

Does US Withdrawal From Another Nuclear Treaty Really Benefit Russia?

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

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No. Obviously Russia does not benefit from the scrapping of yet another treaty designed to prevent a nuclear exchange amid a war with the United States.

Yet, as an attempt to frame blatant US provocations as somehow “Russia’s fault,” a narrative has begun circulating – claiming that not only does the US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty somehow benefit Russia – it was via Russia’s “puppet” – US President Donald Trump – that saw the treaty scrapped.

Spreading this scurrilous narrative are political provocateurs like former US ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul who has re-branded himself recently as a prominent anti-Trump voice – feeding into and feeding off of America’s false left-right political paradigm.

In one post on social media, McFaul would claim:

Why can’t Trump leverage his close personal relationship with Putin to get Russia to abide by the INF Treaty?

In [other posts](#), he would recommend followers to read commentary published by US corporate-financier funded think tank – the Brookings Institution – on how the US withdrawal “helps Russia and hurts US.”

[The commentary](#) – penned by former US ambassador to Ukraine, Steven Pifer – admitted that no evidence has been made public of supposed “Russian violations.” It also admits that America’s European allies – those who would be in range of Russian intermediate range missiles if deployed – have not raised a “stink” with the Kremlin, publicly or privately.

But Pifer claims that the US has no missiles to match those supposedly being developed by Russia, and even if it did, the US would have no where to place them – claiming that NATO, Japan, and South Korea would not allow the US to place such systems on their shores. This, he and McFaul suggest, is why the US’ withdrawal from the treaty “benefits” Russia by granting it a monopoly over intermediate range missiles.

Washington’s Other Withdrawals Prove Otherwise

Yet the US has already withdrawn from treaties and twisted the arms of allies to allow newly developed missile systems to be deployed on their shores.

In the aftermath of Washington’s unilateral withdrawal from another Cold War-era

agreement – the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty scrapped by US President George Bush Jr. in 2002 – the US developed and deployed the Lockheed Martin ashore Aegis ballistic missile defense system in Europe along with the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile defense systems to South Korea – also manufactured by Lockheed Martin.

It is clear the unilateral treaty withdrawals under Bush and Trump, as well as the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems to Europe and East Asia under the Obama administration, represent a continuity of agenda regardless of who occupies the White House. Coupled with these treaty withdrawals and the subsequent deployment of US missile systems to ring Russia and China – there has been a constant build-up of US troops directly on the borders of both nations.

While those claiming Russia has violated the INF Treaty – and has been doing so for “8 years” as claimed in a 2017 op-ed by US Senator Tom Cotton [published in the Washington Post](#), it should be noted that 8 years previously, it would be revealed that in addition to the US placing Patriot missile systems along Russia’s borders, plans for wider military deployments in the Baltic states were also in the works.

The Guardian’s 2010 article titled, “[WikiLeaks cables reveal secret Nato plans to defend Baltics from Russia](#),” would admit:

According to a secret cable from the US mission to Nato in Brussels, US admiral James Stavridis, the alliance’s top commander in Europe, proposed drawing up defence plans for the former Soviet Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

Of course, those “defense plans” manifested themselves in the deployment of US forces to the Baltics, meaning US troops were now stationed on Russia’s borders.

It is clear that a pattern is emerging of the US withdrawing from treaties, deploying missiles, then citing Russia’s rational reaction to hostile forces building up on its borders, in order to withdraw from additional treaties and deploy further military forces along Russia’s peripheries and on Russia’s borders.

Who Really Benefits? Follow the Money

After McFaul’s various claims of the INF Treaty scrapping by the US benefiting Russia, he himself would obliquely admit to who the real beneficiaries were.

In a more recent [social media post](#), McFaul would claim:

If Putin deploys large numbers of new intermediate missiles in Europe, what missile and launcher would the US seek to deploy in Europe in response? & where would we base them? I worry that we wont/cant respond.

Whatever this “missile and launcher” is, whoever builds it will reap hundreds of billions of dollars to develop and deploy it. Each Lockheed Martin ashore Aegis system cost over a billion dollars. Lockheed Martin’s annual revenue rivals Russia’s entire annual military

budget. It is clear who benefits most from the US scrapping the INF Treaty – at least in terms of dollars and cents.

As for McFaul's doubts over Washington's ability to station weapons in Europe – as proven by the US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty – the US is more than capable of developing and successfully deploying controversial and unwanted missile systems to both Europe and East Asia.

The US Department of Defense was already developing plans for an intermediate missile system to do just that – before the US even withdrew from the INF Treaty.

As early as February 2018. Defense One would report in its article titled, "[Pentagon Confirms It's Developing Nuclear Cruise Missile to Counter a Similar Russian One](#)," that:

The U.S. military is developing a ground-launched, intermediate-range cruise missile to counter a similar Russian weapon whose deployment violates an arms-control treaty between Moscow and Washington, U.S. officials said Friday.

The officials acknowledged that the still-under-development American missile would, if deployed, also violate the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

The article also cited Greg Weaver, the Joint Staff's deputy director of strategic capabilities, who would claim that the development of such a missile would not violate the INF Treaty unless it was deployed.

With the US' withdrawal from the INF Treaty, the missile can be openly developed and deployed – meaning even more demand for whichever US arms manufacturer(s) clinches the contract.

Thus McFaul answers for all those in doubt as to who the real beneficiaries are of the INF Treaty's scrapping – the arms manufacturers that will reap hundreds of billions of dollars in the development and deployment of these new missile systems, operating alongside other multi-billion dollar missile systems already developed and deployed in the wake of the US' walking away from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Also benefiting are those who seek to encircle and contain Russia, but lack any rational pretext to justify doing so.

McFaul and others like him craft narratives predicated on the assumption that their audiences are profoundly ignorant and will remain prohibitively ill-informed. Hand-in-hand with the Western media – the public is kept in a state of ignorance and adversity – where overt provocations aimed at Moscow and the US taxpayers' pockets can be easily passed off as "Putin and his puppet" tricking the US into encircling and containing Russia – just as McFaul himself called for in [a lengthy 2018 editorial](#) he wrote for Foreign Affairs.

By framing Russia as the mastermind behind the US' own provocations, McFaul and the special interests he represents get to move their openly stated agenda of encircling and containing Russia several more steps forward – proving just who the real threat to global peace and stability is.

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