

Security issue: imminence of the global arms race



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North America Security Brief

Current Situation: Global Arms Race is imminent

On the 2nd February 2019 President Trump announced the US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) The Treaty was originally agreed between US President Regan and Soviet Union's Gorbachev on 2nd December 1987. On 2nd August US formally withdrew from the INF Treaty.

The INF Treaty “ *bans production, flight-testing, and possession of all ground-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of between 500km and 5, 500km.*” (Tselichtchev, 2019)

With the treaty's collapse there will be an escalation of arms production and an arms race between super powers and growing unease between allies.

Overview

The security issue is the inevitable global arms race that will begin with the dissolve of the treaty. With INF Treaty withdrawals from both sides, Russia are now able to pursue and test more missiles and their capabilities.

Moreover, the withdrawal has caused allies to doubt the US commitment and integrity causing a symbolic blow to US leadership in this matter. Russia are moving forward with missile development and this leaves US allies vulnerable to Russian nuclear attacks; if allies view the withdrawal as a threat to their regional security, which amongst the EU could very well be the case, they may become less willing to engage in proliferation security initiatives.

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Analysis

Several claims were made throughout the years by the US, from both the Obama Administration and the Trump Administration, that Russia were in breach of the INF treaty with their development of the SSC8 / 9M-729 missiles. Russia has denied this and states that their missiles are all in compliance.

Due to these claims Trump and the US announced their intention to withdraw from the treaty unless Russia destroyed their newly developed missiles or brought them back within treaty regulated terms.

In turn, Russia refused to comply as they remained adamant that they weren't in breach of any conditions and also then claimed that due to the US having defensive missiles shield (MK-41) based in Romania that could also be used to launch attack missiles, and their plans to extend this to Poland (Gotev, 2019), that they, the US, were in breach of the treaty and they should disarm it and not pursue these plans.

The US formally withdrew 2nd August 2019 shortly followed by Russia.

This has caused hostility between the US and Russia with their leader, Putin, stating that the recent testing of a new type of missile by the US indicates that they were going to withdraw long before they made the announcement and that if the US place any of their new weapons in Europe that Russia will have no choice but to respond and “[we] will be forced to take reciprocal measures.” (Ward, 2019)

Trump has been quoted stating he would like to arrange a new agreement that would bring China into the fold as he believes China can no longer claim they are accumulating weapons purely for defensive measures.

The lack of any form of treaty in place means that now both US and Russia are free to develop previously banned forms of weapons leading into a serious concern of a modern global arms race.

“ Russia will be forced to create and deploy new types of weapons that could be used not only against the territories where a direct threat to us comes from,” meaning Europe, “ but also against the territories where decision-making centers directing the use of missile systems threatening us are located.” (Ward, 2019)

The only treaty left in place to restrict the acquisition of nuclear weapons is the New START treaty. This treaty is again between US and Russia and limited the number of nuclear warheads to 1, 500-1, 675 units, as well as their delivery weapons to 500-1, 100 units.

However, Trump has made clear his feelings on this treaty and it is unlikely that it will be extended after 5th February 2021 as he feels it favours Russia and is “[was] one of several bad deals negotiated by the Obama administration.” (Landay & Rohde, 2017)

Without INF and New Start there would be no restrictions on the creation and development of nuclear arms for the first time in decades.

NATO supported the US and their assessment of Russia's missiles and the treaty breach but have shared its concerns about the way the disbanding of the INF treaty is handled and has stated that despite not wanting a new arms race, any action taken by Russia now that is deemed offensive will be responded to in kind.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is reported to have said, " We do not want a new arms race, but as Russia is deploying new missiles, we must ensure that our deterrence and defence remains credible and effective." (Brzozowski, 2019)

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Desired Outcome

No one wants an arms race.

The US should seek to communicate and negotiate a new variation of the INF treaty with Russia, but should also make clear its intent to include China in the new arrangement.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the Trump Administration is attempting to lead with a new chapter of arms control legislation rather than relying on " bilateral treaties of the past." (Pompeo, 2019)

" Going forward, the United States calls upon Russia and China to join us in this opportunity to deliver real security results to our nations and the entire world." (Pompeo, 2019)

To move forward both the US, Russia and China would need to agree to site visits by technical experts to ensure the missiles that breached the <https://assignbuster.com/security-issue-imminence-of-the-global-arms-race/>

standards were either modified so they comply or destroyed and that no more were to be made. The US would need to modify the MK-41 launchers that can be used for offensive attacks so that Russia can see that they no longer pose a threat.

The US should also seek to renew the New START treaty to ensure the number of warheads is controlled, not just the type or ability.

This is the outcome that the US should strive towards if it wishes to maintain the safety of its citizens and its allies. The largest threat to the world's safety is if this treaty can not be resolved with another swiftly in its place.

Looking Forward

Alternative approaches could be that NATO puts forward that no members can store or create INF Treaty breaching missiles or new nuclear equivalents. This would mean that, as above, Russia would have to destroy the missiles that do not meet compliance and the US would have to halt all plans to move forward with new missiles it has created in response to the Russian breach.

Another option is for a Treaty or agreement between NATO and Russia; this would ensure the safety and behaviour of NATO nations and Russia and could ideally limit the deployment of missiles, land based or otherwise, within striking distance of the others territory. This would be instead of a reconciliation of the INF treaty with the US.

Finally, New START should be extended whether a new treaty to replace INF is put in place or not. It has proven its self as a failsafe system, slowing down the arms race when the main treaty comes under dispute, limiting for a short

time the pace in which an arms race could escalate. Despite the US stance on this matter it is imperative that it be extended.

With the INF treaty at a disastrous end, it comes to this:

“ If New START does expire with nothing to replace it, there will be no legally binding limits on the world’s two largest nuclear arsenals for the first time in nearly half a century.” (Bugos, 2019)

Without the INF treaty and New START as it’s failsafe there would be nothing stopping or governing the creation of nuclear arsenals with the US or Russia. This is a massive security issue, not just for those involved but for the entire globe.

If the US and Russia can not reach an amicable and secure agreement then it will be up to NATO and its alliance members to keep the global safe from the next nuclear arms race.

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