

Labour CND Motion for Annual Women's Conference EXPLAINER

- **INF Treaty**

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was signed by Ronald Reagan on behalf of the United States and Mikhail Gorbachev for the Soviet Union in December 1987. Under the Treaty, the two agreed: not to possess, produce or flight test ballistic missiles or ground launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) with a range of between 500-5,000 kilometres; not to possess or produce launchers for these missiles; and to an on-site verification process. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI Year Book 2007) records that 2,692 short- and medium-range missiles had been destroyed by 1991. That same year, US cruise missiles were removed from the Greenham Common airbase in Berkshire.

The INF helped clear the way for subsequent US-Russia arms control agreements – including the New START Treaty of February 2011, a US-Russia arms reduction agreement coming up for renewal in 2021. Reuters reports that President Trump has attacked this Treaty and National Security Adviser John Bolton is blocking talks on renewal; it also reports that President Putin has signalled willingness to extend it. New START limits the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers and warheads to 800 – including intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers, submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments.

- **Trump's statement**

At a Mid-Term election rally in Nevada on 20 October, President Trump announced his intention to withdraw from INF Treaty, claiming that Russia has failed to abide by it. Trump told the press afterwards

- 'Russia has violated the agreement; they have been violating it for many years. And we're not going to let them violate a nuclear agreement and go out and do weapons and we're not allowed to';
- 'if Russia's doing it and if China's doing it and we're adhering to the agreement, that's unacceptable';
- 'We'll have to develop those weapons, unless Russia comes to us and China comes to us and they all come to us and say, let's really get smart, and let's none of us develop those weapons.'

The US claims that Russia has failed to comply with the terms of the agreement, by developing a GLCM the Pentagon calls the SSC-8 (Russian designation 9M729). Russia also claims that the US violates the terms of the Treaty.

- **Making the case for this resolution**

- ❖ Scrapping the INF Treaty would re-introduce the spectre of nuclear war on Britain's doorstep. Britain's nuclear weapons would make it more likely we'd become a target in such a conflict.
- ❖ Trump has not only put the possibility of nuclear confrontation in Europe back on the table, he has also hinted at a wider threat – that of a world-scale military confrontation between the US and China.
- ❖ France, Germany and the EU have defended the INF Treaty – calling for greater Russian transparency but making clear they oppose US withdrawal.
- ❖ The UK government's response is ambiguous at best. Within 24 hours of Trump's statement Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said Russia had made a 'mockery' of the INF and must 'get its house in order'. See for example <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/oct/21/uk-backs-trumps-nuclear-treaty-withdrawal-blames-russia-for-breakdown>
- ❖ Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton Kemptown Labour MP) has tabled an Early Day Motion, EDM 1744 on US withdrawal from INF treaty which has attracted cross-party support. Text available at <https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1744>