

# International Physicians Urge US and Russia to Preserve INF Treaty, Begin Negotiations for Nuclear Abolition

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For Immediate Release

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*Boston, MA - US President Donald Trump announced on Saturday that he is considering having the United States withdraw from the 1987 Treaty on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF). The following is the response of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), winner of the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize.*

In a world already nervous about the intentions of the nuclear weapons states and their continued modernization of nuclear weapons, the Trump Administration's consideration of withdrawing from the historic INF Treaty is grave and unwelcome news.

"It is very disturbing that the agreement that was the beginning of the end of the Cold War may be tossed aside by President Trump at the same time that the US is officially leaving the Iran nuclear deal," said IPPNW Board Chair Dr. Bjorn Hilt of Norway.

The big loser in the new East-West confrontation could be Europe. Before the conclusion of the INF treaty thirty years ago, there was an uncontrolled arms race between the major powers. If nuclear war had broken out, either by intention or accident, it likely would have begun in Europe and would have obliterated the nations in its front lines. The signing of the historic INF treaty in 1987 by President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev relieved some of the immediate danger. Its impending demise threatens a relapse into a new Cold War.

"Both the US and Russia own a share of the blame for this situation, with each accusing the other of breaking the contract," said Dr. Alex Rosen, Chairman of IPPNW Germany. "The recent upgrades of both sides, especially the development of medium-range cruise missiles, but also the Russian deployment of short-range missiles in Kaliningrad and the establishment of a missile defense system by the United States in Romania and Poland contradict the spirit of the INF agreement. It is time to settle these questions at the negotiating table."

Citing both President Putin's and President Trump's expressed desire at different points in their careers to negotiate the total abolition of nuclear weapons, IPPNW called upon the two leaders to begin a wider discussion of their nuclear arsenals, rather than ending an iconic nuclear weapons limitation treaty.

With the passage of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at the United Nations last year by a vote of 122-1-1, it is clear that a majority of nations favor the total abolition of nuclear weapons. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), co-founded by IPPNW in 2007, received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its work in promoting the TPNW.

"These nations and the people of the world are sending a clear signal to the nuclear weapons states to pay heed to their obligation to completely disarm under the 50-year old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)," said IPPNW co-President Dr. Ira Helfand. "The ['Back from the Brink' Campaign](#) in the US outlines steps that could be taken by Congress and the US President, if they wish to be true leaders in avoiding nuclear war. This should not be a partisan issue. As President Reagan famously said, 'nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.' At a time when we desperately need steps forward toward disarmament, withdrawing from the INF treaty would be major step backward."

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