

End of the INF Treaty: Are We Entering a New Cold War Era?

INF Sözleşmesinin Sonu: Yeni Bir Soğuk Savaş Dönemine mi Giriyoruz?

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Abstract

This article analyzes possible consequences of the abolition of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed between the US and the USSR in 1987 and banning developing, testing and deploying intermediate-range missiles. The article argues that termination of the treaty would result in a conventional and especially a nuclear arms race as during the Cold War, and might trigger scrapping further agreements, although common sense in both parties enabled extending of the New START Treaty for 5 years. The new environment, with regional and global crises and massive armament by the global powers, including missile defense systems and hypersonic missiles, would endanger possible cooperation.

Key Words: Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Nuclear Weapons, New START, Arms Race, Missile Systems.

Öz

Bu makale, 1987 yılında ABD ve Rusya arasında imzalanan ve orta menzilli füzelere geliştirilmesi, denenmesi ve konuşlandırılmasını yasaklayan Orta Menzilli Nükleer Kuvvetler Sözleşmesinin yürürlükten kaldırılmasının muhtemel sonuçlarını analiz etmektedir. Makale, Sözleşmenin yürürlükten kalkmasının aynı Soğuk Savaş döneminde olduğu gibi yeni bir konvansiyonel ve nükleer silahlanma yarışına yol açacağını ve her ne kadar her iki taraftaki akselitim politikacılar Yeni START Sözleşmesinin süresinin 5 yıl daha uzatılmasını sağlamışlarsa da, daha başka sözleşmenin iptal edilmesi ile sonuçlanabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Küresel ve bölgesel krizleri barındıran ve büyük devletler tarafından füze savunma sistemleri ve hipersonik füze sistemleri dâhil yoğun bir silahlanmanın yaşandığı bu yeni ortam ise muhtemel bir işbirliğini engelleyecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Orta Menzilli Nükleer Kuvvetler Anlaşması, Nükleer Silahlar, Yeni START Sözleşmesi, Silahlanma Yarışı, Füze sistemleri.

Introduction

The early post-Cold War era saw the cooperation of the US and Russia on arms control and disarmament issues, focusing on prevention of proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, especially nuclear weapons. Their efforts enhanced hopes for a world without nuclear weapons in the foreseeable future,

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as articulated by former US president Obama in his Prague speech in 2009. Cooperation reached the extent that Europeans who had pleaded with the US during the Cold War to deploy nuclear weapons in Europe for assurance started urging the US to remove the remaining American tactical weapons located in Europe, calling them “relics of the Cold War.”

However, increased tension between the US and Russia over missile defense efforts, an intense arms race, and disagreement over ongoing regional and global crises such as in Ukraine and Syria, seemed to reverse course for the dream of a world without nuclear weapons. The new security environment resulted in the suspension of cooperation between the US and Russia, unleashing new global competition in nuclear weapons. A host of events—the US withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; subsequent American efforts on the National Missile Defense (NMD) system along with its European component, the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA); the Conventional Global Prompt Strike (CPGS); and modernization programs for nuclear capabilities—culminated in reciprocal actions by Russia to introduce a missile defense project and develop a new nuclear-capable weapon system. As a result, the world entered an extensive arms race in which nuclear weapons and missile systems play the main role.

The INF Treaty (signed only by the US and USSR) played a crucial role in establishing arms control norms on nuclear weapons. The main reasons for the US decision to withdraw from the treaty include Russia’s denial of American accusations that Russia has been violating the treaty for a long time, and the failure of American efforts at multilateralisation of the treaty, especially to include other nuclear states such as China or India. Opposition of officials in the US administration to all international arms control and disarmament treaties-led by former National Security Adviser John Bolton-also played an important role in the US decision. Vehemently opposing US accusations, Russia also withdrew from the treaty, opening the way for development, testing, and deployment of intermediate-range missiles and thus launching a new phase in the nuclear arms race.

Abolition of the INF Treaty could seriously affect security in Europe and the Pacific region, where the US and Russia are expected to deploy new nuclear capable missiles banned under the Treaty. This move would tempt regional states to take counter measures such as deploying or developing, if they have not already done so. Disruption of a long-term and firm arms control norm would also induce nuclear proliferation in these regions, creating the kind of arms race cycle that has been feared since the advent of nuclear weapons.

The new mindset against arms control and disarmament treaties could lead to the abolition of more treaties, including treaties concerning strategic nuclear weapons. Although the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)

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has been signed after long discussions, reluctance for cooperation on arms control issues between the US and Russia could trigger a new arms race. In this event, the world would enter an era of improved strategic and nuclear weapons that would almost certainly be far more dangerous than the Cold War. The environment in the international area with regional and global crisis in addition to an intense armament would deepen the competition between the global players.

The INF Treaty

First part of the Cold War experienced an intense nuclear arms race between the US and USSR. However, the 1962 Cuban Crisis, which brought the world dangerously close to nuclear warfare, served as a warning call for both the US and USSR on how close the world is to nuclear confrontation. That warning call prompted both states to negotiate on nuclear weapons, resulting in the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963. It also opened an era of both sides to engage in détente, in which dialogue and international or bilateral treaties provided a period of relative peace.

Russia's deployment in Eastern Europe in the mid-1970s of SS-20 missiles, with a range of 5,000 km, alarmed Western Europeans, who urged the US to react swiftly to the Russians. Intense debates among NATO members culminated in the "dual track decision" negotiations with the USSR while simultaneously deploying intermediate missiles in Europe. The Americans announced that they would deploy Pershing Missiles in Western Europe if the dialogue part of the dual track decision failed.¹

Negotiations beginning in the early 1980s resulted in the 1987 "Treaty between the USA and USSR on the Elimination of their Intermediate-range and Shorter-Range Missiles", known as the INF Treaty, signed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. The treaty led to the elimination of nuclear and non-nuclear ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of roughly 500 to 5,500 km, and prohibited production, testing, or launch of these missiles while not covering air- or sea-launched weapons.² The treaty did allow research and development of ground-launched systems, and provided for on-site inspection, while a Special Verification Commission was established to monitor compliance with the treaty.

The most important feature of both short range (between 500-1,000 km) and intermediate range (1,000-5,000 km) missiles are their short timeline between launch and strike, which might trigger nuclear strike between the US and USSR. As Sigal pointed out, in a crisis this pernicious interaction could

1 Peter Vincent Pry, War Scare: Russia and America on the Nuclear Brink, Westport, Praeger, 1999, p.16.

2 For more information see the Treaty Text, https://media.nti.org/documents/inf_treaty.pdf

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lead to a war that neither side intended.³ With the Treaty, both the US and USSR planned to eliminate the danger of misunderstanding.

The INF Treaty entered into the force on June 1, 1988. In May 1991, both parties declared elimination of their last missiles covered under the INF Treaty. A total of 2,692 missiles were eliminated after the treaty entered into force.⁴ Thus the INF became the first international treaty that provided elimination of an entire category of nuclear weapons.

As Woodworth put it, “within the world of nuclear arms control, INF itself was in many respects sui generis. Its political dimension was vast and complex. Its military dimension, although not of the scope and size of strategic armaments at the heart of the Cold War superpower nuclear rivalry, has a dynamic quality stimulated by new systems and growing deployments. The US and the USSR as well as other countries with vital interests at stake were wrestling with problems for which there were little precedent.”⁵

Additionally, the treaty started a period of dialogue between the US and USSR. As former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and former US secretary of state George Shultz (who helped negotiate the terms of the INF treaty at the 1986 Reykjavik summit between Gorbachev and Reagan), pointed out, “an important result of the agreements was the emergence of mutual trust between the two nations, and a healthier international environment overall which helped to resolve regional issues, facilitated democratic processes and improved the lives of people in many countries.”⁶

The Post-Cold War Era and Abolition of the INF Treaty

The early 1990s witnessed close cooperation between the US and Russia to control and contain the spread of nuclear weapons and materials in the former Soviet states, as well as to provide and ensure non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, these efforts failed to prevent emerging of new nuclear states, such as India, Pakistan or North Korea.

The US-Russian cooperation provided an atmosphere of peace in Europe and The NATO-Russia Council was established as a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action.

- 3 Leon V. Sigal, “INF Deal Faces Conservative Opposition”, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol.43, No.4, (1987), p.15.
- 4 Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range And Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty), Official website of the US Department of State, retrieved June 06, 2019, from <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/trty/102360.htm>
- 5 John A. Woodworth, “Dispute Resolution in Bilateral Arms Control: the INF Experience” Julie Dahlitz (ed.), Peaceful Resolution of Major International Disputes, New York and Geneva, United Nations, 1999, p.181.
- 6 Mikhail Gorbachev and George P. Shultz, “We participated in INF negotiations. Abandoning it threatens our very existence”, The Washington Post, December 04, 2018.

But Russia's goal, under Putin's leadership, to become a hegemonic player once again, and US efforts that resulted in the destabilization of Eurasia, began with the US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty in 2002, US NMD system with EPAA and CPGS, resulted in renewed hegemonic competition between the US and Russia that also involved strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. Both sides have increased their efforts in ballistic missile defense as well as weapon systems to penetrate through possible new missile defense systems. Thus a new fierce Cold-War-type of nuclear arms race has begun in the post-Cold War era, dubbed "the return of Great Power competition."⁷

The US decision to withdraw from the 1987 INF Treaty bolstered the idea of a new Cold War era. The process started in 2011 when the Obama administration informed Congress that Russia was in non-compliance with the Treaty. The US State Department stated in its yearly Compliance Report to Congress in 2014 that Russia was developing and testing missile systems in violation of the Treaty. President Obama also sent a letter to President Putin reiterating the same allegations in July 2014, stating that he wanted to resolve the issue through dialogue so as to preserve the accord.⁸ According to American officials, Russia first began testing cruise missiles as early as 2008, and the Obama administration concluded by the end of 2011 that they were a compliance concern.⁹

The American accusation is based on Russian developing, testing, and deploying (in western Russia after 2017) of the Novator 9M729 (NATO code SSC-8) missiles, which have a range of more than 500 km and target European countries. NSC Senior Director Christopher Ford publicly announced in November 2017 that the Russian 9M729 missile system violates the treaty; US Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats was the first to provide technical specifications of the weapons system in late November 2018, saying that Russia began developing the missile in the mid-2000s.¹⁰ Russia vehemently denied the US allegations, claiming that the range of this missile is 480 km and thus that it falls under the INF Treaty.

These non-compliance allegations are intensified during the Trump administration. In the 2018 NPR of the Trump Administration, the US again accused Russia violating arms control agreements, with the "production, pos-

7 Nuclear Posture Review prepared by Department of Defense, (February 2018), retrieved May 12, 2019 from <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872877/-1/-1/1/EXECUTIVE-SUMMARY.PDF>

8 Andrew E. Kramer and Megan Specia, "What is the I.N.F. Treaty and why does it matter?", The New York Times, February 01, 2019.

9 Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. says Russia tested Cruise Missile, violating Treaty", The New York Times, July 28, 2014.

10 Roman Goncharenko, "Russia's controversial 9M729 missile system: A not-so-secret secret", Deutsche Welle, December 05, 2018.

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session, and flight testing of a ground-launched cruise missile in violation of the INF Treaty” and argued that “Moscow believes these systems may provide useful options for escalation advantage.”¹¹

On October 20, 2018, President Trump announced that the US plans to exit the INF treaty due to Russian noncompliance. Trump also suggested the US should renegotiate the treaty to include China, which US strategists maintain is the primary long-term challenger to American power.¹² In early December, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that the US has found Russia in material breach of the treaty and will suspend American obligations effective in 60 days, unless Russia returns to full and verifiable compliance.¹³ The US intelligence alleged that Russia has deployed four battalions of the nuclear capable 9M729 cruise missile.¹⁴ In the end, the US government delivered formal notice to Russia on February 2, 2019, that the US will withdraw from the INF Treaty within six months.

On the Russian side, President Putin signed a decree suspending Russia’s participation in the Treaty and ordered the treaty suspended until Washington stops violating the treaty.¹⁵ Russia accused the US of breaching the treaty by testing and deploying the ground-based Aegis anti-missile system in Poland and Romania under the EPAA, arguing that these missiles have offensive characteristics.¹⁶ Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claimed that the U.S. started violating the treaty in 1999 by using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) that has the same characteristics as land-based cruise missiles banned by the treaty.¹⁷ Putin said Russia would indeed design and build weapons previously banned under the treaty — something the US says Russia is already doing — but would not deploy them unless America did so first. He also stated that Russia would no longer initiate talks with the US on any matters related to nuclear arms control.¹⁸ European members of NATO and other European states have been watching the process closely, out of fear that their continent would become a theater in the nuclear arms race between the US and Russia. Under

- 11 Nuclear Posture Review, February 2018, p.9.
- 12 Chase Winter, “What is the INF nuclear treaty?”, Deutsche Welle, February 01, 2019.
- 13 Julian Borger, “US says it will pull out of INF treaty if Russia does not comply within 60 days”, The Guardian, December 04, 2018.
- 14 Michael R. Gordon, “On Brink of Arms Treaty Exit, U.S. finds more offending Russian Missiles”, Wall Street Journal, January 31, 2019.
- 15 “Putin signs decree suspending INF nuclear pact”, Hurriyet Daily News, March 04, 2019.
- 16 “Russia slams US Aegis Ashore missile deployment in Europe as direct breach of INF Treaty”, TASS News Agency, November 26, 2018, retrieved June 10, 2019 from <https://tass.com/politics/1032585>
- 17 Tom Nellis, “Russia summons US diplomat accusing Washington of breaking collapsed INF Treaty”, Express, February 08, 2019, retrieved May 22, 2019 from <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1084658/russia-us-inf-treaty-nuclear-vladimir-putin-donald-trump-kremlin>
- 18 Andrew E. Kramer, “Russia pulls out of I.N.F. Treaty in ‘Symmetrical’ Response to U.S. Move”, The New York Times, February 02, 2019.

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American pressure, NATO members expressed support for the US arguments. Leaders declared that the Allies strongly supported the finding of the US that Russia is in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty and called upon Russia to quickly return to full and verifiable compliance.¹⁹ However, both member leaders and NATO officials repeatedly called both parties to preserve the Treaty for the security of the Alliance.

The EU also has been working to preserve the Treaty since the beginning of the crisis. High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini stated that Europe has been probably the one that has benefited the most from this Treaty and they wish this Treaty to be preserved with full compliance by both parties.²⁰ European leaders, especially French President Macron and German leader Merkel, repeatedly underlined the importance of the Treaty for the security of Europe and asked both parties to preserve the Treaty. Merkel's appeal and efforts urging China to be part of the Treaty immediately was rejected by China.²¹

However, the US rejected warning calls and withdrew from the Treaty. America's policy on the INF abolition is based on two different approaches. First, American authorities have accused Russia of flouting the Treaty with developing, testing and deploying the Novator 9M729 missile systems. In President Trump's words, "For far too long, Russia has violated the INF Treaty with impunity, covertly developing and fielding a prohibited missile system that poses a direct threat to our allies and troops abroad."²² Mike Pompeo stressed that the US "has raised Russia's noncompliance with Russian officials, including at the highest levels of government, more than 30 times, yet Russia continues to deny that its missile system is noncompliant and violates the treaty," adding that "Russia's violation puts millions of Europeans and Americans at greater risk."²³ After his meeting with Putin, John Bolton renewed U.S. accusa-

19 Statement on Russia's failure to comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Issued by the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, February 01, 2019, retrieved July 16, 2019 from https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_162996.htm

20 Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the Press Conference following the Informal Meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers, Bucharest, February 01, 2019, Official website of European External Action Service, retrieved July 18, 2019 from https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/57529/remarks-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-press-conference-following_en

21 Robin Emmot, "China rebuffs Germany's call for U.S. missile deal with Russia", Reuters, February 16, 2019, retrieved July 22, 2019 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-security-china/china-rebuffs-germanys-call-for-u-s-missile-deal-with-russia-idUSKCN1Q50NZ>

22 Statement from the President regarding the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, (February 01, 2019), Official website of the White House, retrieved August 02, 2019 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-regarding-intermediate-range-nuclear-forces-inf-treaty/>

23 David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, "U.S. suspends Nuclear Arms Control Treaty with Rus-

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tions that Russia is violating the treaty and suggested it would be a waste of time to try to persuade the Kremlin to comply.²⁴ Thus both sides blamed each the other side's violation for the abolition of the Treaty and could not reach compromise to preserve the Treaty.

America's second approach has been to include other nuclear capable states into the Treaty, especially China. The US has been concerned about China's nuclear-capable missile programs. As indicated by U.S. Navy Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific, "since the mid-1990s, China has built up the world's largest and most diverse arsenal of ground-launched missiles, and China's inventory contains more than 2,000 ballistic and cruise missiles; approximately 95 percent of them would violate the INF Treaty if China were a signatory."²⁵ According to the US, China also likely plans to use conventional ballistic and cruise missiles as a key element in its strategy to forestall or defeat U.S. intervention in a regional conflict.²⁶

The 2018 NPR of the Trump administration did not directly blame China concerning short- or intermediate-range missile systems as defined under the INF Treaty. However, the document states that "direct military conflict between China and the US would have the potential for nuclear escalation, and US-tailored strategy for China is designed to prevent Beijing from mistakenly concluding that it could secure an advantage through the limited use of its theater nuclear capabilities, or that any use of nuclear weapons, however limited, is acceptable"²⁷ implying that any kind of these missiles provides an advantage over the US.

This has been articulated by US authorities for a long time. John Bolton for example alleged that China's missile capabilities meant there was a "new strategic reality out there" and that the INF Treaty had now become a "bilateral treaty in a multipolar ballistic missile world."²⁸ Mike Pompeo said China should be included in the next version of the treaty but signaled how difficult that could be: "it may be that we can't get there, it may be we just end up work-

sia", The New York Times, February 01, 2019.

- 24 Deirdre Shesgreen, "Dismissing Russian concerns, John Bolton says there is no way to salvage nuclear weapons treaty", USA TODAY, October 23, 2018.
- 25 Statement of Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., U.S. Navy Commander, U.S. Pacific Command before the House Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture, April 26, 2017, retrieved June 26, 2019 from <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20170426/105870/HHRG-115-AS00-Wstate-HarrisH-20170426.PDF>
- 26 Jacob Stokes, "China's Missile Program and U.S. Withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty", Report prepared by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, retrieved July 23, 2019 from https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China%20and%20INF_0.pdf, p.3.
- 27 Nuclear Posture Review, February 2018, p.32.
- 28 Andrew Roth, "US confirms withdrawal from nuclear arms treaty with Russia", The Guardian, October 23, 2018.

ing with the Russians on this.”²⁹ However, China repeatedly rejected calls by the US and Russia to join the Treaty and thus US’ efforts to include China also failed.

It should be noted that there was a fierce lobby in the US opposing international disarmament and arms control treaties during the Trump Administration that played an important role for the abolition of the INF Treaty in addition to Russian and Chinese factors. John Bolton, who described the Treaty as “outdated and outmoded,”³⁰ was regarded as the main impetus for the abolition of the Treaty. He also opposed extending the New START, arguing that “most Republicans who voted in 2010 on ratifying New START opposed the treaty, primarily because the pact has no provisions or limitations on tactical or non-strategic nuclear weapons, and that flaw remains today” adding that “extending the Treaty extends the basic flaw.”³¹ The US also scrapped the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran after John Bolton, who was serving as the Under-Secretary for Arms Control when the US withdraw from the ABM Treaty in 2002, took his office. He is well known for his staunch opposition for arms control and disarmament agreements. Bolton is recently ousted by the President because of disagreement on several issues and the US’ stand has changed especially after Biden has won the election.

Biden Administration signed the New START and opened a new page for cooperation with Russia and China about nuclear weapons. Pentagon stated that “failing to swiftly extend New START would weaken America’s understanding of Russia’s long-range nuclear forces” adding that “just as we engage Russia in ways that advance American interests, we in the Department will remain clear-eyed about the challenges Russia poses and committed to defending the nation against their reckless and adversarial actions.”³² In the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance of March 2021, the new administration underlined that “We will head off costly arms races and re-establish our credibility as a leader in arms control. That is why we moved quickly to extend the New START Treaty with Russia. Where possible, we will also pursue new arms control arrangements. We will take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our

29 Paul Sonne and John Hudson, “Trump orders staff to prepare arms-control push with Russia and China”, Washington Post, April 25, 2019.

30 Oliver Carroll, “Defiant John Bolton signals no way back for arms control treaty after Vladimir Putin meeting”, The Independent, October 24, 2018.

31 Bill Gertz, “Bolton: China Continuing Cyberattacks on Government, Private Networks”, The Washington Free Beacon, June 18, 2019, retrieved July 21, 2019 from <https://freebeacon.com/national-security/bolton-china-continuing-cyberattacks-on-government-private-networks/>

32 Statement by John Kirby, Pentagon Press Secretary, on New START, January 21, 2021, retrieved January 29, 2021 from <https://ua.usembassy.gov/statement-by-john-kirby-pentagon-press-secretary-on-new-start/>

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allies remain strong and credible. And we will engage in meaningful dialogue with Russia and China on a range of emerging military technological developments that implicate strategic stability.”³³ The Guidance highlighted the US’ willingness for cooperation with Russia and China for nuclear weapons. However, Biden’s comments about President Putin, calling him as killer, and China signaled that the tension will be high enough to prevent an effective cooperation.

Possible Consequences

The INF Treaty expired on August 2, 2019. US last-ditch efforts to reach an agreement with Russia or convince China to join the Treaty did not succeed in saving it.³⁴ In essence, the Treaty came about in the context of competition between Cold War rivals in an adversarial relationship, and negotiations were directed toward the specific arms control task of lessening the risks and dangers of nuclear competition.³⁵ The situation has now completely changed and disagreement on the Treaty is on the verge of unleashing a new phase of nuclear competition, with serious long-term consequences that will potentially reshape the global nuclear threat from Europe to Asia.³⁶ Abolition of the Treaty is expected to severely affect the regional and global security environment in the foreseeable future. With Kibaroglu’s words: “we might enter a period where we can seriously miss the cold war era.”³⁷

Many politicians and scholars warned of these possible dangers. Mikhail Gorbachev and George Shultz warned that “abandoning the INF Treaty would be a step toward a new arms race, undermining strategic stability and increasing the threat of miscalculation or technical failure leading to an immensely destructive war.”³⁸ US Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) argued that the US decision is shortsighted and counterproductive, and a giant step away from the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, risking a nuclear arms race instead.³⁹ As argued by a report prepared for the British Parliament, “the wider political relationship between the US and Russia, which is arguably at its lowest

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- 33 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, March 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>
- 34 Peter Baker, “Trump sends Negotiators to Geneva for Nuclear Talks with Russians and also seeks to limit Chinese Warheads”, The New York Times, July 15, 2019.
- 35 Woodworth, “Dispute Resolution in Bilateral Arms Control: the INF Experience”, p.193.
- 36 William. J. Hennigan , “Trump is withdrawing from a Landmark Arms Agreement with Russia. What happens now?”, TIME, February 01, 2019.
- 37 Barçın Yinanç, “End to nuke deal may start ‘era worse than Cold War’: Expert”, Hurriyet Daily News, February 25, 2019.
- 38 Mikhail Gorbachev and George P. Shultz, “We participated in INF negotiations. Abandoning it threatens our very existence”, The Washington Post, December 04, 2018.
- 39 “Feinstein: Abandoning INF Treaty risks Nuclear Arms Race”, Press Release by Dianne Feinstein, February 01, 2019, retrieved June 02, 2019 from <https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=A01F1AF9-A125-4C3D-B756-991594828C41>

since the end of the Cold War, and the ongoing dispute over alleged Russian noncompliance with the INF treaty, which has been overshadowing the arms control agenda more broadly” is complicating the issue and decreasing hopes for future relations.⁴⁰

First of all, security of Europe would be mostly and severely affected. “The treaty is most consequential in Europe; it’s the place that was protected by the treaty.” Nearly all Europeans have stressed this point since the beginning of the crisis.⁴¹ Following the day of the US withdrawal, Germany’s Foreign Minister stated that “with the end of the Treaty, a piece of Europe’s security has been lost.”⁴² Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg stated that “the end of the INF Treaty means a threat to security in Europe.”⁴³ These concerns were intensified with Russian threats as Vladimir Shamanov, Head of the Defense Committee in Russia’s Parliament, for example, stated that “Russia will have to adjust their plans on the use of all arms and branches of the military and, naturally, Europe will find itself in a sticky situation.”⁴⁴

Some European states have gone so far as to hint at a possible crisis with the US if the Americans decide for deployment of new missiles on the continent. Germany, for example, stated that Berlin would staunchly oppose any efforts to station new medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe after the INF Treaty is scrapped.⁴⁵ After the expiration of the Treaty, both sides would be free to develop, test, and deploy short-range and intermediate-range missiles that have been banned since 1978. Just two weeks later after the withdrawal, the US already started testing missiles which has range more than 500 km.⁴⁶ Just three days later, Putin said he had ordered the military to prepare a “symmetric response” after Washington test⁴⁷ thus heralding an imminent arms

40 Claire Mills, “Prospects for US-Russian Nuclear Arms Control”, retrieved June 22, 2019 from <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8421#fullreport>, p.4

41 Hennigan, “Trump is withdrawing from a Landmark Arms Agreement with Russia. What happens now?”

42 “Foreign Minister Maas on the end of the INF Treaty”, Press Release by the German Federal Foreign Office, August 01, 2019, retrieved August 12, 2019 from <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-inf-treaty-end/2236964>

43 “Alexander Schallenberg: Europe must not become the scene of a new arms race”, Press Release by Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, August 02, 2019, retrieved August 12, 2019 from <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/the-ministry/press/announcements/2019/08/alexander-schallenberg-europe-must-not-become-the-scene-of-a-new-arms-race/>

44 Andrew E. Kramer and Megan Specia, “What is the I.N.F. Treaty and why does it matter?”, The New York Times, February 01, 2019.

45 “Russia warns U.S. is preparing to use Nuclear Weapons in Europe”, The Moscow Times, May 14, 2019.

46 “Pentagon conducts 1st Test of previously banned Missile”, The New York Times, August 19, 2019.

47 Will Englund, “Putin orders ‘symmetric response’ to U.S. missile test”, The Washington Post, August 23, 2019.

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race. It is clear that these moves would accelerate the armament of Europe, which has intensified since the US deployed new missile systems in Europe under the EPAA and stationed new units and troops there under the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which NATO adopted after the Ukrainian crisis.

As Europe, the new situation would also destabilize security in the Pacific region heightening tension between the US and China. As long pointed out by Trump, Pompeo, Bolton and other US officials, China has been developing and deploying short-range and intermediate-range missiles that fell under the INF Treaty. U.S. military officials have said 95% of China's ballistic and cruise missiles would have violated the treaty.⁴⁸ Therefore, both the US and Russia have been urging China to join the treaty for a long time, but China has been directly opposed to multilateralization of the INF Treaty arguing that "making an issue out of China on withdrawing from the treaty is totally wrong."⁴⁹

According to the US, China plans to threaten or use its conventional missile arsenal against both regional countries and US military assets and bases in Asia in the event of a future regional conflict, including one over Taiwan or islands in the East or South China seas.⁵⁰ The US has been regarding Chinese capabilities as an important disadvantage in the Pacific region and when freed from the INF constraints, it is highly expected to deploy missiles in Guam or in the territories of its allies such as Japan or Korea. The American Defense Secretary, Mark T. Esper, already stated that he was in favor of deploying ground-based missiles to Asia, a day after the US formally pulled out of the Treaty.⁵¹ Such a move would likely cause a counterbalancing maneuver from China and trigger a new arms race in the region. Chinese officials already warned that they would "not stand idly by and will be forced to take countermeasures."⁵²

Therefore, like the Europeans, American allies in the Pacific also strongly oppose the demise of the treaty because of the possible arms race in the region, and they worry that the US may ask them to deploy missiles to redress China's advantage. Japan underlined it would be "undesirable" for the US to withdraw from the INF Treaty despite feel threatened by Chinese missiles.⁵³

48 "US to test new Missile as Arms Treaty with Russia ends", The New York Times, February 01, 2019.

49 "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Remarks on the US Suspending INF Treaty Obligations and Beginning Withdrawal Process", Official website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, February 02, 2019, retrieved July 03, 2019 from https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1635268.shtml

50 Stokes, "China's Missile Program and U.S. Withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty", p.4.

51 Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Pentagon Chief in favor of deploying U.S. Missiles to Asia", The New York Times, August 03, 2019.

52 Alan Yuhas, "China warns U.S. against sending Missiles to Asia amid Fears of an Arms Race", The New York Times, August 03, 2019.

53 "Japan reluctantly endorses 'undesirable' U.S. exit from INF nuclear arms pact with Russia",

The Philippines' defense minister has said Washington's withdrawal from the treaty has "triggered a nuclear arms race" and he fears Beijing might target his country if the US were to use it as a staging post in a future atomic war with China.⁵⁴

Australia, which has been regarded as one of the possible host nations for future US missiles banned by the Treaty, declared tacit support for the US government, stating that they consider Russia to be in persistent non-compliance with the treaty.⁵⁵ However they underlined that they do not have plans to allow the US deploying missiles in their territory.⁵⁶ After the meeting with Esper, South Korea's defense ministry has said there had been no discussion of placing American intermediate-range missiles in the country, and there were no plans to consider the idea.⁵⁷ Both China and North Korea already warned regional states for possible dangerous consequences of deployment of the US missiles for the region.

The new situation is likely to affect Russian-Chinese relations if Russia decides to deploy missiles on the Chinese border to counter Chinese missile capabilities. Many within the Russian government have long considered the INF treaty discriminatory, and one which places a greater burden on Russia which, unlike the US, is surrounded by countries in possession of significant intermediate-range cruise missile capabilities.⁵⁸ Thus freed from the restrictions of the INF, Russia will likely deploy intermediate range missiles that target nuclear-capable states in the region, especially China, Pakistan, and India. China would react by deploying missile systems to target Russia, thus unleashing an arms race between Russia and China and escalating tension in the region.

The collapse of the INF treaty, on the other hand, would undermine confidence in arms control and non-proliferation regimes between the US and

The Japan Times, February 04, 2019, retrieved July 17, 2019 from https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/02/04/national/politics-diplomacy/japan-reluctantly-endorses-undesirable-u-s-exit-inf-nuclear-arms-pact-russia/#.XTF2R_lzbn4

54 John Reed and Kathrin Hille, "Philippines warns of China threat after US nuclear pact exit", Financial Times, February 21, 2019.

55 Remarks of Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Frances Adamson in Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Legislation Committee, October 25, 2018, retrieved July 14, 2019 from <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22committees%2Festimate%2F726eefc8-0a12-4c57-8016-8d4e4fe45117%2F0002%22;src1=sm1>

56 Trevor Marshallsea, "Australia says it won't be hosting US missile site", Stars and Stripes, August 05, 2019.

57 Josh Smith, "Deploying new U.S. missiles would be 'reckless act': North Korean media", REUTERS, August 14, 2019, retrieved August 18, 2019 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-usa/deploying-new-u-s-missiles-would-be-reckless-act-north-korean-media-idUSKCN1V40RZ>

58 Mills, "Prospects for US-Russian Nuclear Arms Control", p.6.

Russia. Following the withdrawal announcement by the U.S., the Russian Foreign Ministry stated, “the denunciation of the INF Treaty confirms that the U.S. has embarked on destroying all international agreements that do not suit them for one reason or another”⁵⁹ underlining that Russia is not expecting possible steps from the US for arms control and disarmament agreements.

The Trump administration, under Bolton’s influence, seemed unwilling to sign the Treaty. In the NPR, the Trump administration argued that Russia violated the new START and stated that “Russia has also rebuffed U.S. efforts to follow New START with another round of negotiated reductions, and to pursue reductions in non-strategic nuclear forces.”⁶⁰ President Trump called the treaty a “bad deal” and “one-sided”.⁶¹ John Bolton, in his article in 2010, described the treaty as “unilateral disarmament,” arguing that dismantling existing long-range delivery systems would cripple the US’s conventional capabilities.⁶² Bolton’s comments in 2010 demonstrates that his approach is not related to the Russian missile deployments, the Ukrainian crisis, or recent developments in Russia, but rather to long-term American projects such as NMD or CPGS, as he mentioned in the article. He recently also underlined that there is no decision on extension of the new START, but extension is unlikely.⁶³

However, the new administration signed the deal just two weeks after they took office. The New START Treaty has been extended for five years. The Biden administration expressed willingness to cooperate with Russia and China on arms control and disarmament issues in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance. Secretary of State Blinken also stated that “the US is ready to engage Russia in strategic stability discussions on arms control and emerging security issues and they will be clear-eyed about the broader challenges posed by Russia and how our respective nuclear arsenals represent existential threats to each other” and “the US will also demand greater transparency regarding China’s provocative and dangerous weapons development programs, and continue efforts aimed at reducing the dangers posed by their nuclear Arsenal” at the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament.⁶⁴ His remarks include both cooperation and threat. The new Democrat administration is expected to reverse the Republicans’ inflexible international decisions and focus on cooperation rather than unilateralism. However, Biden’s first com-

59 “US to test New Missile as Arms Treaty with Russia ends”, The New York Times, February 01, 2019.

60 Nuclear Posture Review, February 2018, p.XVII.

61 Kieren Murray, “Highlights of Reuters interview with Trump”, REUTERS, February 24, 2017, retrieved July 03, 2019 from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-interview-highlights-idUSKBN1622RG>

62 John Bolton, “New START is unilateral disarmament”, Wall Street Journal, September 08, 2010.

63 Gertz, “Bolton: China Continuing Cyberattacks on Government, Private Networks”

64 Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, “Remarks at the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament”, February 22, 2021, retrieved February 28, 2021 from <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2021/02/22/secretary-blinken-cd/>

ments on Russian President Putin and China indicate that the cooperation process will not be easy.

On the other hand, all parties have continued to develop intensive nuclear weapons, new generation missiles, and missile defense systems which are more capable than existing systems. The US has been enhancing the capabilities of the Ballistic Missile Defense System, which is clearly against Russian and Chinese nuclear missiles, rather than the threat of Iran or North Korea, and continues to work on hypersonic missile systems such as CPGS, which will be able to carry nuclear warheads. Russia has developed new weapons and new nuclear weapons delivery systems, such as the 3M22 Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile, sea-launched 3M14 Kalibr cruise missiles, Kinzhal air-launched ballistic missiles and MiG-31K Foxhounds. Russia has put Tsirkon into service and has already fielded the Avangard hypersonic boost glide vehicle. China also continues to develop its hypersonic systems, such as the DF-17 hypersonic missile.

Armament and militarization also increased greatly in the last decade. The 2020 US defense budget of \$738 billion⁶⁵ was about a \$100 billion increase over the fiscal year 2017 budget of the Obama administration, and the US DoD requested \$705 billion for fiscal year 2021. According to the US DoD, this budget focuses on NDS priorities of nuclear deterrence recapitalization and homeland missile defense.⁶⁶ The 2021 Chinese defense budget of US\$202 billion represents a 6.8% nominal increase over the core 2020 budget.⁶⁷ Russia now ranks fourth in the world for defense spending, with \$65.1 billion in expenditures in 2019 compared to \$61.4 billion the previous year.⁶⁸ Together, these three budgets account for 55% of worldwide spending (US 38%, China 14% and Russia 3.4%).⁶⁹ Cooperation and mutual understanding will be not easy, considering the crises in Syria, Ukraine, and the Pacific, as well as the speed of armament and research and development activities for more effective weapons to infiltrate existing and future missile defense systems, supersede nuclear weapons, or carry nuclear warheads.

65 Joe Guld, Pentagon finally gets its 2020 budget from Congress, Defense News, December 19, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2019/12/19/pentagon-finally-gets-its-2020-budget-from-congress/>

66 "DOD Releases Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Proposal", US DoD, February 10, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2079489/dod-releases-fiscal-year-2021-budget-proposal/>

67 Jon Grevatt and Andrew MacDonald, China announces 6.8% increase in 2021 defence budget, Janes Defence, March 05, 2021, <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/china-announces-68-increase-in-2021-defence-budget-0503>

68 "Russia Returns to Top 5 Defense Spending Countries Worldwide – Think Tank", The Moscow Times, April 27, 2020, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/04/27/russia-returns-to-top-5-defense-spending-countries-worldwide-think-tank-a70114>

69 "Military Expenditure", Stockholm International Peace Research Institute <https://www.sipri.org/research/armament-and-disarmament/arms-and-military-expenditure/military-expenditure>

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Conclusion

Nuclear weapons, a breakthrough weapon in the history of war, evolved into a political tool rather than a military one, and shaped Cold War politics across the world, especially concerning the US and USSR. Deterrence based on nuclear weapons provided a period of relative peace, or at least prevented a major war such as World War I or World War II. Investment in nuclear and conventional armament cost billions of dollars, along with nuclear confrontation based on assured destruction, encouraged states to press for arms control and disarmament treaties, especially in the later phase of the Cold War.

Recent developments, beginning with Putin's Russia challenging American hegemony and especially the withdrawal of the US from the 1972 ABM Treaty in 2002, which has been the main barrier for an arms race in the offensive and defensive missile systems, increased tension between the US and NATO on nuclear issues. US efforts such as NMD with EPAA under the NATO Command, CPGS, under the guise of nuclear threats from Iran and North Korea but targeting in essence Russian and Chinese nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, launched a new nuclear arms race between the US, Russia, and China, drawing the world into a new nuclear age. Global and regional crises such as the Russian interventions in Georgia and especially in Ukraine, and the enduring crisis and regional competition in Syria, increased the competition between Russia and the West, under American leadership, with China performing the role of silent competitor.

Abolition of the INF Treaty would become another major step in this dangerous competition in that it would trigger a conventional and especially a nuclear arms race. Freed from restrictions, both the US and Russia would develop and deploy missile systems in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific, which would tempt existing nuclear capable states, especially China, Pakistan and India, to deploy more missiles. A new arms race would result in an arms race by other states, who would feel less constrained in the development of their nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

Thus, abolition of the INF Treaty would result in more than just removing restrictions on intermediate-range missiles; it would trigger a new conventional and nuclear arms race at both the tactical and strategic levels. The new environment would be more dangerous than the Cold War because both sides have far more highly technological missile systems, especially hypersonic missile programs that can carry nuclear weapons. Developing short and intermediate nuclear missiles at short notice, backed by increased strategic nuclear missiles, would keep the world continuously on the brink of nuclear war. These possibilities sound as though they are Cold War relics, but abolition of the INF Treaty made them reality. The end of the Trump administration in the

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US, especially the replacement of John Bolton, who opposed arms control and disarmament treaties, have provided better hope for the world. The new Biden administration has expressed its intent of cooperation however their restrictions sound not easy to handle. Therefore, it seems that the New Cold War we already entered with US' withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty in 2002 will continue in the future.

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