

Open Letter from American, Russian, and European Young Leaders on the Critical Importance of Arms Control

18 December 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

President Vladimir Putin
The Kremlin
Moscow, Russian Federation

Dear President Trump and President Putin:

We are writing to you because we are gravely concerned by the possible collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and urge you to preserve the agreement, resolve compliance issues, and work to protect the nuclear arms control infrastructure that has underpinned global security for decades. It is that security that allowed our generation to move past the constant fear of nuclear war. We now believe that security is at risk.

We are members of the Younger Generation Leaders Network on Euro-Atlantic Security (YGLN), a collection of young professionals from 28 countries across the Euro-Atlantic region spanning from Vancouver to Vladivostok. We are diplomats, researchers, civil servants, academics, journalists, lawyers, and economists. Though we have different perspectives on many aspects of Euro-Atlantic security, we share a deep concern that the risk of nuclear weapons use is higher today than it has ever been in our lifetimes.

For over forty years, nuclear arms control agreements, such as the INF Treaty, have provided stability and predictability to the most consequential nuclear relationship on the planet. The INF Treaty eliminated an entire class of weapons from U.S. and Russian arsenals and reduced the risk of nuclear war in Europe. The destruction of that agreement may spark a dangerous new arms race in a world already beset with instability.

It is our generation that will have to bear the costs and the risks of destabilizing nuclear policy decisions taken today. It is with that in mind that we call on you to urgently implement the following recommendations:

- 1) **Preserve the INF Treaty.** Rather than abandoning the agreement, the United States and Russia should urgently seek to resolve compliance issues through technical talks focused on practical, mutually-amenable solutions. Moscow and Washington should also intensify diplomatic efforts to begin a global conversation on the risks posed by intermediate-range ballistic missiles.
- 2) **Extend the New START Treaty until 2026.** Set to expire in February 2021, the New START Treaty provides common-sense limits and verification on the

numbers of U.S. and Russian deployed strategic weapons and delivery vehicles. Extending the treaty until 2026 will help ensure that our generation continues to benefit from the transparency and predictability that it provides.

3) Initiate a dialogue on nuclear risk reduction. Officials from Moscow, Washington, and European capitals should establish an official and sustained dialogue on nuclear risk reduction and strategic stability. The dialogue should include discussions on measures to reduce the risk of accident and miscalculation, as well as on the impacts of cyber, space, and precision-guided conventional weapons on strategic stability.

4) Declare that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” Issuing such a joint statement would offer a much-needed signal to political and military leaders in our countries that preventing nuclear war remains a top priority.

We respectfully ask that you and your advisors take these recommendations under consideration and act now before it is too late to reverse course. Your legacy and our future are at stake. Do not leave the next generation with another Cold War.

Sincerely,

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