

# The INF Treaty and European defence

The United States has announced its withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, sparking fears of a fresh nuclear arms race between Russia, the United States and China. The collapse of the 1987 agreement, which bans land-based missiles with a range of between 500 kilometres and 5 500 kilometres, has further exacerbated existing concerns about European security caused by the uncertain commitment of US President Donald Trump to the NATO military alliance.

President Trump's approach to security, coupled with Russia's assertive behaviour, have prompted the European Union to put forward initiatives to increase its military capabilities. President Trump started a six-month process of withdrawing from the Treaty in February 2019, blaming the decision on Russian violations. Hopes are not high that an agreement can be negotiated during this period. Furthermore, during the 2019 Munich Security Conference, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on China to join the INF Treaty, but China has argued that this would place unfair limits on its military, and refused.

This note offers links to commentaries and studies on the collapse of the INF Treaty, and on European defence. Earlier papers on defence can be found in a [previous edition](#) of 'What Think Tanks are Thinking', published in July 2018.

## The INF Treaty

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