

CHINA VOWS TO COUNTER U.S. MISSILE PLANS

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China threatened countermeasures on Tuesday if the United States deploys intermediate-range, ground-based missiles in Asia and warned U.S. allies of repercussions if they allow such weapons on their territory.

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said on Saturday he was in favour of placing ground-launched, intermediate-range missiles in the region soon, possibly within months.

U.S. pulled out last week from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, a 1987 pact with the former Soviet Union that banned ground-launched nuclear and conventional ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500-5,000 km. The withdrawal also allows the Pentagon to develop new weapons to counter China.

Fu Cong, Director General of the Arms Control department at China's Foreign Ministry, said Beijing "will not stand by idly" and warned "China will be forced to take countermeasures".

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