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## Reports of Russian Violations of the INF Treaty

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In May 2012 the Russian Defense Ministry announced the successful launch of a new ICBM, the third new ICBM announced since the ratification of the New START Treaty. The Defense Ministry was unusually tight lipped about it not even revealing the name of the new missile. It stated only that it was a mobile ICBM that made maximum use of existing components.<sup>1</sup> Russian press reports have been contradictory, ranging from reports that the new missile was a Bulava 30 SLBM derivative to reports it was a modified SS-27 Mod 2 (RS-24/YARS), a resurrection of a Soviet era missile or a larger version of the SS-27. The largest number of reports (*Lenta.ru*, *Kommersant*, *Gazeta.ru*,) say the new missile is based on the Bulava 30 SLBM which would be much more suitable to an intermediate range ballistic missile due to its shorter range and smaller size than the new MIRVed version of the SS-27 (RS-24) which is now being deployed.<sup>2</sup> The range of the Bulava 30 is reportedly only 8,000-km.<sup>3</sup>

The unusual secrecy about this new missile raises concerns that Russian silence relates to a treaty compliance issue. When a compliance issue is in play, Russia generally does not provide technical details about a new missile. For example, in the case of the MIRVed SS-27 which violated the START Treaty, Russia placed no information in the START data exchange on the characteristics of the missile and the exhibition of the missile was not held until March 2011, after the expiration of the START Treaty in December 2009.<sup>4</sup>

If the new ICBM turns out to be a derivative of the Bulava 30 SLBM, a Soviet era small ICBM revival or a two stage version of the SS-27, the missile is likely intended to be an intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) posing as an ICBM designed to circumvent the INF Treaty. In the words of Colonel General (ret.) Viktor Yesin, “Roughly speaking, if the third-stage engine is removed from our three-stage inter-continental ballistic missile Topol-M, one will have an intermediate range missile.”<sup>5</sup>

There now is a broad pattern of INF-related Russian compliance issues being reported in the Russian press. In fact, Russia has repeatedly threatened to withdraw from the INF Treaty. This issue was first raised by then-Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov (now Kremlin Chief of Staff) who called the Treaty a “mistake” and a “Cold War relic.”<sup>6</sup> Then-Chief of the General Staff General Yuriy Baluyevskiy threatened to pull out of the treaty unless Washington decreased its missile defense plans. By 2007, President Vladimir Putin threatened to withdraw from the Treaty unless it was made universal, which was clearly impossible. In February 2007, then-Commander of the Strategic Missile Forces, Colonel General Nikolai Solovtsov said, “If the political decision is made to withdraw from this treaty (the Russian-American Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, or INF) the Russian Strategic Missile Forces will be ready to fulfill this task.”<sup>7</sup> That same year, Major General Midykhat Vildanov, a professor at the Academy of Military Sciences, called for “pragmatic approaches to the observance of the INF Treaty in support of the state’s national security.”<sup>8</sup> Major General Vladimir Vasilenko, head of the 4<sup>th</sup> Central Research and Development Institute of the Russian Defense Ministry stated: “Deploying ground-based medium-range missiles may be one of the options for insuring national security.”<sup>9</sup>

The first major INF Treaty compliance issue, as reported in the Russian press, was the R-500 ground-launched cruise missile. The first test of the R-500 in 2007 was announced by then-First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov.<sup>10</sup> Mr. Ivanov said, “It can be used at long range with surgical precision, as doctors say,”<sup>11</sup> (Emphasis added) This is a very odd thing to say about a missile that is supposed to be short-range. After Mr. Ivanov’s announcement, Russian officials went silent about the new missile, which is unusual. Indeed, while President Putin gave the developers of the R-500 missile the Russia State Award, their names were not mentioned “because their identity is a state secret.”<sup>12</sup> It seems clear that the Russian Government does not want the press talking to the missile’s designers.

The Russian press soon began to report that the R-500 was a violation of the INF Treaty. To violate the INF Treaty a cruise missile does not have to fly beyond 500-km (the INF Treaty prohibition is on missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometers) but merely have the range potential to do so.

In November 2007 *Ria Novosti*, an official Russian Government news agency, reported: “The flight range of a new cruise missile adapted for Iskander and successfully tested in May 2007 could exceed 500 km (310 miles).”<sup>13</sup> In November 2008, it revealed that the potential range of the R-500 “can exceed 2,000 kilometers...”<sup>14</sup> Russian arms control expert Viktor Myasnikov wrote that the R-500 exceeded the limit of the INF Treaty on its first test and its range could be expanded to 1,000 kilometers. Russian journalist Oleg Vladykin stated the “R-500 cruise missile...range will presumably increase to 1000 km or more.”<sup>15</sup> *Kommersant*, a major Russian publication, maintains that the range of the R-500 “can amount to 1,000 kilometers.”<sup>16</sup> *Pravda.ru* reports it has a range of 2,000-km.<sup>17</sup> Russian journalists Ivan Konovalov and Vladislav Litovchenko said the R-500 range is “even greater” than 500-km. Yury Fedorov, Associate Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, indicated “there are reports that it could have a range of up to 2000km, as it is an upgrade of the Soviet land based cruise missile RK-55, also known as CSS-X-4 Slingshot...destroyed in accordance with the INF treaty.”<sup>18</sup> Mikhail Barabanov, chief editor of the *Moscow Defense Brief*, wrote that the R-500 range could be more than 1,000-km.<sup>19</sup> Writing in *Ria Novosti* and for *UPI*, Ilya Kramnik said that the range of the R-500, and possibly a second missile, could be between 1,200 and 3,000-km.<sup>20</sup> In *RIA Novosti*, Kramnik concluded the R-500 was a violation of the INF Treaty. In January 2009, he stated that “Iskander can be equipped with cruise missiles with a range of up to 2,000 km (1,243 miles), and even 3,000 km (1,865 miles) that will allow it to destroy targets anywhere in Western Europe.”<sup>21</sup>

In 2009 the U.K. House of Commons Defense Committee noted reports that the R-500 has a 2,000-km range.<sup>22</sup> In addition, STRATFOR obtained information from Russians to the effect that:

The R-500 is a more conventional version of the old Soviet 3M10 long-range cruise missile with a range of 2,600 km, which was deployed on Russian nuclear attack submarines. These older missiles were eliminated also under INF [-for now]. Testing of the R-500 will be completed by the end of 2009; it has been successful thus far. After that it would be a political decision whether to put it into service. Six missiles with the R-500s are already ready to be deployed.<sup>23</sup>

In July 2010, Pavel Felgengauer, a distinguished Russian journalist, stated: “...Moscow plans to covertly quit the 1987 treaty on medium and short-range missiles,” because the Russian

S-300 and the S-400 air defense missiles, the new S-500 air and missile defense interceptor and the Moscow ABM interceptors are nuclear armed and can function as “dual-use as conventional or nuclear medium or shorter range ballistic missiles.”<sup>24</sup> The INF Treaty contains an exception to allow for missile and air defense interceptors used “solely” for air or missile defense but that exception would be lost if it also had a surface-to-surface role. If what Felgengauer claims is true, the Moscow ABM violated the INF Treaty since its first day. Whether the S-300 and S-400 violate the INF Treaty depends upon their testing history. It would be virtually impossible for the S-500 with a stated intercept range of 600-km not to violate the INF Treaty once it is fully tested.

For years there has been talk in Russia of a new intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM). The elimination of all START qualitative and numerical limitations on ICBMs and SLBMs in New START Treaty makes it fairly easy to circumvent the INF Treaty. Because of the permissiveness of New START, a MIRVed IRBM could legally be tested under New START as an ICBM by simply flying it in one test with a single warhead to a range of over 5,500-km. It could then be deployed on rail mobile launchers as what amounts to a heavily MIRVed IRBM and would be completely outside of both New START and the INF Treaty unless Russia agrees to amend the New START Treaty. In December 2011, Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology general designer Yuri Solomonov said, “The transformation of an intercontinental missile into a shorter range missile is not a very difficult task. There are certain problems but they are solvable.”<sup>25</sup> All Russian press reports indicate that Mr. Solomonov was the chief designer of the new missile tested in May 2012. There are also Russian press reports which maintain that the new missile will carry 10 warheads.<sup>26</sup>

The INF Treaty non-compliance described in the Russian press is fully consistent with historic Soviet/Russian compliance behavior and the pattern of Russia threatening preemptive nuclear strikes against U.S. missile defenses deployed in Europe.<sup>27</sup> The U.S. government appears to be ignoring all this activity. Despite the statement by Acting Under Secretary of State Rose Gottmoeller that social media can be an effective tool of verification,<sup>28</sup> apparently the Department of State does not regard reports by important Russian journalists and publications concerning the INF issues described in this paper, as having any importance. None of these

issues, according to the State Department's publication, *2011 Adherence and Compliance With Arms Control, Non-Proliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments* have been raised with the Russians.<sup>29</sup> A review of these issues and the May 2012 new missile launch and the other issues discussed in this paper is certainly warranted. Violating and circumventing the INF Treaty with impunity is far more in the Russian interest than withdrawal from the Treaty. The history of Russian arms control non-compliance certainly generates legitimate concern about Russian willingness to violate arms control agreements.

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<sup>1</sup> "Russia test launches new ICBM prototype from Plesetsk cosmodrome," *Interfax-AVN*, May 23, 2012, available at: <<http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-290599158/russia-test-launches-new.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> "Russia: Survey of Domestic Media on Plesetsk Ground-Launched Bulava Test," Lenta.ru report: 'Russia Successfully Tested a New Ballistic Missile To Spite the European Missile Defense'," *Lenta.ru*, May 26, 2012, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>. "Prototype ICBM From Plesetsk Reported Report by Sergey Smirnov: "The Missile Took Off in the Second Attempt -- Russia Successfully Tests New Intercontinental Missile," *Gazeta.ru*, May 24, 2012, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>. "Russia: New ICBM Labeled Bulava Missile Modification Article by Ivan Safronov, entitled: "Bulava Resurfaces in Plesetsk: What Sort of Missile In Point of Fact Did They Launch Yesterday in Russia." *Kommersant Online*, May 24, 2012, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>.

<sup>3</sup> "Russia Successfully Tested a New Ballistic Missile To Spite the European Missile Defense," *Lenta.ru*, May 26, 2012, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Schneider, "The Future of the U.S. Nuclear Deterrent," *Comparative Strategy*, June 2008, p. 352, available at <<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/ucst/2008/00000027/00000004/art00005>>; "START Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Arms," Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, October 1, 2009, available at: <<http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/130149.htm>>; "New START Treaty Implementation Update," Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, May 17, 2012, available: <<http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/183335.htm>>.

<sup>5</sup> "Russia, US Can Make INF Missiles In 2-4 Yrs, If Need Be – Analyst," *ITAR-TASS*, February 20, 2010, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen J. Blank, *Towards A New Russia Policy*, U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, February 2008, p. 44, available at: <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/4871316/TOWARDS-A-NEW-RUSSIA-POLICY>>; Jane M.O. Sharp, "Russia and America: Is Another Arms Race Afoot?," November 7, 2007, available at: <[http://web.mit.edu/cis/editorspick\\_sharp07\\_audit.html](http://web.mit.edu/cis/editorspick_sharp07_audit.html)>; "Soviet-U.S. INF Treaty A Relic Of Cold War - Ivanov (Part 2)," *Interfax*, May 23, 2007, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>.

<sup>7</sup> "Medium-range Missiles Could Re-appear In Strategic Missile Forces' Arsenal," *Agentstvo Voyennykh Novostey (Internet Version-WWW)*, February 19, 2007, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>.

<sup>8</sup> *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye Online*, May 13, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> "Expert: Russia Could Counter Security Threats By Employing Medium-Range Missiles," *Agentstvo Voyennykh Novostey*, February 14, 2006, available at: <<http://wnc.dialog.com/>>.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Timoshik, "New Russian missile R-500 to destroy any US defense system," *Pravda.ru*, May 30, 2007, available at: <[Pravda.ru http://english.pravda.ru/russia/kremlin/30-05-2007/92443-missile\\_r\\_500-0/](http://Pravda.ru/http://english.pravda.ru/russia/kremlin/30-05-2007/92443-missile_r_500-0/)>.

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<sup>12</sup> Steve Gutterman, "Putin celebrates Russia Day with State Prize ceremony at Kremlin," *The Associated Press*, June 13, 2007, available at: <<http://www.semissourian.com/story/1216976.html>>.

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