



## **ABM Treaty Fact Sheet**

Statement by the Press Secretary

Announcement of Withdrawal from the Abm Treaty

The circumstances affecting U.S. national security have changed fundamentally since the signing of the ABM Treaty in 1972. The attacks against the U.S. homeland on September 11 vividly demonstrate that the threats we face today are far different from those of the Cold War. During that era, now fortunately in the past, the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in an implacably hostile relationship. Each side deployed thousands of nuclear weapons pointed at the other. Our ultimate security rested largely on the grim premise that neither side would launch a nuclear attack because doing so would result in a counter-attack ensuring the total destruction of both nations.

Today, our security environment is profoundly different. The Cold War is over. The Soviet Union no longer exists. Russia is not an enemy, but in fact is increasingly allied with us on a growing number of critically important issues. The depth of United States-Russian cooperation in counterterrorism is both a model of the new strategic relationship we seek to establish and a foundation on which to build further cooperation across the broad spectrum of political, economic and security issues of mutual interest.

Today, the United States and Russia face new threats to their security. Principal among these threats are weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means wielded by terrorists and rogue states. A number of such states are acquiring increasingly longer-range ballistic missiles as instruments of blackmail and coercion against the United States and its friends and allies. The United States must defend its homeland, its forces and its friends and allies against these threats. We must develop and deploy the means to deter and protect against them, including through limited missile defense of our territory.

Under the terms of the ABM Treaty, the United States is prohibited from defending its homeland against ballistic missile attack. We are also prohibited from cooperating in developing missile defenses against long-range threats with our friends and allies. Given the emergence of these new threats to our national security and the imperative of defending against them, the United States is today providing formal notification of its withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. As provided in Article XV of that Treaty, the effective date of withdrawal will be six months from today.

At the same time, the United States looks forward to moving ahead with Russia in developing elements of a new strategic relationship.

- In the inter-related area of offensive nuclear forces, we welcome President Putin's commitment to deep cuts in Russian nuclear forces, and reaffirm our own commitment to reduce U.S. nuclear forces significantly.
- We look forward to continued consultations on how to achieve increased transparency and predictability regarding reductions in offensive nuclear forces.
- We also look forward to continued consultations on transparency, confidence building, and cooperation on missile defenses, such as joint exercises and potential joint development programs.
- The United States also plans to discuss with Russia ways to establish regular defense planning talks to exchange information on strategic force issues, and to deepen cooperation on efforts to prevent and deal with the effects of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

The United States intends to expand cooperation in each of these areas and to work intensively with Russia to further develop and formalize the new strategic relationship between the two countries.

The United States believes that moving beyond the ABM Treaty will contribute to international peace and security. We stand ready to continue our active dialogue with allies, China, and other interested states on all issues associated with strategic stability and how we can best cooperate to meet the threats of the 21st century. We believe such a dialogue is in the interest of all states.