The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Threatens to Target U.S. Allies If Trump Exits Treaty

By Bloomberg

December 05, 2018



Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Russia will target countries hosting U.S. missiles if Washington goes ahead with plans to pull out of a landmark Cold War arms treaty, General Staff chief Valery Gerasimov said Wednesday.

"If the INF treaty is destroyed, we won't leave it without a response," he said in a presentation to foreign military attaches in Moscow, according to an official transcript. "You as military professionals must understand that the target for Russian retaliation won't be U.S. territory but the countries where the intermediate-range missiles are deployed."

His comments came hours after the U.S. said it would pull out of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 60 days if Russia doesn't stop alleged violations. Moscow says it's complying with the deal. Gerasimov accused the U.S. of seeking to shift the blame for its demise to Russia.

The U.S. has said it has no plans to deploy land-based nuclear missiles in Europe once it pulls out of the treaty. In the past, Russia has threatened to target European countries that hosted U.S. missile defenses.

Related article: Russia Says U.S. Has Shown No Evidence It Is in Breach of Nuclear Treaty

Earlier Wednesday, the Defense Ministry said it's deployed laser weapons, one of several systems President Vladimir Putin touted as a new generation of armaments during his annual address in March.

The Peresvet laser, named after a 14th century Orthodox monk who fought in single combat against a Tatar champion at the Battle of Kulikovo, was deployed by the army on Dec. 1, the ministry said in an emailed statement.

Putin in March described the new arms as Russia's response to the U.S. decision in 2002 to pull out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and develop its global defense shield. While Peresvet's technical specifications are secret, military experts say it can be used against drones, missiles and aircraft.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told NATO allies on Tuesday that the U.S. is setting a two-month deadline for Russia to return to compliance with the INF treaty before carrying out President Donald Trump's threat in October to withdraw from the accord. Russia denies breaching the treaty, which bans deployment of ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 kilometers (311 miles) to 5,500 kilometers, and has said it wants to hold talks with the U.S. on preserving the agreement.

"The U.S. has presented no evidence that the Russian side in any way violates or fails to comply with the terms of the agreement," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters in Moscow. The INF treaty is "one of the key pillars of strategic stability" and Russia's ready to discuss any problems with the accord without "baseless accusations and ultimatums," she said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/12/05/russia-threatens-to-target-us-allies-if-trump-exits-treaty-a63717