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Russia 'Not Interested' in Arms Race With U.S., Putin Says

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Russia is being pulled into an arms race with the United States against its will, President Vladimir Putin has said in an interview with Serbian media.

Putin has in the past accused the U.S. of increasing the risk of nuclear war by threatening to exit the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). U.S.-Russian talks on the future of the key arms control treaty ended in an impasse on Tuesday in Geneva.

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"Naturally, we are not going to turn a blind eye to the deployment of American missiles, which present a direct threat to our security," Putin said in comments published on the Kremlin's website Wednesday

“We will have to take effective countermeasures," the Russian president added.

“However, Russia, as a responsible and sensible country, has no interest in a new arms race,” Putin told Serbia’s Politika and Večernje Novosti newspapers.

The INF Treaty bans Moscow and Washington from stationing short- and intermediate-range, land-based missiles in Europe.

Washington has threatened to pull out of the accord over what it says are Russian violations. Russia’s Foreign Ministry reportedly plans to hold a briefing on the treaty’s fatefor diplomats from partner and ally countries this Friday.

Putin’s comments were followed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov telling reporters Wednesday that Moscow was ready to work to save the INF treaty and hopes Washington will take a responsible approach to arms control.

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