

**Постоянное  
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## **STATEMENT**

**by Mr. Mikhail Uliyanov,  
Director, Department for Nonproliferation  
And Arms Control, MFA of Russia  
Representative of the Russian Federation  
at the First Committee of the 71 session of the  
United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 3 October, 2016

On 3 October 2016 the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir V. Putin signed the Decree to suspend the operation of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the United States of America concerning the management and disposition of plutonium designated as no longer required for defense purposes and related cooperation signed on 29 August – 1 September 2000 and related Protocols of 15 September 2006 and 13 April 2010.

The main reason for this decision is the fact that since the Agreement entered into force the fundamental change of circumstances has taken place as a result of a number of unfriendly steps taken by the United States over the last few years. These steps include:

- imposing of economic and political sanctions;
- active build-up of the US military presence near the Russian borders;
- development and deployment of the ballistic missile defense system to the detriment of national security of the Russian Federation and global strategic stability;
- adoption of the US legislation aimed at interfering into the internal affairs of the Russian Federation, destabilizing internal political situation, sponsoring extremism, separatism and economic criminal activities. Just to mention a few among them – the “Magnitsky Act” and the “Stability and Democracy for Ukraine Act”.

Suspension of the Agreement is in full compliance with Article 62 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

Another reason for the presidential decision was an obvious inability and lack of will on the part of the United States to comply, fully and on time, with its obligations under the Agreement and the Protocols.

In particular, the Agreement and its 2010 Protocol provide that the States Parties shall dispose of weapon-grade plutonium surplus by its irradiation in nuclear reactors. This method was chosen to secure irreversibility of the disposition process.

The Russian Federation took all the measures to fulfill its obligations under the Agreement. The BN-800 reactor which was designed “to burn” excessive weapon-grade plutonium has been built and brought into a full-scale capacity operation. The construction of the MOX-fuel production facility has also been almost completed.

The United States failed to fulfil its obligations under the Agreement and one should not expect any change for the better. The construction of the MOX-fuel production facility in Savannah River has been completed only by two thirds and now frozen. Adjustment in design of the reactors needed for burning such fuel has not been made. As a result, according to the assessments by the US experts, it would take from 20 to 30 years to begin the plutonium disposition while the Russian-US arrangements had set the year 2018 for the beginning of such disposition.

Under these circumstances the US, without prior agreement with Russia, decided unilaterally to conduct plutonium disposition with a different method, namely – by mixing it with filling material and dumping in underground salt shafts. Such a method of disposition had been considered earlier, at the stage of negotiations on the Agreement and finally was recognized by the Parties as not guaranteeing irreversibility of the disposition process. Accordingly, there is no such option in the Agreement as amended by the 2010 Protocol.

According to the Agreement, substitution of one method of disposition for another is possible only by agreement of the Parties. The US has not approached the Russian authorities officially through diplomatic channels in this regard. Instead the United States unilaterally started preparations for plutonium disposition using the earlier rejected method. In particular, the US Administration proposed cuts in 2017 budget appropriations for the burning plutonium program.

In the situation when the Russian Federation covered the most part of its expenditures on the construction of the facilities to dispose of plutonium by mutually agreed method, the remarks made by the US officials about Washington’s intention to save money by changing the disposition method cannot but cause perplexity.

We have already been asked by some colleagues today, if the decision on suspension will have any negative impact on the state of affairs in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. I can firmly assure you that there will be no negative consequences for the following reasons:

First. We introduced a quarter of century ago the national moratorium on production of plutonium for its use in nuclear weapons. We would also like to draw special attention of the delegations to the fact that the Presidential Decree of 3 October, 2016 clearly provides that all plutonium designated earlier as no longer required for defense purposes that is subject to the Agreement and the Protocols would not be used for nuclear weapons-related activities.

Second. We stress that Russia does not terminate the Agreement, but suspends its operation. We are ready to resume implementation of the Agreement as soon as the United States rectify the circumstances that caused the suspension. The specific conditions under which the operation of the Agreement could be resumed will be defined by the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

We do expect that the United States will undertake, eventually, the necessary steps to improve the current situation and at the same time make sure that the fulfillment of its obligations under the Agreement starts not in 20 or 30 years, as many US experts predict, but within the established timeframe and in accordance with the previously agreed approaches to guarantee genuinely irreversible process of plutonium disposition.

Therefore, the suspension of the Agreement does not affect international arms control agenda. Our decision is limited only to Russian – US relations being a result of the short-sighted Washington's politics and non-compliance with its obligations.