Russia follows US in suspending nuclear deal

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Russia has suspended the cold war-era intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty after a similar move by the US.

Vladimir Putin announced the decision on Saturday and also instructed the government not to initiate disarmament talks with Washington.

Moscow's relations with the west are strained over a number of issues, including Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine as well as charges of meddling with the presidential election in the US and allegedly being behind a nerve agent attack in Britain.

"The American partners have declared that they suspend their participation in the deal; we suspend it as well," the Russian president said during a televised meeting with foreign and defence ministers.

The US announced on Friday it would withdraw from the INF treaty with Russia in six months unless Moscow ended what it said were violations of the landmark 1987 arms control pact.

Putin said Russia would start work on creating new missiles, including hypersonic ones, and told ministers not to initiate disarmament talks with Washington, accusing the US of being slow to respond to such moves.

"We have repeatedly, during a number of years, and constantly raised a question about substantiative talks on the disarmament issue, notably, on all the aspects," Putin said. "We see that in the past few years the partners have not supported our initiatives."

During the meeting, the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, also accused the US of violating the INF and other arms deals, such as the non-proliferation treaty.

Putin said Russia would not increase its military budget for the new weapons and it would not deploy its weapons in

Europe and other regions unless the US did so.