

Text obtained from the permanent archives at www.state.gov

December 13, 2001

Response to Russian Statement on U.S. ABM Treaty Withdrawal

The United States welcomes President Putin's statement. We agree with President Putin that the decision taken by the President of the United States presents no threat to the national security of the Russian Federation.

We have worked intensively with Russia to create a new strategic framework for our relationship based on mutual interests and cooperation across a broad range of political, economic, and security issues. Together, the United States and Russia have made substantial progress in our efforts and look forward to even greater progress in the future.

The United States in particular welcomes Russia's commitment to deep reductions in its level of offensive strategic nuclear forces. Combined with the reductions of U.S. strategic nuclear forces announced by President Bush in November, this action will result in the lowest level of strategic nuclear weapons deployed by our two countries in decades. We will work with Russia to formalize this arrangement on offensive forces, including appropriate verification and transparency measures.

Russia's announcement of nuclear reductions and its commitment to continue to conduct close consultations with the United States reflect our shared desire to continue the essential work of building a new relationship for a new century.