

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 23 DECEMBER 2002 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION REGARDING THE STEPPING UP OF ATTEMPTS BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO SET IN PLACE A GLOBAL MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEM

I have the honour to forward herewith the text of a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Russian Federation, dated 18 December 2002, regarding the stepping up of attempts by the United States of America to set in place a global missile defence system.

I would be grateful if this statement could be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed to the delegations of all member States of the Conference and non-member States participating in its work.

(Signed): Leonid SKOTNIKOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Russian Federation to the
Conference on Disarmament

**Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
regarding the stepping up of attempts by the United States of America
to set in place a global missile defence system**

Moscow is watching with dismay as the United States of America steps up its attempts to set in place its so-called "global missile defence system". With the political decision to deploy by 2004 several strategic interceptors with "support" from outer space, a new destabilizing phase has now been reached in the implementation of these plans.

In this connection, the Russian Federation stands by the views which it expressed after the United States unilaterally withdrew from the ABM Treaty of 1972, the cornerstone of the disarmament process. Abandonment of the principles of the ABM Treaty can only lead to a weakening of strategic stability, a senseless new arms race in the world, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their missile delivery systems, and the diversion of resources from efforts to combat the real challenges and threats of the present day - above all, international terrorism.

As part of their fundamentally new relationship, the strategic partnership that is being formed between them, in their most recent summit meetings the leaders of Russia and the United States have adopted a new - and positive - programme to make further far-reaching reductions in nuclear arms and to combat terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. It is important that a prominent place should be allocated in this programme of joint action to our cooperation in the truly vital and practical matter of non-strategic missile defence. This cooperation, at both bilateral and multilateral levels, should, moreover, be effected within the context of the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council.

Moscow is counting on the United States giving priority attention to the implementation of this particular strategic partnership programme, which has been agreed upon at the highest level, and to enlisting its friends and partners in the programme, rather than in a destabilizing strategic defence arms race, including in outer space.

18 December 2002
