

US concerned over Russia's announcement to add over 40 intercontinental ballistic missiles

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Washington: US Secretary of State John Kerry has expressed concern over Russian President Vladimir Putin's announcement that he would add more than 40 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) to Russia's arsenal this year, media reported on Wednesday.

"It does concern me," Kerry told reporters via teleconference, adding that the US and Russia, with their arms control treaty, "are trying to move in the opposite direction", Xinhua news agency reported.

Kerry said the two countries had "enormous" cooperation from the 1990s forward with respect to the destruction of nuclear weapons that were in former territories of the Soviet Union.

"Nobody wants to see us step backwards," the top US diplomat said. "Nobody wants to, I think, go back to a kind of Cold War status."

More than 40 ICBMs will enter service in the Russian army this year, Putin said on Tuesday as he unveiled an ambitious plan to reinforce Russia's defense capability.

Putin added that these ICBMs can penetrate any advanced anti-missile defense shield.

Putin's announcement came amid NATO's increasing military build-up near Russian borders. Moscow has been gravely concerned about NATO's intention to deploy heavy weapons in Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries.

Kerry said Putin "could well be posturing", but added that "nobody should hear that kind of announcement from the leader of a powerful country and not be concerned about what the implications are".

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