims that Russia set forth to the United States during the agreement's validity period.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the deployment of such launch systems on land, at the US missile defence base in Romania, and their forthcoming deployment in Poland is a direct, substantial, and flagrant violation of the INF Treaty.

The Americans stubbornly rejected this, claiming that the ground-based MK-41 was allegedly unable to launch Tomahawk sea-based cruise missiles. Now the fact of the violation is evident, and impossible to dispute – they themselves have actually spoken about it.

And of course, the question arises: how do we know now what exactly they are going to deploy in Romania and Poland? Missile defence systems or missile strike systems of quite a long range?

The fact that stands out is that the testing of a missile with the characteristics prohibited under this Treaty took place only 16 days after the Washington's denunciation of the Treaty. Clearly, the test was not an improvisation but another link in the chain of long-planned measures that were taken in the past.

This only proves the validity of our concerns that were expressed earlier. Even in prior years, we were aware that the United States had long been developing the weapons banned by the INF Treaty. We repeatedly informed our partners about that.

But instead of rectifying this unacceptable situation and getting back to observing the Treaty, the Americans orchestrated a propaganda campaign claiming that Russia is in breach. As we all see now, the only purpose of that campaign was to provide cover for Washington's own actions in violation of the Treaty and its initial plan to withdraw.

All this leaves us in no doubt as to the true intentions of the United States, which is that, once the previous restrictions are removed, they will be free to deploy previously banned missiles in various regions of the world. High-ranking US politicians are claiming that the deployment of new arms systems may start in the Asia-Pacific region, which is also affecting our vital interests because they will be close to the Russian border.

As you know, we never wanted, we still do not want and we will not be dragged into a cost-intensive arms race that would be destructive for our economy. Let me remind you that

Russia has a rather modest defence spending ranking: we are seventh in the world after the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, Great Britain, France and Japan.

Development of our new and truly unique advanced weapons was triggered and, in a manner of speaking, provoked by the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2003. We were simply forced and even obligated to enhance the security of our nation. We are doing it now and will continue to do that in the future, there is no question about it.

At the same time, considering the new circumstances, I instruct the Defence Ministry, the Foreign Ministry and other competent agencies to analyse the level of threat posed to our country by the above actions of the United States, and take exhaustive measures for a reciprocal response.

Meanwhile, Russia remains open to an equal and constructive dialogue with the United States aimed at restoring trust and strengthening international security.

Let us discuss this matter further.

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### **Publication status**

Published in sections: News, Transcripts, Security Council

Publication date: August 23, 2019, 12:30

Direct link: [en.kremlin.ru/d/61359](http://en.kremlin.ru/d/61359)