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June 14, 2002

**Statement by the Russian MFA on the Legal Status of the Treaty Between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II)<sup>10</sup>**

In May 2000, the Russian Federation ratified the START II Treaty and the New York agreements of September 26, 1997, regarding the ABM Treaty. In this connection, there was a mutual understanding with the U.S. side that the U.S. would act in a similar fashion. This would have made it possible to implement the aforementioned, very important agreements on the strategic offensive and defensive arms of both Parties.

However, the U.S. declined to ratify the START II Treaty and the New York agreements. Moreover, on June 13, 2002, the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty and, as a result, this instrument of international law, which for three decades had served as the cornerstone of strategic stability, is no longer in effect.

Taking into account the above mentioned actions of the U.S. and based on the provisions of the Federal Law on Ratification of the START II Treaty, the Russian Federation notes the absence of any of the prerequisites for entry into force of the START II Treaty and no longer considers itself bound by the obligation, provided for under international law, to refrain from actions that could deprive this Treaty of its object and purpose.

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<sup>10</sup> Official U.S. translation of a Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement of June 14, 2002.