The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

France's Macron Denies Accepting Putin's Anti-Missile Proposal

By Reuters

November 28, 2019



France has said EU states want to play a role in negotiations after the demise of the pact. **Kremlin.ru**

French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday denied having accepted a Russian proposal to impose a moratorium on missile deployments in Europe, but said it was important the Kremlin initiative not be simply dismissed.

Russia has called on the United States and other countries to declare a moratorium on the deployment of short- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe after a treaty banning such a move formally ended in August.

Related article: 'Destructive U.S.': Russia Reacts to INF Treaty Withdrawal

Macron, who met transatlantic alliance NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg in Paris for talks on Thursday, said France had "absolutely not accepted" the proposal, as suggested in

leaks in the German press earlier this week.

"But we considered that, as a basis for discussion, we shouldn't just brush it off... Let's be serious, this is the security of Europe we're talking about," he said.

The Cold War-era Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) between Russia and the United States banned land-based missiles with a range of 310-3,400 miles, reducing the ability of both countries to strike at short notice.

Macron said European countries should have a role to play in negotiations after the demise of the pact.

"The INF treaty was revoked by the United States, but I remind you that it's our security which is at stake. That of our European allies."

"It implies that Europeans should be involved in this future treaty. We can't outsource our security to a bilateral agreement in which no European is a stake-holder."

Acknowledging concerns in eastern Europe about his overtures to Russia, Macron said France would be "uncompromising" in defending European allies' sovereignty if they were attacked, thanks to troops in the Baltics.

"But has the absence of dialogue with Russia made the European continent any safer? ... I don't think so," he added.

On Thursday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Macron had replied to a moratorium proposal from President Vladimir Putin. NATO has called the proposal not "credible" and said Moscow has already deployed illegal missiles, something Russia denies.

"Of course, (Macron's) answer is not detailed. But at least, it expressed an understanding of (Russia's) concern and a readiness for dialogue on this score," Peskov was quoted by Interfax as saying.

The spokesman said Macron and Putin would discuss the proposal in Paris on Dec. 9, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/11/28/frances-macron-denies-accepting-putins-anti-missile-proposal-a68395