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COMMUNICATION OF 17 APRIL 2000 RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Attached is a communication received from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation, forwarding a statement by the Acting President of the Russian Federation, for the information of Member States.

ПОСТОЯННОЕ ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
ПРИ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯХ
В ВЕНЕ



PERMANENT MISSION
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17 April 2000

Excellency,

I would appreciate your assistance in distributing to Member-States as information document the attached hereto statement of the Acting President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir V. Putin, in connection with the ratification by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of START-II Treaty and the package agreements on antimissile defence of 1997.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valeri V. Loshchinin'.

Valeri V. LOSHCHININ
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of the
Russian Federation to the
International Organizations in Vienna

Attachments:

Statement of the Acting President Vladimir V. Putin on START-II Treaty ratification (Russian original, English translation).

H.E. Dr. Mohamed ElBarade
Director General
International Atomic
Energy Agency (IAEA)
Vienna

STATEMENT
of the Acting President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir.V. Putin, in
connection with the ratification by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of
the Russian Federation of START-II Treaty and the package agreements on
antimissile defence of 1997

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation has just taken the decision to ratify the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on further reduction and limitation of the strategic offensive arms, more widely known as START-II Treaty, and the package agreements on antimissile defence of 1997. It is a wise and important decision. It is important from the viewpoint of the national interests of our state as well as the interests of international peace and security as a whole.

For Russia, the conclusion of START-II Treaty is opening up the possibility to ensure its security on an equal footing of parity with the United States, at a much lower level of strategic offensive arms than before, two times less than in the existing START-I Treaty, and of course, with less expenditure.

The ratification of START-II Treaty opens up the way for starting official negotiations on further reductions in the strategic arsenals of Russia and the USA within the framework of START-III Treaty. Along with that we are ready to reduce our strategic offensive arms, naturally, on a mutual basis with the USA to much lower level than it was envisaged by the Russian -- American agreement of 1997 in Helsinki, i.e. to 1500 nuclear warheads instead of 2000-2500.

The decision of the State Duma gives a good and positive signal to the world community. As a great nuclear power, Russia demonstrates its responsible approach, as it consistently advances towards weapons reduction and disarmament. We are setting an example of practical implementation of the commitments assumed according to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, thus consolidating the regime established by that Treaty.

There is another aspect of a principled importance as regards the decision of the State Duma.

Lately, great importance has been attached to the issue of proliferation of missiles and missile technologies, there is talk about the so called growing missile threat and the necessity to take urgent steps to counter it. The United States has advanced the idea of creating a national antiballistic missile system as such a step, which contradicts the 1972 ABM Treaty.

We stand for taking jointly with other countries measures to counter the proliferation of missiles and missile technologies. However, from our point of view, it should be done not by dismantling the existing agreements in the sphere of disarmament, and first of all of the ABM Treaty. We are in favour of a different approach – the one of strengthening the existing non-proliferation regimes and elaborating new treaties on arms reduction. By ratifying START-II Treaty Russia has made its concrete contribution to these efforts.

We rely on the US making a similar constructive choice. The US is still to complete the ratification procedures to ensure that START-II should come into force, as also to endorse the package agreements on ABM issues strengthening the 1972 Treaty. Indeed, the success of disarmament and formation of a new political climate in the world depends first of all on the actions of our two countries.

Vladimir V. Putin,

Acting President of the Russian Federation

April 14, 2000