# 1AC

## Plan

#### The United States should restrict its nuclear forces by disarming its intermediate-range nuclear forces.

## Verification ADV

#### Advantage 1 is Verifiable Disarm:

#### No restrictions disarming its intermediate-range nuclear forces means Biden’s accelerating INF deployment in the Pacific theater.

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2. Seeking defense-in-depth capabilities while advancing the new intermediate-range program

In order to develop precision strike capability that can deny China, the United States has been spending heavily to purchase new precision strike weapons and accelerate their deployment in recent years. Several intermediate-range missile programs started under the Trump administration have continued after Biden took office. The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command regards the construction of a “highly survivable precision strike network along the first island chain” as one of its core tasks and plans to establish a precision strike network with a range of more than 500 km in the “first island chain.”52 In addition to promoting the rapid production of precision strike missiles, the Biden administration has also continued to advance the new intermediate-range missile program launched at the end of the Trump administration, seeking to upgrade the “Tomahawk” and “SM-6” missiles used by the Navy to land-based versions. To this end, the Biden administration has overcome many technical and financial obstacles and tried to transfer more resources to the rapid R&D of new conventional precision missiles. For example, the short range and high cost of the “SM-6” once discouraged the U.S. Army from adopting it, and outside observers also speculated that the land- based “SM-6” might not be the preferred choice.53 However, considering that this type of missile will be the future hub of the Army’s Multi-Domain Task Force’s intermediate-range strike force, the Biden administration persisted in investing heavily in order to integrate the “SM-6” into land-based mobile platforms as quickly as possible and create combat effectiveness. The Biden administration requested $409 million for the new intermediate-range missile program in FY 2023, five times the initial funding the Trump administration provided for the program in FY 2021.54 The implementation of the new intermediate-range missile program will complement the ground and sea strike capabilities of U.S. Navy ships and threaten targets within China’s defense in depth region. Although it has only been two years since the United States withdrew from the INF Treaty, the land-based INF program is advancing extremely rapidly due to benefits from the accumulation of early-stage technologies, and it is expected to generate initial combat effectiveness as soon as 2023.55 After finding suitable deployment sites, the precision missile strike network along the “first island chain” will gradually take shape.

As part of a deterrence by denial approach, defense in depth refers to holding off an attacker through a series of defensive positions with the aim of repressing the offensive firepower of the attacker at each position. However, the most notable disadvantage of this strategy is that it requires a lot of resources, so defenders are more likely to employ defense-in-depth strategies to protect a particularly important location.56 In the view of Biden’s military team, Guam is currently just such an important defensive position. Guam’s current missile defense mission is maintained by “THAAD” and “Aegis” ships, but Indo-Pacific Command believes that this is far from enough. Shortly after Biden took office, former Indo-Pacific commander Philip Davidson and current commander John C. Aquilino showed Congress the importance of Guam as the missile defense hub of the “second island chain” and its favorability for the land-based “Aegis” system. The DoD then asked the Missile Defense Agency to conduct a preliminary study. According to the information released by the Missile Defense Agency, the land-based “Aegis” system designed for the Indo-Pacific Command will be specially used to intercept various types of Chinese missiles. It is equipped with “SM-3” missiles to intercept ballistic missiles and “SM-6” missiles to intercept cruise missiles.57 The Biden administration requested $892 million in the defense budget for FY 2023 to strengthen Guam’s defenses, mainly to improve missile defense capabilities.58

Although “Aegis” is already a relatively mature interception system, the Indo-Pacific Command said that related missile defense equipment will also be deployed in Guam after other new interception methods are successfully developed.59 The U.S. military vigorously promotes the “UAV-borne Directed Energy Weapon” project, intending to load high-energy lasers on UAVs to intercept missiles in the booster stage so as to minimize the lethality of incoming missiles.60 In fact, as the military applications of directed energy technology continue to mature, the power of directed energy weapons will be increased while reducing the influence of limiting factors. The potential advantages of these weapons, such as extremely low single-shot cost, nearly unlimited ammunition, and rapid engagement, can provide the U.S. military with sustained tactical and strategic advantages. In February 2022, Heidi Shyu, the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, called on the DoD to make directed energy one of its priorities for maintaining U.S. technological superiority and called for the construction of a robust and reliable supply chain for this purpose.61 If mature directed energy technology is used for missile interception, the cost-effectiveness of missile defense will be greatly increased, and the United States will achieve a qualitative leap in its deterrence by denial capability against China.

3. Consolidating a foundation of allies and partners for joint denial against China

Since they came to office, the Biden administration has maintained that they would be committed to repairing the alliances that were damaged during the Trump era. An important goal of the “integrated deterrence” strategy is to incorporate allied forces into its deterrence system. The U.S. military believes that, due to factors such as the defense budget, it faces many difficulties in the modernization of nuclear weapons systems, the procurement of advanced weapons and equipment, and the R&D of emerging disruptive technologies. Their existing platform capabilities can no longer effectively meet the needs of strategic deterrence and day-to-day military operations. Therefore, it is necessary to utilize allied forces to strengthen the deterrence capability. From this perspective, “integrated deterrence” is actually an important measure in the current reconstruction of a new type of alliance system by the Biden administration.

Improving the precision strike network is the main measure taken by the Biden administration to build “first island chain” deterrence by denial capability. It is worth noting that although allies are more cautious about the deployment of intermediate-range missiles by the United States, their enthusiasm for R&D of intermediate-range missiles has not diminished. In May 2021, the Biden administration decided to terminate the U.S.-South Korea Missile Guidelines, allowing South Korea to develop various types of missiles under permitted conditions. Australia and the United States signed a memorandum of understanding in September 2021 to participate in the development of precision strike missiles.62 In January 2022, the United States and Japan issued a statement after their “2+2” talks, saying that the two sides “committed to increase joint/shared use of U.S. and Japanese facilities, including efforts to strengthen Japan Self-Defense Forces’ posture in areas including its southwestern islands.”63 Once the United States and Japan complete the corresponding work, they will be able to quickly deploy and replenish weapons and ammunition near the Taiwan region. Like Trump, Biden also set about planning to continue to improve Taiwan’s denial capabilities after taking office: In February 2022, it approved the sale of U.S. $100 million worth of “Patriot” system engineering service support to Taiwan for a period of five years. In April, it announced the approval of the “Patriot Project Personnel Technical Assistance Case” with a total sales price of U.S. $95 million. As the Biden administration accelerates the construction of a system of deterrence by denial forces targeting China, it may continue to provide some key denial capabilities to Taiwan in the future.

#### That’s the brink for Chinese fears – entanglement and perception make risk of inevitable crisis escalation ahistorically high.

Hiim et al 23 [Henrik Stålhane Hiim, Associate Professor at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies at the Norwegian Defence University College; M. Taylor **Fravel**, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Security Studies Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Magnus Langset **Trøan**, Researcher at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; “The Dynamics of an Entangled Security Dilemma: China's Changing Nuclear Posture,” International Security, 47(4), Spring 2023, pp.147-187, DOI 10.1162/isec\_a\_00457] \*[language modifications]

Amid an intensifying rivalry with the United States, China is modernizing and significantly expanding its nuclear forces. These developments fuel concerns that China's traditional nuclear strategy premised on a limited nuclear arsenal for assured retaliation and a no-first-use policy is undergoing a major shift. Using Chinese-language materials, an examination of Chinese debates about China's security environment and the future direction of its nuclear strategy finds that a nuclear-conventional entangled security dilemma is emerging between the United States and China. The shift in the conventional balance of force in the region and the U.S. development of lower-yield nuclear weapons has led to greater fears in China of U.S. limited nuclear use in a conflict. Chinese strategists increasingly believe that U.S. nonnuclear strategic capabilities threaten China's nuclear forces. Although there is limited evidence of a shift in its nuclear strategy, China is changing its strategic posture to ensure its second-strike capability, including by relying on advanced conventional weapons (e.g., counterspace capabilities, cyber weapons, and electronic warfare) that can target U.S. missile defense. The dynamics of an entangled security dilemma may weaken arms race stability, and they underscore why it will be challenging for the United States to engage China in nuclear arms control.

In summer 2021, it was revealed that China is constructing three silo fields as part of a significant expansion of its nuclear forces. In November 2021, the U.S. Defense Department projected that China will possess as many as 1,000 nuclear warheads by 2030, or an almost five-fold increase.1 These developments indicate that China may be transforming its approach to nuclear weapons. Until recently, China has pursued a strategy of assured retaliation and has developed a relatively small but survivable force. Nuclear weapons have played only a limited role in China's overall military strategy, as Chinese leaders have viewed such weapons as useful only for deterring a nuclear attack or preventing nuclear blackmail and coercion.2 China's past approach has been consistent with its declaratory no-first-use (NFU) policy, which is based on a retaliatory posture.

China's nuclear expansion raises concerns that China may be shifting toward a much less restrained and more offensive posture. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Defense assessed that China is “implementing a launch-on-warning [LOW]” posture.3 U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken concludes that “Beijing has sharply deviated from its decades-old nuclear strategy based on minimum deterrence.”4 U.S. military leaders describe China's nuclear modernization as a “strategic breakout” that will provide Chinese leaders with “the capability to execute any plausible nuclear employment strategy.”5 Likewise, analysts such as Austin Long suggest that, by 2030, China's “force structure and posture will be similar to America's and Russia's in many ways.”6

Recent studies of China's approach to nuclear weapons examine important questions, including the risks of inadvertent escalation, Chinese views [opinions] of limited nuclear war, and the survivability of China's arsenal.7 Today, the expansion of China's nuclear force warrants a reassessment of the drivers of China's nuclear strategy and its future trajectory. To this end, we seek to answer two related questions in this article. First, how has China's strategic community assessed their country's external security environment, especially the U.S. nuclear posture, and the robustness of China's deterrent? Second, based on these assessments, how is China considering changing its approach to nuclear weapons, including its strategy, potential employment, and force posture?

Answers to these questions are important for several reasons. Amid growing competition between the United States and China, nuclear weapons are poised to play a greater role than ever before in security ties between the two countries. Understanding the nuclear dynamics between the two, and China's perceptions of the United States, has never been more pressing. Moreover, China's significant expansion of its silo-based intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) force raises the question of whether China is on the cusp of a fundamental change in its nuclear strategy and the start of a new arms race. Finally, understanding the drivers and future direction of China's nuclear strategy is critical to any effort at enhancing arms control or improving strategic stability.

For the past few decades, China's approach to nuclear weapons was mostly influenced by assessments of U.S. nuclear posture and its impact on China's ability to develop and maintain a secure second strike. Today, however, security competition between the United States and China is increasing, as China continues to undergo an unprecedented peacetime modernization of its conventional forces that is shifting the balance of power in Asia. At the same time, the United States is pursuing a trillion-dollar modernization of its nuclear arsenal and reorienting its conventional posture in East Asia to address China as the “pacing threat.” As a result, nuclear and conventional capabilities and threats are increasingly intertwined and interacting with each other.

To explore these dynamics of entanglement and how they may be influencing China's approach to nuclear weapons, we use the concept of the security dilemma. Specifically, we identify three pathways for how conventional and nuclear entanglement shapes threat perceptions.8 First, adverse shifts in the conventional balance can create strong incentives for “nuclear compensation,” or a state's increasing its reliance on nuclear weapons to compensate for a weakening conventional position. The opposing state, however, will likely view such an increased reliance on nuclear weapons as a threat to its own nuclear forces that requires increasing the role of nuclear weapons in its own strategy. The second pathway highlights how conventional weapons may weaken a state's nuclear deterrent, creating perceptions of vulnerability. If a state perceives that its nuclear forces can be degraded by an adversary's conventional capabilities, the state may respond by bolstering its nuclear deterrent. Third, a state may also develop conventional capabilities to enhance the survivability of its nuclear forces. For example, it may develop platforms that can target an adversary's missile defenses to ensure its ability to retaliate after a strike. Its adversary, however, may regard these platforms as a threat to its conventional forces—or even its nuclear forces.

Our analysis of China's approach to nuclear weapons amid the shifting balance of conventional capabilities yields several conclusions. First, Chinese experts believe that the United States seeks to lower the threshold for nuclear use, especially by emphasizing lower-yield weapons. They regard this development as part of an effort to counter China's growing conventional strength in East Asia and fear that the United States could rely on such weapons in a conflict over Taiwan and threaten limited first use.

Second, Chinese experts [perceive] U.S. conventional capabilities, in addition to U.S. nuclear counterforce capabilities, as posing a growing threat to China's nuclear deterrent. China's long-held concerns about U.S. missile defense and more recent concerns about U.S. conventional precision-strike capabilities have intensified in recent years. This apprehension is spurred by developments such as the 2016 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and an associated X-band radar deployment in South Korea, the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the successful testing of an SM-3 interceptor against an ICBM, and the continued investments in the conventional prompt global strike (CPGS) program, as well as new capabilities to target nuclear forces such as “left of launch.”9

Third, in response to concerns about conventional threats to its deterrent, China is not only expanding and modernizing its nuclear forces but also pursuing advanced conventional capabilities. China's construction of new missile silos suggests a desire to bolster its second-strike capability because the silos will be largely invulnerable to conventional counterforce attacks. To defeat U.S. missile defenses and ensure the penetrability of China's nuclear weapons, Chinese experts also argue that China should rely on conventional capabilities, such as anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons and conventionally armed missiles that can strike enabling capabilities such as satellites and ground-based radars.

Fourth, while the entangled security dilemma is contributing to significant shifts in China's strategic posture, most available sources indicate that China is not (yet) abandoning its strategy of assured retaliation. Nevertheless, China's assessment of the force levels required for deterrence appears to have changed. Moreover, although the evidence remains inconclusive, an increased role for silo-based ICBMs and the development of a space-based early warning system indicate that China could place parts of its forces on a LOW posture, a policy that some Chinese experts favor. Finally, even if China's nuclear strategy has not yet changed, the expansion of its arsenal and development of capabilities such as the dual-capable, highly precise DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile can enable future changes in strategy. Fears of U.S. nuclear compensation and limited nuclear use arguably increase the likelihood that China will adopt a strategy that incorporates limited nuclear use for retaliation.

Our findings are based on a diverse set of Chinese-language sources on military affairs and nuclear weapons published before China started to construct the silo fields in 2020. These sources include teaching texts, yearbooks, scholarly books, academic articles, and newspaper reporting published by organizations or institutes that are part of the PLA or China's defense industries. Authors include military officers from the PLA Rocket Forces (PLARF), military scholars affiliated with PLA research institutes, civilian nuclear experts, and scientists and engineers. Taken together, we refer to these experts as members of China's strategic community. Although these sources are incomplete because they do not include classified materials on strategy and operational doctrine, they allow us to identify areas of consensus and contestation within China's strategic community, which informs leadership decision-making regarding nuclear weapons. Access to new, additional sources might warrant reassessments of our conclusions.

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. In the first section, we describe how conventional and nuclear modernization together create an entangled security dilemma between the United States and China, which shapes U.S.-China nuclear dynamics. Second, we analyze Chinese assessments of the United States’ nuclear posture, including threats to China's deterrent springing from U.S. lower-yield nuclear weapons as well as U.S. missile defense and conventional counterforce capabilities. Third, we analyze debates about how China may respond in terms of its nuclear strategy. Fourth, we examine how China's nuclear posture is changing, and how conventional capabilities play an increasingly important role in Chinese nuclear strategy. The conclusion points to some of the lessons that the Chinese case may have for debates about arms control between the United States and China, the prospects for strategic stability, and broader debates about the security dilemma as well as the implications of increasing entanglement between conventional and nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-Conventional Entanglement in a Security Dilemma

The security dilemma is an important driver of the intensifying rivalry and military competition between the United States and China.10 The security dilemma refers to actions that one state takes to enhance its security that another state perceives as offensive and threatening, thus increasing its own military capabilities in response. Even though both states may view themselves as pursuing defensive goals, the security dilemma is associated with increased instability and spirals of tensions.11 In the current U.S.-China relationship, China's rapid military modernization, and its economic growth more generally, create apprehension and uncertainty in the United States about China's intentions.12 Although China may view its military modernization as largely defensive, it has elicited a sharp U.S. response, with the United States bolstering its military presence in East Asia and preparing its forces for potential military conflict with China. Both states now view the other as harboring hostile intentions: The United States describes China as having “the intent to reshape the international order,” whereas Chinese leaders point to “external attempts to blackmail, contain, blockade and exert maximum pressure on China.”13

As we describe in more detail below, spiral dynamics sparked by China's conventional modernization and U.S. responses can shape perceptions of nuclear security and the robustness of deterrence for both states. In other words, the effect of conventional military competition on nuclear threat perceptions exacerbates the security dilemma between the United States and China. Although recent literature on entanglement—or “how militaries’ nuclear and nonnuclear capabilities are becoming dangerously intertwined”—highlights how it affects crisis stability, the question of how entanglement may undermine arms race stability and affect the security dilemma has received less attention.14

Traditionally, most scholars do not view the conventional military balance as influencing nuclear threat perceptions. Scholars associated with the influential theory of the nuclear revolution argue that nuclear weapons dampen or may even eliminate the security dilemma when two states have a mutual second-strike capability.15 When deterrence exists between two states, nuclear weapons generate a significant defensive advantage. One implication of this logic is that the conventional military balance should be unlikely to affect threat perceptions between nuclear-armed states, even when the gap in conventional capabilities is significant. According to Robert Jervis, “if nuclear weapons have had the influence that the nuclear-revolution theory indicates they should have … political outcomes will not be closely related to either the nuclear or the conventional balance.”16

Furthermore, to assess the nuclear balance and its effect on the security dilemma, nuclear revolution theorists emphasize that nuclear weapons or capabilities are intimately tied to nuclear operations, such as missile defenses and strategic anti-submarine warfare. When considering platforms that could create perceptions of insecurity and incentives for nuclear arms racing, they emphasize counterforce capabilities, such as ground-launched ICBMs carrying multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) that could target the opponent's nuclear forces and ballistic missile defenses (BMD).17 Even counterforce capabilities, however, are often viewed as wasteful rather than harmful because of the defense dominance generated by nuclear weapons.18 Most conventional weapons and conventional military operations are not seen as having much effect on the nuclear balance, and thus are not seen as part of the security dilemma between nuclear-armed states.19 This is unsurprising, given that the theory of the nuclear revolution was developed during the Cold War, when platforms such as conventional precision-strike were far less mature and had limited counterforce utility, particularly in the U.S.-Soviet nuclear relationship.

Although nuclear weapons may dampen the security dilemma, broadly speaking, conventional military competition may affect nuclear threat perceptions and exacerbate the security dilemma. We identify three pathways through which such dynamics may occur. These three pathways are not mutually exclusive and may be mutually reinforcing.

First, in a pathway that was identified during the Cold War, shifts in the conventional balance of forces can produce incentives for “nuclear compensation,” or threatening nuclear use or even employing nuclear weapons to offset conventional weakness.20 If a state fears that its conventional inferiority will leave it vulnerable to aggression or unable to protect its allies at an acceptable cost, it may seek to develop limited nuclear options in order to make threats of limited nuclear employment more credible. It may rely on such options to bolster deterrence, control escalation, or possess a warfighting option to secure a favorable military outcome if a conflict occurs.21 Several conventionally inferior nuclear-armed states have pursued compensation strategies. Prominent examples include the United States’ Cold War “flexible response” strategy in Europe and Pakistan's nuclear strategy.22

Nuclear compensation can exacerbate the security dilemma by increasing the perceived threat to the conventionally superior state. If the state believes that its adversary is developing or deploying nuclear weapons tailored for limited use, it may conclude that the adversary is lowering the threshold for nuclear first use, and that it could use them for coercion. Moreover, the state may worry that it lacks credible options to counter threats of limited nuclear strikes. For example, India has faced a dilemma regarding how to respond to Pakistan's development of tactical nuclear weapons during the last decade. Should it shift from massive retaliation to more proportional retaliation, or should it develop counterforce capabilities? Both a tit-for-tat retaliatory approach and a counterforce approach would constitute a significant shift in India's nuclear strategy and would potentially require it to develop new nuclear weapons capabilities.23

In a second pathway, which we call “conventionally created vulnerability,” conventional military modernization may affect nuclear threat perceptions if an adversary uses conventional forces to degrade or even destroy a state's nuclear capabilities. Such vulnerabilities are a key implication of growing entanglement, with nuclear weapons and nuclear command, control, communication, and intelligence (C3I) networks facing increasing threats from conventional capabilities. Recent technological advances (e.g., the advent of advanced long-range precision-strike weapons that increase the vulnerability of nuclear assets to conventional attacks) have made such threats more salient. Similarly, advanced cyber weapons or counterspace weapons principally intended for conventional operations now constitute potentially serious threats to C3I networks of even advanced nuclear weapons states.24

A likely consequence of conventionally created vulnerability is to exacerbate the security dilemma by creating strong pressure for states to modernize or expand their nuclear forces. Because of entanglement, a state's conventional modernization (not intended to alter the nuclear balance) can nevertheless influence another state's perceptions about the robustness of its deterrent. For example, if one state deploys conventional high-precision strike platforms to counter a perceived conventional threat from another state, the target state may view such capabilities as a potential counterforce threat to its nuclear arsenal. Such concerns about conventional counterforce could lead the target state to bolster its nuclear arsenal in response, creating incentives for the other state to strengthen its own nuclear forces.

In a third pathway, which we call “conventional bolstering,” one state's efforts to use conventional weapons to defend its nuclear arsenal may threaten another state. Advanced conventional capabilities can cause states to strengthen their nuclear deterrent in new ways, including by threatening their adversary's counterforce capabilities, although this is less frequently discussed than their potential to threaten nuclear platforms. Concerns about missile defenses may prompt states to develop both kinetic and non-kinetic conventional capabilities to target early-warning satellites and other assets that enable missile defense. States may use such capabilities to counter counterforce, but they may also direct them against assets that are critical to the operation of conventional forces or potentially even nuclear forces. Thus, it may lead the target state to bolster its conventional forces or to rely more strongly on nuclear compensation in response, setting off another action-reaction dynamic.

In sum, if conventional military competition is influencing nuclear threat perceptions, creating an entangled security dilemma between two nuclear powers, then at least one of the following indicators should exist: (1) greater concern about nuclear compensation, or that an adversary will rely on threats of limited nuclear use to compensate for conventional relative weakness; (2) debates about how to respond to this nuclear compensation, including discussions about or actual development of tit-for-tat capabilities (i.e., limited nuclear options); (3) concerns over how conventional weapons threaten a state's nuclear second-strike capability; and (4) debates about and deployment of conventional capabilities that are intended to bolster a state's second-strike forces.

How China Views U.S. Nuclear Strategy and Capabilities

Since the end of the Cold War, China's perceptions of its own nuclear security have been dominated by concerns about the United States. In the past few years, China's strategic community has viewed [perceived] two shifts in U.S. military posture with growing alarm. The first, which reflects concern about nuclear compensation, is a shift in U.S. nuclear doctrine toward greater emphasis on the limited use of nuclear weapons, which many in Beijing believe is driven by fear of China's growing conventional military capabilities. The second shift, which reflects conventionally created vulnerability, is the development of a suite of primarily conventional counterforce capabilities—including missile defenses and conventional precision-strike platforms—that together would degrade or even eliminate China's secure second strike. In sum, Chinese observers are increasingly pessimistic about both the risk of nuclear escalation and the robustness of China's deterrent.

shifts in u.s. strategy and threats of limited nuclear use

China's strategic community viewed the 2018 U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) as reflecting an alarming shift in U.S. nuclear policy. The NPR reiterates key points of the 2017 National Security Strategy, describing China and Russia as seeking to “substantially revise the post–Cold War international order and norms of behavior.”25 In response, China's 2019 defense White Paper states that the United States had “provoked and intensified competition among major countries” and undermined strategic stability by pushing “for additional capacity in nuclear, outer space, cyber and missile defense.”26 According to Chinese experts, the NPR demonstrates that the United States is again wielding nuclear weapons as a “hegemonistic tool” to maintain its dominant position rather than as weapons of last resort, and that nuclear weapons are an essential component of great power competition with China.27

Concerns about U.S. nuclear compensation appear frequently in Chinese sources. The 2018 NPR and the development of new lower-yield nuclear weapons signal to China that the U.S. military strategy is increasingly emphasizing nuclear weapons and nuclear war-fighting. For example, two scholars from the National University of Defense Technology believe that the NPR indicates that the United States has “lowered the threshold for nuclear first use.”28 Likewise, other experts view the NPR as reviving the “theory of limited nuclear war” and thus “laying the groundwork for the development of low-yield nuclear weapons.”29 The 2018 NPR suggests that the primary justification for developing and deploying new lower-yield capabilities is to counter Russia's “escalate to de-escalate” strategy—a claim that Chinese experts reject.30 Instead, Chinese experts see U.S. efforts as at least partly a response to China's growing conventional capabilities. The NPR's focus on China as a strategic competitor has convinced Chinese experts that the United States now views lower-yield weapons as a way to maintain its military dominance in East Asia. With the conventional balance of forces in the region gradually but steadily tilting in China's favor, especially regarding Taiwan and other areas close to China, Chinese experts believe that the United States will rely on such capabilities to compensate for its conventional inferiority.31 In the words of Chinese arms control expert Li Bin, the NPR indicates “that the United States would use its nuclear weapons to respond to nonnuclear Chinese aggressions.”32 Chinese observers have also noted arguments such as that of former Defense Department official Elbridge Colby, who claims that because of China's increasing conventional power, rather than “excluding the possibility of American nuclear first use, Washington should be emphasizing it.”33 Chinese observers believe that such comments reflect a shift in U.S. thinking about nuclear weapons.34 Moreover, Chinese officials argue that the Joe Biden administration has largely maintained the Donald Trump–era nuclear policies by continuing to place “even more importance on the role of nuclear weapons in its national security policy” and lowering “the threshold for using nuclear weapons.”35

These developments have generated concerns in China about U.S. nuclear first use in a conflict. According to arms control expert Luo Xi from the PLA's Academy of Military Sciences (AMS), the shifts in U.S. nuclear policy mean that “China cannot refrain from being concerned about the possibility of U.S. nuclear first use in a regional crisis.”36 She further notes that the risk of an incident escalating to conventional or even nuclear use is rising, given the tensions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait.37 Similarly, retired PLA Major General Pan Zhenqiang claims that changes in U.S. policy have contributed to a strategic shift with “enormous” consequences for China, and that “China must contemplate a war scenario in which the US may launch a nuclear attack, perhaps in a conflict over the Taiwan Straits.”38 Indeed, the U.S. Department of Defense has recognized these Chinese worries, noting that “by late 2018, PRC [People's Republic of China] concerns began to emerge that the United States would use low-yield weapons against a Taiwan invasion fleet.”39 Likewise, the U.S. intelligence community's 2023 annual threat assessment states that: “Beijing worries that bilateral tension, U.S. nuclear modernization, and the PLA's advancing conventional capabilities have increased the likelihood of a U.S. first strike.”40

Consequently, Chinese thinking about the risk of nuclear escalation and U.S. limited first use is shifting. Fiona Cunningham and M. Taylor Fravel highlight that Chinese leaders and strategists have traditionally believed that nuclear escalation could not be controlled, and that leaders therefore would be highly cautious about employing nuclear weapons.41 But with the U.S. fielding new lower-yield weapons, this confidence is weakening. A scholar from the AMS, for example, argues that the U.S. lowering of the nuclear threshold may “promote the escalation of low-intensity conflicts to nuclear war.”42 Chinese experts have also highlighted that a limited nuclear strike could be misinterpreted as a high-yield countervalue attack, and thus lead to major retaliation. According to analysts from a research institute under the China National Nuclear Corporation, if the United States launches missiles carrying W76-2 warheads, “it is almost impossible for opponents to distinguish whether the warheads they carry are strategic or low-yield nuclear warheads. Therefore, [the opponent] may use strategic nuclear weapons in response, turning a nuclear conflict into a full-scale nuclear war.”43

conventional threats to china's nuclear deterrent

Amid these changes in U.S. nuclear posture, China's strategic community remains concerned that the United States seeks to undermine China's secure second-strike capability and thus negate its deterrent. China still has a small arsenal compared with the United States. The Defense Department estimated in 2021 that China's arsenal comprises warheads in the “low 200s,” but upgraded that figure to having “surpassed 400” in 2022. China has been sensitive to both offensive capabilities that could destroy most of its weapons and defenses that could limit its ability to threaten retaliation.44 Chinese strategists have long believed that the United States seeks nuclear superiority and “absolute security” at China's expense, and that U.S. strategic capabilities are increasingly directed at China.45 Moreover, with the intensifying strategic rivalry, they are more concerned that the United States could employ its nuclear advantage for “opportunistic” purposes.46 Luo Xi from AMS, for example, casts the United States as seeking to “deprive” other states of their retaliatory capability, using BMD to “destroy China's second-strike capability.”47

Reflecting the pathway of conventionally created vulnerability, U.S. conventional capabilities are a major concern for China. As described by PLA Air Force experts, the United States could use its “global rapid strike system” in an attack on China's nuclear forces and then intercept the surviving missiles with missile defense systems so that the “combined use of strategic offensive and strategic defensive systems will give the United States a monopolistic strategic advantage.”48 Another prominent Chinese nuclear expert notes that the development of conventional technologies such as conventional precision strike and advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance “have improved the United States’ ability to conduct damage-limitation strikes against China,” a tendency that may exacerbate U.S. “risk-taking” in a crisis.49 Although Chinese concerns about missile defenses and long-range precision-strike capabilities are not new, they have been reinforced by the combination of new deployments in East Asia, the U.S. pursuit of new capabilities such as medium- and intermediate-range missiles, the left-of-launch concept, and the intensifying strategic rivalry.

#### Reliance on national technical means (NTM) to overcome entanglement drives miscalculated provocation AND restraint through information complexity — escalation.

Hersman 19 [Rebecca Hersman, director of the Project on Nuclear Issues, senior adviser for the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, former deputy assistant secretary of defense for countering weapons of mass destruction, US Department of Defense; and Bernadette Stadler, program coordinator and research assistant with the Project on Nuclear Issues; “When is More Actually Less? Situational Awareness and Nuclear Risks,” War On The Rocks, 8-2-2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/08/when-is-more-actually-less-situational-awareness-and-nuclear-risks/] \*[language modifications]

The Emerging Strategic Situational Awareness Environment (2020 forward)

The emerging strategic situational awareness environment will be even more networked, dual-use, and codependent than the transitional one. Distinctions or firebreaks between conventional and strategic situational awareness will all but disappear, creating a highly networked, real-time, dual-use landscape that is both murkier and more complex across all levels of conflict.

In the emerging situational awareness environment, not only will conventional weapons rely on strategic situational awareness assets for targeting data, countries will also rely on conventional situational awareness systems for strategic warning. For example, hypersonic systems, boost-glide systems, long-range cruise missiles, and other capabilities are designed to elude traditional U.S. early warning systems (i.e., radars and satellites) and thus defeat U.S. missile defenses. To counter these new delivery systems, the United States may have to rely on conventional situational awareness systems, including systems that are more visible or intrusive, to complete strategic missions and supplement strategic situational awareness. If an adversary were to discover and target such systems, would such an attack be considered conventional or strategic in intent and implication? Increasingly blurred lines between nuclear and conventional command, control, and communications [C3] also contribute to this dynamic. Conventional missile warning currently relies on these dual-use surveillance capabilities, increasing the risk that they could be targeted in a conventional conflict for conventional purposes but with profound strategic implications.

In the emerging strategic situational awareness ecosystem, there will be ample potential for inadvertent escalation through miscalculation. For example, deploying unmanned underwater vehicles to monitor an adversary’s nuclear submarines might trigger adversary concerns about potential vulnerabilities to its nuclear forces, and thereby generate an escalatory response.

Technology and Escalation Risks

The capabilities in the emerging strategic situational awareness environment have the potential to dramatically improve decision-makers’ understanding of developing conflicts and crises especially in light of rapidly evolving delivery systems that may elude traditional strategic warning and situational awareness. However, it is possible that the use of these capabilities may likewise complicate crisis management and introduce new escalatory risks. Of particular concern are three potential escalation pathways — provocation, entanglement, and information complexity — that may be triggered or exacerbated by the use of emerging strategic situational awareness-enhancing capabilities.

Provocation

The active nature of the emerging strategic situational awareness ecosystem means that states have the capability to penetrate adversary territory (land, sea, and air) and networks to gain highly precise and potentially actionable information. However, these capabilities are potentially provocative — they directly challenge legal and political concepts of sovereignty, their mission (general surveillance vs. counterforce support or surveillance vs. strike) may not always be readily identifiable, and they may intentionally or unintentionally approach vital strategic assets as they conduct surveillance. Similarly, cyber surveillance of strategic situational awareness or NC3 systems may provide highly valuable insight into adversary actions and decision-making with low risks of detection. But if discovered, such intrusions could be difficult to distinguish from a destructive or offensive attack, and therefore could be highly provocative.

Policymakers may already be cognizant of this potential escalatory pathway; ironically, the greater risk may be that policymakers overcompensate and opt not to use capabilities that could produce important information because they perceive them to be too risky. In a series of table-top exercises carried out by CSIS, mid-career and senior academics and policymakers proved very hesitant to deploy capabilities that would enter adversary airspace or territorial waters. They viewed capabilities that operated outside of adversary territory as less likely to cross adversary thresholds and trigger escalation. Excessive caution may avoid unnecessary provocation but may also force decision-makers and military operators to “fly blind” [remain ignorant] in a crisis in ways that contribute to miscalculation.

However, the question remains as to how well American policymakers understand adversary thresholds and red lines. For example, would China consider American situational awareness capabilities operating in newly claimed and still contested Chinese territory less provocative than assets operating in Chinese territory as recognized by international law? Given the novelty of these technologies and use scenarios, it is highly probable that China — or any other U.S. adversary — probably has not thought through in detail their own red lines, further complicating the action-reaction cycle in a crisis.

Entanglement

The blended or dual-use nature of the emerging situational awareness ecosystem contributes to the potential for escalation through entanglement. As defined by James Acton, entanglement occurs when nuclear delivery systems, forces, and support structures are co-mingled, or when non-nuclear weapons are able to threaten nuclear weapons and their C3I. Entanglement in the strategic situational awareness space occurs when conventional situational awareness systems intentionally or unintentionally collect information on nuclear assets, or when dual-use situational awareness systems become military targets during a conventional conflict. Entanglement can lead to escalation by convincing one or more countries in a crisis that their nuclear assets are at risk.

While the escalatory risks of entanglement are somewhat clear, the solutions — especially with regard to strategic situational awareness capabilities — are far less so. A return to a more disaggregated, or stove-piped system of surveillance and warning for nuclear versus conventional purposes simply may not be realistic. More likely, these risks will need to be moderated via communications, transparency, signaling, and perhaps favoring more overt sources of collection over covert or stealthy means.

Our exercises suggest that policymakers are quite attuned to the risk of entanglement, especially where command and control is concerned. Even so, participants struggled to articulate effective ways to differentiate between intrusive cyber surveillance of nuclear and conventional command and control and tended to significantly restrict the use of cyber capabilities against adversary command and control if they did not reject it entirely. Participants were less concerned about entanglement when surveilling adversary capabilities — either nuclear or conventional — in other domains. For example, in many cases policymakers were willing to use unmanned underwater vehicles to detect adversary submarines as long as surveillance occurred outside of the adversary’s territorial waters, while recognizing that there could be a discrimination issue between the adversary’s nuclear and conventional assets, and that the adversary may not be able to discern whether the unmanned underwater vehicle was armed or unarmed.

Information Complexity

Both the quantity and quality of information generated by the emerging strategic situational awareness ecosystem have the potential to cause escalation in surprising ways. In the national security field, it is widely assumed that more and better information leads to better decision-making. However, this may not always be the case. The technologies in the emerging strategic situational awareness ecosystem have the potential to provide vast amounts of information; however, this information must be analyzed and distilled in a way that is useful. For example, while it may be possible for AI to assist human analysts with this task, the fact remains that the right questions must be asked in order to render information beneficial.

Furthermore, the ambiguous and unproven nature of some of the new streams of strategic situational awareness may lead decision-makers to discount vital information if they don’t trust the source. The hesitancy to trust new technology described in Molly Kovite’s recent article has also played out in our table-top exercises across a range of technologies including pseudo-satellites, small satellites, and next-gen stealth, as well as AI.

Policymakers also expressed reluctance to accept information generated by unfamiliar technology or assumed more risk than reward in its use. Sometimes, policymakers discounted the value or reliability of some technologies — such as stealth — altogether. On the other hand, policymakers assigned signaling value to nearly every action, including the use or deployment of surveillance assets, in ways that were often not anticipated by technology experts, who viewed most of these capabilities not as political tools but rather technical ones. This suggests that psychology is underappreciated when examining the relationship between decision-making and emerging technology, and that new technologies should be socialized with policymakers well before the onset of a crisis to improve the likelihood that policymakers will trust and use them.

The Next Crisis?

Emerging technologies that improve situational awareness can provide tremendous visibility into a future crisis or conflict but likely not without significant potential risk when employed between nuclear-armed adversaries. It is possible that policymakers will not appreciate the potential escalatory pathways described above and use strategic situational awareness-improving capabilities in ways that cause crisis instability and escalation. It is also possible that policymakers will recognize escalation risks and overcompensate, neglecting to use capabilities that could otherwise improve their ability to manage a crisis. As a good first step, appropriate socialization to new capabilities and appreciation of the trade-offs associated with their use can help policymakers maximize benefits and reduce risks. The key is ensuring that policymakers encounter these trade-offs and develop a more sophisticated understanding of these capabilities before a crisis hits — not afterwards.

#### AND, the plausibility of dual-use generates vulnerabilities to political warfare.

Edelman et al 22 [Eric S. Edelman, Counselor at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), formerly served in senior positions at the Departments of State and Defense as well as the White House, including as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, U.S. ambassador to Finland in the Clinton administration and Turkey in the Bush administration; Josh **Chang**, analyst at CSBA, MA Security Studies; and Tyler **Hacker**, analyst at CSBA, formerly at the Congressional Research Service, MA Security Studies, Georgetown University; “Arming America’s Allies: Historical Lessons for Implementing a Post-INF Treaty Missile Strategy,” The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2022, https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/CSBA8323\_(Arming\_Americas\_Allies)\_web-9-1-22.pdf]

The U.S. deployment of the Pershing II in Western Europe triggered significant domestic controversy among the European public, and the anti-nuclear sentiment provided fertile ground for the Soviet Union to engage in a major information operation. Critics on the Left, like Egon Bahr in Germany and others, argued that these weapons would only destabilize the region and heighten the risk of war with the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders, who may have believed some of the rhetoric, did everything they could to fan the flames of public concern that the world was edging closer to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe.57

A similar dynamic could exist in both Europe and Asia in the present day. While U.S. allies in either theater may support the deployment of intermediate-range missiles for security purposes, they may hesitate to fully embrace these weapons for political reasons. Local populations may oppose such weapons based on rationales that are like those that fueled opposition to the Pershing II deployment in the 1980s. Although we are currently talking about conventional missiles rather than missiles that carry nuclear warheads, the distinction is not likely to appreciably ease the political and diplomatic task for the United States. First, even conventional missiles meant to strike PRC or Russian territory will make the basing countries targets for Chinese and Russian missile forces. Second, because some of these systems are likely to be dual-use, Beijing and Moscow will have every incentive to elide the difference and wage informational campaigns claiming the U.S. is feeding the nuclear arms race.

Moreover, the rise of social media has arguably increased the ability of our authoritarian rivals to wage information and political warfare against deployments of new missile capabilities beyond what took place in the Cold War, even if those capabilities are less controversial than the nuclear deployments of years past. The Chinese media campaign against the terminal high-altitude air defense (THAAD) deployments in South Korea offers a case in point.58 Although the implementation of the dual-track decision and the subsequent INF Treaty eventually led to the removal and dismantlement of Pershing IIs in Europe, there is no guarantee that the United States and its competitors in the present day will necessarily enter a comprehensive agreement to limit intermediate-range missiles anytime soon (although the Euromissile Crisis does suggest that firmly moving ahead with deployments may actually facilitate rather than frustrate arms control). If Washington and its partners seek to maintain a robust post-INF missile posture in the absence of a comprehensive arms control agreement, they will have to find ways to address and manage public opposition to these assets to sustain long-term competition. There is a critical need for Washington to clearly convey its intentions and rationale for the deployment of these weapons, inform allied publics about the role these assets play, and prepare partners to meet potential responses from Russia and China.

#### Unlike others, these BOTH generate crises AND open escalation pathways.

Johnson 22 [James Johnson, Lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Aberdeen, “Inadvertent escalation in the age of intelligence machines: A new model for nuclear risk in the digital age,” European Journal of International Security, 7(3), 2022, pp.337-359, DOI 10.1017/eis.2021.23]

The digitised information ecosystem, human psychology, and inadvertent risk

Misperceptions, cognitive bias, and the human psychological features of security dilemma theorising can also be used to elucidate the escalatory dynamics that can follow from inflammatory, emotionally charged, and other offensive public rhetoric (see, for example, fake news, disinformation, rumours, and propaganda) used by adversaries during crisis – or saber-rattling behaviour.Footnote120 During, in anticipation of, or to incite a crisis or conflict, a state or non-state actor (for example, clandestine digital ‘sleeper cells’) could employ subconventional (or ‘grey zone’) information warfare campaigns to amplify its impact by sowing division, erode public confidence, and delaying an effective official response.Footnote121

The public confusion and disorder that followed a mistaken cell phone alert warning residents in Hawaii of an imminent ballistic missile threat in 2018 serve as a worrying sign of the vulnerabilities of US civil defences against state or non-state actors’ seeking asymmetric advantages vis-à-vis a superior adversary – that is, compensating for its limited nuclear capabilities.Footnote122 North Korea, for example, might conceivably replicate incidents like the Hawaii false alarm in 2018 in a disinformation campaign (that is, issuing false evacuation orders, issuing false nuclear alerts, and subverting real ones via social media) to cause mass confusion.Footnote123

During a crisis in the South China Seas or South Asia, for example, when tensions are running high, state or non-state disinformation campaigns could have an outsized impact on influencing crisis stability (dependent on the interpretation and processing of reliable intelligence) with potentially severe escalatory consequences. This impact would be compounded when populist decision-makers heavily rely on social media for information-gathering and open-source intelligence and thus more susceptible to social media manipulation.Footnote124 In extremis, a populist leader may come to view social media as an accurate barometer of public sentiment, eschewing official (classified and non-classified) evidence-based intelligence sources, and regardless of the origins of this virtual voice – that is, from genuine users or fake accounts as part of a malevolent disinformation campaign. Consequently, the agenda-setting framing narrative of decision-makers during a crisis would instead be informed by a fragmented and politicised social media information ecosystem; amplifying rumours, conspiracy theories, and radical polarisation, which in turn, reduces the possibility of achieving a public consensus to inform and legitimatise decisions during a crisis. Such dynamics may also expose decision-makers to increased ‘rhetorical entrapment’ pressure whereby alternative policy options (viable or otherwise) may be overlooked or dismissed out of hand.Footnote125

Furthermore, increased public scrutiny levels – especially coupled with disinformation and public panic – could further increase political pressures on leaders whose electoral success determines their political survival.Footnote126 Under crisis conditions, these dynamics may compromise diplomatic de-escalation efforts and complicate other issues that can influence crisis stability, including maintaining a credible deterrence and public confidence in a state's retaliatory capability and effective signalling resolve to adversaries and assurance to allies.Footnote127 State or non-state disinformation campaigns might also be deployed in conjunction with other AI-augmented non-kinetic/political (for example, cyberattacks, deep fake technology, or disinformation campaigns via social media amplified by automated bots) or kinetic/military (see, for example, drone swarms, missile defence, anti-satellite weapons, or hypersonic weapons) actions to distract decision-makers – thus, reducing their response time during a crisis and conferring a tactical or operational advantage to an adversary.Footnote128

For example, in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in India's Jammu and Kashmir in 2019, a disinformation campaign (see, for example, fake news and false and doctored images) that spread via social media amid a heated national election,Footnote129 inflamed emotions and domestic-political escalatory rhetoric, that in turn, promoted calls for retaliation against Pakistan and brought two nuclear-armed adversaries close to conflict.Footnote130 This crisis provides a sobering glimpse of how information and influence campaigns between two nuclear-armed adversaries can affect crisis stability and the concomitant risks of inadvertent escalation. In short, the catalysing effect of costly signalling and testing the limits of an adversary's resolve (which did not previously exist) to enhance security instead increases inadvertent escalation risks and leaves both sides less secure.

The effect of escalatory imbued rhetoric in the information ecosystem can be a double-edged sword for inadvertent escalation risk. On the one hand, public rhetorical escalation can mobilise domestic support and signal deterrence and resolve to an adversary – making war less likely. On the other hand, sowing public fear, distrust (for example, confidence in the legitimacy and reliability of NC3 systems), and threatening a leader's reputation and image (for example, the credibility of strategic decision-makers and robustness of nuclear launch protocols) domestically can prove costly, and in turn, may inadvertently make enemies of unresolved actors. For example, following the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling against China over the territorial disputes in the South China Seas in 2016, the Chinese government had to resort to social media censorship to stem the flood of nationalism, calling for war with US ally the Philippines.Footnote131 Furthermore, domestic public disorder and confusion – caused, for example, by a disinformation campaign or cyberattacks – can in itself act as an escalatory force, putting decision-makers under pressure to respond forcefully to foreign or domestic threats, to protect a states’ legitimacy, self-image, and credibility.Footnote132

These rhetorical escalation dynamics can simultaneously reduce the possibility for face-saving de-escalation efforts by either side – analogous to Thomas Schelling's ‘tying-hands mechanism’.Footnote133 During heightened tensions between the United States and North Korea in 2017, for instance, the Trump administration's heated war of words with Kim Jong Un, whether a madman's bluff or in earnest (or ‘rattle the pots and pans’) raised the costs of Kim Jong Un backing down (that is, with regime survival at stake), thus increasing inadvertent escalation risk, and simultaneously, complicating de-escalation.Footnote134 Because of the fear that its nuclear (and conventional) forces are vulnerable to a decapacitating first strike, rhetorical escalation between a conventionally inferior and superior state is especially dangerous.Footnote135 Research would be beneficial on how the contemporary information ecosystem might affect decision-making in different political systems.

Ultimately, states’ willingness to engage in nuclear brinkmanship will depend upon information (and mis/disinformation), cognitive bias, and the perception of, and the value attached to, what is at stake. Thus, if one side considers the potential consequences of not going to war as intolerable (that is, regime survival, the ‘tying-hands’, or ‘use it or lose it’ pressures), then off-ramps, firebreaks, or other de-escalation measures will be unable to prevent crisis instability from intensifying.Footnote136 Finally, to the extent to which public pressure emanating from the contemporary information environment affects whether nuclear war remains ‘special’ or ‘taboo’ will be critical for reducing the risk of inadvertent escalation by achieving crisis stability during a conventional war between nuclear-armed states. Future research would be beneficial (a) on how the digitised information ecosystem affects decision-making in different political regimes; and (b) the potential effect of asymmetry and learning in the distribution of countries with advanced AI-capabilities and dynamics associated with its adoption. Will nuclear-armed states with advanced AI-enabled capabilities treat less advanced nuclear peers that lack these capabilities differently? And how might divergences in states synthesis and adoption of military AI contribute to misperception, miscalculation, and accidents?

Policy implications

How can decision-makers mitigate the inadvertent escalation risks associated with AI and nuclear systems? Possible ways forward include, inter alia, arms control and verification, changes to norms and behaviour, unilateral measures and restraint, and bilateral and multilateral stability dialogue. AI technology is already raising a multitude of questions about warfare and shifts in the balance of power, which are challenging traditional arms control thinking.Footnote137 Traditional arms control and non-proliferation frameworks of nuclear governance are not necessarily obsolete, however.Footnote138 Instead, we will need to depart from conventional siloed, rigid, and stove-piped approaches and search for innovative frameworks and novel approaches to meet the challenges of the rapidly evolving dual-use technology, the linkages between conventional and nuclear weapons, and the informational challenges in the new nuclear age. An asymmetric arms control framework emphasises the importance of dynamism – allowing for mutual adjustment in force posture in ways that differ from the traditional ‘like-for-like’ approach to arms control – in designing such agreements would be a sensible starting point.Footnote139

#### Post-INF conventional conflicts – and escalation – are ahistorically likely – dampening use – even absent retaliation – is a precondition to ethics and the flourishing of any life.

***\*NOTE: card references self-harm in ununderlined sections***

Ruff 23 [Dr. Tilman A. Ruff, Associate Professor in the School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne, “The Planetary Health Imperative to Eradicate Nuclear Weapons,” Chapter 21, *Systems Thinking for Global Health*, eds. Fiona Larkan, Frederique Vallieres, Hasheem Mannan & Naonori Kodate, Oxford University Press, 2023, ISBN 978-0-19-879949-8, pp.265-271]

Existential Threats to Survival and Health

Among the myriad causes of death, illness, and suffering, it is those with potential to cause not only individual or mass death but disrupt the ongoing chain of life itself which can jeopardize the possibility of life for future generations that most demand priority and attention. Consequences of such cataclysmic proportions make intolerable the mere existence of danger that is preventable.

Until our sun expands into a red giant star in 6 billion or so years and makes the earth inhospitable, there are three existential challenges we must navigate collectively.

The first is collision of the earth with a celestial body, such as a large meteorite. Such collisions have been the main cause of previous major extinctions, like that of the dinosaurs. We may now be able to anticipate and avoid some such catastrophic collisions and should work collectively to improve these capabilities.

The second is environmental disruption, with degradation and depletion of vital resources and ecosystems; inadequately mitigated global heating posing the greatest such threat.

The third, more acute and less potentially reversible, is the danger of nuclear war. The World Health Assembly in 1983 identified nuclear weapons as “the greatest immediate threat to the health and welfare of mankind” (World Health Organization, 1983). Preventing use of nuclear weapons, by accident or design, necessitates their eradication; a necessary, urgent, and feasible precondition for securing planetary and human survival, health, and sustainability.

The latter two of these existential challenges are of recent and human origin, needing human solutions. Those of us alive since 1945 when nuclear weapons were first exploded, and more recently since evidence of human-induced climate disruption became unequivocal, are in all human evolutionary history the first generations to face existential threats of our own collective making. While the enormous and unprecedented responsibility we bear is a daunting challenge and burden, it is also a precious gift. No people in all human history have had as great an opportunity as those alive now to avert harm and do good for humanity, and for all the current and potential future denizens with whom we share planet earth.

For each of these existential threats, the severity and pervasiveness of the potential impacts make the broader ecosystem frame of planetary health more appropriate than one limited to human health, even if viewed globally.

Health evidence and health professionals have played and continue to play a central role in work to control nuclear weapons. This work involves mobilization and coalition building within the health sector, and also necessitates expertise and wide collaborations well beyond the health sector. The health systems building blocks most germane to this work are information/evidence, resources (especially human), and governance/leadership. A number of elements of a systems approach have proven useful to the health contribution toward freeing our world from nuclear weapons, in particular dynamic, big-picture thinking, a broad ecological perspective of positive and resisting forces and actors, an understanding of the non-linearity of political and social change, and the roles of focused interventions, critical mass, and tipping points. Applying the lessons of what has worked in efforts to control and eliminate other indiscriminate and inhumane weapons has also been key. This chapter discusses approaches and lessons useful in what has become known as the Humanitarian Initiative on nuclear weapons developed over the last decade, and especially the first international legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and provide a framework for their elimination: the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Materials

Nuclear weapons are by far the most destructive, indiscriminate, persistently toxic weapons ever invented.

The nuclear fission processes inside an atomic weapon and a nuclear reactor are fundamentally similar, and both increase the radioactivity present in the starting materials millions of times. In a thermonuclear (or hydrogen) bomb, highly enriched uranium (HEU) and/or plutonium undergoes fission, producing immense heat and pressure which enable isotopes of hydrogen (deuterium and tritium) to fuse, releasing vast, essentially limitless amounts of energy. This is the main process driving the sun. Single nuclear weapons have been detonated with more than four times the destructive power of all explosives used in all wars throughout human history.

Fissile materials are both toxic and weapons-usable over geological periods that make the time frames of human institutions irrelevant. Therefore, a sound approach is based on primary prevention and the inherent dangers of nuclear weapons and fissile materials. The custodial political leaders, their intentions, policies, and personalities, alliances, and governments, the areas within their jurisdiction, the functioning of governance and regulatory institutions, on the other hand, can transform overnight.

The current global stockpile of HEU is estimated at 1,330 tons, and for plutonium already separated from spent reactor fuel, 536 tons (International Panel on Fissile Materials, 2021). With modern US nuclear weapons known to contain an average of 4 kilograms (kg) of plutonium (or 12 kg of HEU), current fissile material stocks are sufficient to reconstitute the current global nuclear arsenal of 13,100 weapons many times over (Kristensen & Korda, 2021). Hence, ending production of weapons-usable materials, eliminating them wherever possible, and storing the rest as securely as humanly possible are key to achieving and sustaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Effects of Nuclear Weapons

An understanding of the effects of nuclear weapons is a crucial underpinning for all considerations and policy relating to them. Evidence of the true extent of the effects of nuclear weapons has frequently not been collected, or has been covered up, misrepresented, or disregarded by governments, victim to the myths that nuclear weapons are just weapons like any other, only larger, and can be used to serve legitimate military purposes and enhance security. The reality is vastly different. No humanitarian response, reconciliation, or recovery is possible after a nuclear war. The concept of “winners” would be meaningless; there would be only losers.

(i) Acute effects

Nuclear weapons produce an enormous blast wave that causes trauma both directly (such as lung trauma and ear drum rupture) and indirectly through powerful winds which can turn objects, including people, into missiles. Intense heat causes direct vaporization, incineration, and burns and ignites anything flammable over a large area. A defining feature of nuclear weapons is the release of huge amounts of radioactivity in the initial pulse as well as through radioactive fallout, containing hundreds of different radioisotopes with half-lives ranging from fractions of a second to millions of years. Fallout is dispersed by wind and water over great distances, eventually worldwide. Ionizing radiation causes acute multi-organ toxicity (acute radiation sickness) at high acute doses, and in the long term any level causes dose-related genetic damage and lifelong subsequent increased risk of cancer and chronic diseases. Genetic damage may be inherited by future generations, who would also be at further risk through living in a radioactively contaminated environment.

The electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from a single high-altitude nuclear explosion would cover a continental size area with voltage a million times greater than lightning. This would disrupt the vast array of not specifically protected electrical and electronic equipment on which the infrastructure of modern societies is highly dependent, including water and electricity supply, telecommunications, computer systems, transport networks, medical equipment, traffic lights, banking, and most commerce and trade (Ruff, 2013).

While the average size of the weapons in the global nuclear arsenal is 200 kilotons (kt) high explosive equivalent, thirteen times the size of the Hiroshima bomb, the largest currently deployed nuclear weapons contain 5 million tons (Mt) of high explosive equivalent for blast. Within a thousandth of a second, conditions akin to the center of the sun would be produced: 100 million °C and 100 million atmospheres of pressure in a fireball which would rapidly expand to 1.8 kilometers (km) across. Within 4.7 km in every direction, winds of 750 km/h and a blast wave over 140 kPa would destroy all buildings and vaporize the upper layer of the earth. To 7.5 km in every direction, winds of 460 km/h and blast pressures of 80 kPa would break apart concrete and steel buildings and vaporize aluminum. For 12.3 km in every direction, asphalt would melt and windows fragment into more than 4,000 projectile glass shards per square meter (m2). Stretching 22.6 km in every direction, over an area of 1605 km2, everything flammable would ignite—wood, vegetation, paper, cloth, plastics, petrol, oil from ruptured tanks, and cars; further fueled by ruptured gas pipes, downed electricity lines, and leaking chemicals. Within half an hour, hundreds of thousands of fires would coalesce into a giant firestorm 45 km across, with temperatures of more than 800 °C, sucking in air and creating winds of more than 320 km/h, consuming all available oxygen (Ruff, 2013). Shelters would become crematoria and every living thing would die within this fire zone.

Streets would be impassable. There would be no ambulances, fire engines, or police, no power or communications or functioning hospitals. The vast majority of injured and burnt people would die alone without any human comfort or relief from their agonizing pain (World Health Organization, 1987).

(ii) Climate impacts and nuclear famine

There have been important new findings regarding ionizing radiation health effects in recent years, in the direction of greater health consequences than previously estimated (Ruff, 2017). However, it is in relation to the impacts of nuclear war on climate, agriculture, and nutrition that scientific advances of the greatest moment have been made in the past fourteen years. It is not just large-scale nuclear war between Russia and the United States that poses a global threat. A series of studies have shown that a localized, regional nuclear war utilizing a tiny fraction of the global nuclear arsenal would also have catastrophic worldwide effects.

Nuclear weapons are extremely efficient at igniting simultaneous fires over large areas, which would rapidly coalesce and loft large volumes of sooty smoke into the stratosphere. The scenario most frequently studied and recently updated (Toon et al., 2019) is nuclear war between India and Pakistan. These countries have fought four wars and many skirmishes since their partition in 1947. The most recently studied scenario assumes that in 2025, each country will possess 250 nuclear weapons, and 250 are used in a war between them. This number constitutes less than 2% of the current global nuclear arsenal and less than 1% of its explosive power. The direct effects in South Asia are catastrophic. Depending on whether the weapons used had yields of fifteen (Hiroshima-size), 50 or 100 kt, between 50 and 125 million people would die from the early direct effects of the explosions, fires, and local radiation.

The global consequences would, however, be far more devastating. Cities ignited by the nuclear explosions would loft dark smoke containing between 16.1 million tons (for 15 kt warheads) and 36.6 million tons (for 100 kt warheads) of black carbon high into the upper atmosphere. Previously, three teams of climate scientists using three different climate models and making conservative assumptions each showed significant drops in average surface temperature, sunlight, and precipitation across the globe, with the effects lasting for over a decade for a smaller scenario involving 100 15kt nuclear explosions (Mills, Toon, Lee-Taylor, & Robock, 2015). While the fuel density of modern cities and industrial areas varies, there is nothing specific to India/ Pakistan about such a scenario, and urban populations and fuel densities are tending to rise worldwide. In the Toon 2019 study, average global land temperatures decline by as much as 4-8C. By comparison, the Last Glacial Maximum 20,000 years ago saw a decline in temperatures of 3-8C. Following nuclear war, ice-age conditions would develop within a few weeks.

This climate disruption would in turn profoundly reduce food production. For a scenario involving 100 15 kt explosions, producing 5 million tons of smoke, considering only the impact of colder temperatures, reduced sunlight, and precipitation decline, global grain crops would reduce by 20% for the first five years and 10-15% for the second five years (Toon et al., 2017), with much larger declines at higher latitudes.

Adequate human nutrition cannot be sustained in the face of widespread decline of food production of this magnitude. Total world grain reserves typically amount to 60-120 days of global consumption and would not begin to offset the shortfall over a decade or more (Toon et al., 2017). Furthermore, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates there were 768 million people in 2020 who are already chronically undernourished, and a rising number of people—2.37 billion—currently facing moderate or severe food insecurity (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2021). In addition, a further 300+ million people who receive adequate nutrition today live in countries highly dependent on food imports, which would quickly dry up following a nuclear war. Conservatively estimated, without taking account of land polluted by radiation and toxic chemicals, dramatically increased ultraviolet (UV) radiation harmful to plants and animals both on land and in water, disruption to trade and agricultural inputs including seed, fertilizer, fuel, pesticides, etc., or the disease epidemics and social conflict that inevitably accompany famine, around 2 billion people would starve, following a regional nuclear war involving 0.7% of the global arsenal and less than 0.1% of its total yield (Helfand, 2013).

A recent study (Toon et al., 2019) estimates reductions in net primary productivity (NPP) for the range of weapons yields already described. This is a measure of broad ecological health, reflecting the amount of carbon dioxide (C02) converted to plant matter, after accounting for plant respiration. It is therefore a proxy envelope for the maximum amount of food which could be harvested. NPP would decline by 15-30% on land and 10-20% in the oceans over several years. This is comparable to the total amount of food and fiber currently used by humans. In some densely populated regions of Europe, south and east Asia, humans appropriate 63-80% of NPP, and people in most of India, eastern China, parts of the Middle East, and equatorial Africa consume more than 100% of local NPP, with consequently little or no margin to cope with the multiyear productivity loss that would follow a regional nuclear war anywhere in the world.

Large-scale war between the United States and Russia would be far worse. A war involving the strategic (long range) weapons now deployed would put 150 million tons of black carbon in the upper atmosphere, and drop temperatures around the world by 8-10 °C. In the interior regions of North America and Eurasia, temperatures would fall by 25-30 °C for more than a decade. In temperate regions of the northern Hemisphere, temperatures would fall below freezing for part of every day for at least two years (Coupe, Bardeen, Robock, Toon, 2019). Food production would cease and the vast majority—perhaps all—of the human race would starve (Helfand et al., 2016).

This evidence of severe global impacts from even a limited regional nuclear war involving a tiny fraction of the world stockpile means that all nuclear arsenals, not only those of Russia and the United States, pose a global danger. During most of the Cold War it was argued that the risk of “mutually assured destruction” would keep the peace between rationally and reliably governed nuclear-armed rivals. However, we now know that use of nuclear weapons would be suicidal, even without highly probable nuclear escalation and retaliation, resulting in “self-assured destruction” (Toon et al, 2017). Nuclear weapons are effectively global suicide bombs.

The Growing Risk of Nuclear War

The current international security landscape is alarming. Relations between United States/NATO and Russia are at their lowest ebb since the end of the Cold War, with Russian annexation of Crimea, and an increase of aggressive threats, military exercises, and deployments. The arms control treaties that have helped prevent nuclear catastrophe for the last half century are being progressively dismantled. The signature disarmament treaty that ushered in the end of the Cold War, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, was abandoned in 2019. The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and Open Skies Treaty have also been abandoned. In early 2021, a new United States administration joined Russia in extending the New Strategic Arms Reduction (START) Treaty for five years, two days before the treaty would otherwise have expired. This is the only remaining constraint on Russian and US nuclear weapons, together possessing 90% of the global total. While exploratory Russian-US talks on nuclear weapons resumed in 2021, both sides are developing new nuclear weapons and lowering the threshold for nuclear war.

Tensions simmer between China, United States, Japan, and others in the South China Sea. Almost weekly skirmishes along their disputed border, a continuing nuclear arms race, weak security of nuclear weapons, and policies envisioning early use of nuclear weapons, highlight the real danger of armed conflict turning nuclear between India and Pakistan. The welcome signs in recent years of rapprochement and dialog replacing irresponsible escalating nuclear threats between DPRK (North Korea) and the United States are reversing. The landmark agreement which saw unprecedented and effectively verified constraints on Iran’s nuclear program is unraveling after the United States walked away from the agreement. The danger of nuclear weapons detonations as a result of cyberattack is growing (Helfand et al., 2016). A climate stressed world is already witnessing a sharp increase in the number of internationalized armed conflicts over the last decade (World Bank, 2018), many involving nuclear-armed states and thereby posing growing risks of nuclear escalation.

Meanwhile, all nine nuclear-armed states are committed not only to indefinite retention of their nuclear arsenals, but all are investing large sums—together over US$ 105 billion annually—in modernizing them, developing new weapons with new capacities, making them more accurate and “usable.”

No wonder then that the thirteen Nobel Laureates and other custodians of the Doomsday Clock, along with most authoritative others, assess the dangers of nuclear war to be as high as they have ever been, and growing. In January 2018 the hands of the Clock were moved forward to two minutes to midnight, as close to midnight as they have been since 1953, when both the United States and USSR in rapid succession tested thermonuclear bombs. The hands were kept there in 2019. In January 2020, they were moved to 100 seconds to midnight, closer than they have ever been (Science and Security Board, 2020). They said:

Humanity continues to face two simultaneous existential dangers—nuclear war and climate change—that are compounded by a threat multiplier, cyber-enabled information warfare, that undercuts society’s ability to respond\_

In the nuclear realm, national leaders have ended or undermined several major arms control treaties and negotiations during the last year, creating an environment conducive to a renewed nuclear arms race, to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to lowered barriers to nuclear war. Political conflicts regarding nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea remain unresolved and are, if anything, worsening. US-Russia cooperation on arms control and disarmament is all but nonexistent.

In 2021, the hands of the clock remain at 100 seconds to midnight.

#### Plan solves — normal means involves both prior and parallel consultations. The topic-mandated elements are essential: disarming and unilaterally restricting to build confidence in verification in the process – which solves even absent reciprocation.

Bajema et al 21 [Dr. Natasha E. Bajema, Director of the Converging Risks Lab at the Council on Strategic Risks; and Christine **Parthemore**, Chief Executive Officer of the Council on Strategic Risks and Director of CSR’s Janne E. Nolan Center on Strategic Weapons; “The Next Great Idea in Nuclear Arms Control: Putting the “N” Back in INF,” Briefer, 14, 2-2-2021, https://councilonstrategicrisks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Next-Great-Idea-in-Nuclear-Arms-Control\_Putting-the-N-Back-In-INF\_BRIEFER-14\_2021\_02\_02-1.pdf]

For more than three decades, the INF Treaty eliminated nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges from 500 to 5,500 kilometers from U.S. and Russian arsenals.6 When the treaty entered into force in 1988, it made history in several respects. It represented the first time that the Soviet Union and United States had agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals rather than just impose caps or freezes. It also eliminated an entire class of weapons, leading to the permanent dismantlement and destruction of 2,692 missiles—1,846 by Russia and 846 by the United States.7 The treaty provided for the comprehensive verification of its provisions through extensive on-site inspections in addition to national technical means. Finally, unlike the subsequent bilateral arms control treaties between Russia and the United States, the INF Treaty was intended to be of unlimited duration.

On August 2, 2019, the U.S. withdrawal from the INF Treaty became official, freeing both Russia and the United States of their obligations. Though U.S. officials have repeatedly accused Russia of violating the treaty with its development of a new conventional intermediate-range ground-launched missile, the fault for the collapse of this historic treaty appears to be complex, including significant pressures from the shift to a multipolar world. Russia has tested and fielded a new ground launched cruise missile (SSC-8/9M729),8 and the U.S. has tested a new conventional ground-launched ballistic missile.9 So far it appears both countries are focusing on advancing conventional systems, though they will likely be capable of carrying nuclear warheads too.

If both countries continue to develop dual-capable intermediate range nuclear-armed missiles, Europe will face a new period of heightened nuclear tensions. In addition to reviving this Cold War-era threat, the United States and Russia are considering these conventional but dual-capable systems in the Asia-Pacific. This would greatly expand the geographic threat of these weapons, along with their miscalculation risks.10

At the same time, countries such as China have expanded their arsenals of conventional intermediate-range missiles, some of which are considered nuclear-capable. According to RAND’s Michael Chase, the People’s Liberation Army’s “land-based ballistic and cruise missiles serves as the cornerstone of the Chinese military’s strategic deterrence and conventional precision strike capabilities.”11 More than 95 percent of these missiles fall within the range proscribed by the INF Treaty,12 including dual-capable anti-ship ballistic missiles dubbed “carrier killers.” China is not likely to give them up in the near term. Though China has not expressed interest in arming such missiles with nuclear warheads, the presence of these conventional offensive capabilities in the region are of concern to many other nations.

In recent years, India and Pakistan have accelerated their testing programs of conventional, but likely also nuclear-capable, intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles. Pakistan considers its intermediate-range missile programs an essential component of its nuclear posture against India. Since 2002, Pakistan has conducted an average of five missile tests per year, with a peak of eight tests in 2019. After the first test of its Babur-3 submarine-launched cruise missile in 2017, Pakistan expressed the importance of these nuclear-capable cruise missiles for providing a second strike capability.13 In its most recent test in February 2020, Pakistan tested a new air-launched cruise missile.14 India views its intermediate-range ballistic missile programs as a cornerstone of its nuclear deterrence posture with both Pakistan and China. Meanwhile, its interest in cruise missiles appear to be driven at least in part by a desire for capabilities less vulnerable to China’s ballistic missile defense capabilities.15

Several other countries including France, Iran, and North Korea have fielded or are developing intermediate-range missiles that may be nuclear-capable (in Iran’s case, this only applies should it develop nuclear weapons). Additionally, the spread of missile defenses, drones, and other capabilities is bringing further complexities to the global security environment---and to discourse on next steps in arms control.

Rather than return to the substance of the INF Treaty as it was originally negotiated, we propose replacing it with an agreement that bans all nuclear-armed, intermediate-range, ground-launched cruise missiles. This should start with bilateral arrangements between the United States and Russia, designed to be expanded upon later to bring in other countries and nuclear armed, intermediate-range ballistic missiles, and be later built upon with measures to extend to other types of systems. Depending on political conditions at the time this is pursued, officials may consider expanding it to include sea- and/or air-launched nuclear cruise missiles as well, as we discuss below.

Like the original INF Treaty, such measures would reduce the risk of miscalculation that results from these dual-use capabilities and the potential for unintentional escalation. This concept would also serve as a major step toward reimagining the arms control agenda and strengthening the NPT.

THE CONCEPT

We propose that the United States immediately pursue an agreement with Russia on a nuclear-only successor to the INF Treaty, beginning with a ban on nuclear intermediate-range (500 to 5,500 km) cruise missiles. This first step would open the door to later incorporating other nations and nuclear-armed ballistic missiles of the same range.

Our concept is designed to address some of the INF Treaty’s key challenges—e.g., its bilateral limitations, its application to both conventional and nuclear-armed missiles, and its complicated relationship with anti-missile defenses and drones—whilst retaining its core strengths—e.g., reducing a class of destabilizing nuclear-capable missiles and setting the stage for comprehensive on-site verification. While such an agreement could take many forms, the following section includes our recommendations on scope, participants, and sequencing.

What to Include:

As summarized above, a near-term future INF agreement should focus solely on nuclear weapons and seek to ban these weapons outright rather than allow for a limited number of them. Differentiating between nuclear and conventional systems to verify such an agreement is relatively straightforward, while verifying that only certain numbers of weapons are nuclear-armed is much more complex. Negotiating a limit on numbers would require intrusive types of verification measures that many countries may not be comfortable with. A full ban rather than a limit would help avoid these challenges.

Similarly, omitting the notion of banning conventional intermediate-range systems for now would simplify the path toward agreement--and is far more likely to be attractive to China and other countries. However, as we suggest below, moratoriums on deploying conventional intermediate-range systems should be pursued.

Second, such an agreement is best focused in the near term on nuclear-armed cruise missiles rather than both cruise and ballistic missiles. Cruise missiles introduce risks for miscalculation and surprise even beyond those of ballistic missiles. This more tailored approach would likely be more attractive to additional countries in the future. This agreement should, however, be seen as an initial step toward future limits or bans on comparable ballistic missiles as well.

Another key scoping element is whether to focus solely on ground-launched systems, as the original INF Treaty did, or to include sea- or air-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs and ALCMs, respectively).

Many experts, including those that took part in CSR’s early 2021 discussion, consider it worth exploring an agreement that would include ground- and sea-launched nuclear cruise missiles--or potentially all nuclear-armed cruise missiles. Currently, concerns are rising regarding U.S. and Russian nuclear modernization plans regarding these weapons. Russia is exploring a sea-launched, nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed torpedo that some are concerned may indicate a revival of plans for new SLCMs. The United States currently plans to bring back nuclear SLCMs in response to various Russian threats. It is also developing a more-advanced nuclear air-launched cruise missile (the long-range standoff cruise missile, or LRSO). Plans by both countries reintroduce some worrisome dynamics in both Europe and the Asia-Pacific. These tensions make the idea of including nuclear SLCMs and/or nuclear ALCMs attractive.

However, focusing in the immediate term on ground-launched INF systems likely offers a more feasible path--and one that can pave the way toward addressing these other nuclear cruise missile systems (and eventually ballistic missiles, missile defenses, drones, and other relevant capabilities). For now, we recommend prioritizing a nuclear-only INF agreement focused on ground-based cruise missiles rather than entangling its pursuit with other steps. This simple approach would be a good fit to the complexities of the current security environment. It would help rebuild trust among relevant nations. Equally important, it could open the door to multilateral participation in the near term than agreements that cover a broader range of nuclear capabilities.

Yet while a nuclear INF agreement limited to nuclear-armed ground-launched cruise missiles should be an immediate priority, the United States should seriously consider a parallel, unilateral act that would show other nations its renewed commitment to reducing the risks of nuclear weapons and to pivot away from expanding new nuclear capabilities. Pausing or fully halting current plans to bring back its previously-retired nuclear SLCMs would offer an important signal to other countries. It would help meet growing pressure from Congress and civil society to downsize U.S. nuclear weapons plans and pursue defense spending oriented more toward 21st century threats. This move would produce no loss to U.S. security interests whilst showcasing a return of U.S. leadership in arms control.

Who to Involve:

The process should start bilaterally between the United States and Russia, at least as the primary actors. Yet it is clear from recent history that any agreement needs to include provisions that allow other countries to join later--and any work should be framed as moving toward the goal of negotiating multilateral agreements. The aim of this starting point should be for bilateral progress to later embed in a “bilateral-plus” framework with other parties as soon as it is practicable. Indeed, this is similar to the U.S.-USSR bilateral origin of the INF Treaty, which later brought in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine after their independence, given that former Soviet facilities in their territories were inspectable under the treaty.

Yet the mostly-bilateral nature of the INF Treaty hindered its lasting relevance. Whilst Russia and the United States were constrained from developing and testing intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles, China and other countries faced no such restraints on their missile postures. Although the Chinese would have opposed joining the old INF Treaty, given that its ban extended to both conventional and nuclear-armed missiles, they may be open to a nuclear-only INF that focuses on cruise missiles at first. In such a treaty China would not have to give up any of its current nuclear arsenal, and it would offer mutual security benefits to participating countries simply by pledging not to develop the banned class of nuclear weapons.

Even in the early stages of this process, the United States and Russia should consider inviting Chinese officials to observe some elements of discussions (though likely not the initial negotiations) in order to learn more about the dynamics of arms control agreements. Separate but parallel discussions may also be a useful format for further exploring China’s potential future participation.

In the future, if conditions make it beneficial, this agreement could expand in various ways beyond just including China. Other NATO countries may join up at some stage; this approach may appeal to many nations if an agreement enshrines a moratorium on deploying conventional intermediate-range missile systems to Europe. It may also include non-nuclear nations like Kazakhstan that play an important role in reducing nuclear threats and participated in inspections under the original INF Treaty.

Potential Next Steps:

It is important to get started on this concept or other arms control work as soon as possible. Although there are significant strains between the United States and Russia (and with other countries such as China), the work of reducing nuclear weapons risks has grown more urgent in recent years. In the following, we discuss potential next steps.

Pursue the Moratorium

First, the United States and Russia should revisit a moratorium on deployment of conventional ground-launched intermediate-range missiles in Europe. When Russia originally proposed such a moratorium as the original INF Treaty was coming to an end, it was seen in the United States as a propaganda ploy. Particularly, the proposed moratorium involved geographic limitations and would not include the 9M729 system that the U.S. believes violated the INF Treaty in the first place.

Later, in the fall of 2020, Russia put forward a more expansive moratorium concept that would include a mutual verification and monitoring regime and cover the 9M729 system. The United States should work with Russia to finalize a moratorium along these lines, putting aside for the sake of progress the fact that Russia still does not admit that the 9M729 violated the INF Treaty. To be sure, this is only a first step, but it should not be discarded. This Europe-focused moratorium could pave the way for an Asia-centric extension later.16

Pursue Treaty Discussions, With Backup Plans

This, along with what appears to be a pending agreement to extend the New START Treaty (at the time of this writing), will set the stage for a nuclear-only successor to the INF Treaty as described above. The ultimate goal should be to negotiate the agreement as a legally-binding treaty.

If a formal treaty does not seem politically feasible, the United States and Russia could consider parallel, unilateral political declarations of intent to refrain from pursuing nuclear-capable, ground-launched intermediate-range cruise missiles and express their desire to negotiate a legally-binding agreement enshrining the declarations at a later date. Such unilateral declarations could still include a commitment to verification, whether through a third-party organization or mutual on-site inspections. Such declarations would follow the important precedent set by the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives of 1991 and have the benefit that they can be made quickly through presidential decisions.

Once these statements are released, the United States and Russia could encourage other nations such as the United Kingdom, France, China, India, and Pakistan to make similar unilateral statements. This could create momentum and drive a sense of mutual risk reduction regarding some of the most destabilizing types of nuclear weapons. Of course, it would be important in this case to continue pursuing formal, legally-binding agreements.

Ideally, this work should proceed in the early months of 2021 in order to minimize momentum slowing from the bilateral arms control discussions held in 2020. This timing would build on relevant dialogues that have advanced for several years in Track 1.5 settings among U.S., Russian, European, and Asian experts and officials.17 In the near-term, additional Track 1.5 fora should be convened in support of official discussions.

Conduct Parallel Engagements

For the United States, it will be critical to conduct significant, parallel engagement with its allies and key partner nations. Accounting for political and security dynamics of concern to NATO and Asia-Pacific allies is paramount. U.S. officials can benefit from the advice of allied and partner nations and proactive cooperative planning to create momentum and support for such agreements. Consulting with ASEAN nations will be important as well, as they have relevant risk reduction measures in place that could help. Their quiet support will also be important for future engagement with China.

Some dynamics pertaining to incentives for Russia and the United States--as well as China, NATO nations, and U.S. allies in Asia--remain unclear. Some stakeholders worry that lack of interest among U.S. allies for hosting conventionally-armed intermediate-range missiles in Europe and Asia may mean that China feels less pressured to join a nuclear-only INF agreement in the future. Others believe China has significant incentives to keep nuclear-armed cruise missiles out of its region regardless of conventional deployments. Regarding China, it will be important to avoid moves that could incentivize them to race for parity with U.S. or Russian capabilities.

Nuclear strategic stability talks that include countries like China may help in navigating this problem and other challenges. This work can certainly be conducted in parallel to work toward the agreement outlined above. Indeed, both tracks are necessary components of a comprehensive, longer-term work plan toward reducing the risks of nuclear weapons while accounting for increased technological entanglement and pervasive lack of trust among nuclear-armed nations.18

TRUST AND VERIFICATION

The INF Treaty represented the first arms control agreement to include verification measures beyond national technical means. The U.S. and the Soviet Union adopted a comprehensive system of on-site inspections at operating bases and support facilities. Like the arms control agreements that came after it, such inspections focused only on verifying the elimination of delivery vehicles rather than the nuclear warheads themselves. This was due to heightened sensitivities about weapon design and isotopic profiles. Since both ballistic and cruise missiles can carry conventional and nuclear warheads, eliminating an entire class of nuclear weapons by the range of their delivery systems offered a simple way to navigate such issues.

An important, additional lesson from the original INF Treaty is that a comprehensive verification component was developed in advance of the treaty.

The commitment to verification under the INF Treaty should be replicated immediately. The political steps recommended above should be accompanied by a technical analogue to the INF Treaty’s spirit: initial exchanges between U.S. and Russian scientists and technical experts to envision in detail how to verify a nuclear-only INF agreement. Ideally this could be an exchange between national laboratory experts in each country. Though if that proved too difficult, some mix of non-governmental, government, and former government technical experts would still offer an important line of communication--even if such work is initially conducted via an international or fully nongovernmental organization due to political constraints.

The experts and officials consulted by CSR broadly agreed that verification is eminently feasible for a nuclear-only INF agreement. The tools and methods for verification used in the past would benefit from what one discussion participant called institutional “muscle memory.” The verification processes of the INF Treaty would still be familiar to some U.S. and Russian experts and institutions.

Moreover, the field is even better-primed today to devise effective verification regimes than in the 1980s. As Rose Gottemoeller described extensively in presenting the nuclear-only INF agreement concept in The Washington Quarterly in late 2020, recent advancements in verification technologies and methods in recent years should make it even easier than in the past. Today, it is possible to confirm relevant missiles are not carrying nuclear warheads, and/or were modified to no longer be nuclear-capable, and that they remained in that state.19 Additionally, work by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research shows the promise of regimes for verifying the absence of nuclear warheads at specific locations, which could be well suited for the above-recommended agreement that includes nuclear but not conventional forces.20

Efforts to foster learning about nuclear arms control verification should be a component of the pursuit of this or other arrangements. Joint verification experiments, like ones conducted between Russia and the United States in the past, and expert exchanges could be extremely useful in raising the comfort level of countries such as China.21 This would build well on the longer history of nuclear arms control, as well as more recent efforts to open up verification to include countries that may not possess nuclear weapons themselves, as the UK-Norway Initiative did.22

While verification is not a major challenge to future arms control steps like a nuclear INF agreement, trust-building will require enduring work. The dual-use potential of many delivery systems will continue to cause distrust in which countries believe that others will simply convert back conventional systems to carry nuclear warheads. Because avoiding this technical reality is challenging, general trust-building will be a perennial requirement.

CONCLUSION

No matter what course this proposal or others take, stakeholders must also proactively address disinformation and myths that will likely arise if discussions toward a nuclear-only successor to the INF Treaty proceeds. Two pervasive narratives have been spread in recent years. One claims that arms control agreements are too difficult to verify. The second is that U.S. allies will view such agreements negatively. For any agreement to succeed, both narratives must be actively dispelled.

The mutual security benefits of a ban on nuclear intermediate-range, ground-launched cruise missiles are clear for many countries, including both Russia and the United States. Furthermore, verification regimes similar to what this agreement would require were successfully implemented for decades--even prior to technological improvements that could be used for this type of agreement.

Amidst a raging pandemic, economic and climate crises, and more, there may also be those who simply state that progress in nuclear arms control should wait until a different time. Yet the concept presented in this paper is a feasible step in the near-term, and one that would bring significant benefits toward stability and trust-building--and which could also have benefits for international cooperation on other key security issues. It should be pursued as a top nuclear arms control priority of the Biden administration in the United States and other stakeholders around the world.

## Diplomacy ADV

#### Advantage 2 is Disarm Diplomacy:

#### Global perceptions of post-hegemonic transition are driving nuclear and geopolitical hedging, centered on intermediate-range missile racing – that – NOT nuke prolif itself – is what generates existential conflicts.

Cooper 21 [David A. Cooper, Professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, formerly served for nearly two decades as an official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, including as Director of Nonproliferation Policy and Director of Strategic Arms Control Policy, PhD political science and international relations, Australian National University, MA international affairs, Columbia University, “Long-Term Prospects for Nuclear Missile Controls,” Chapter 7, *Space and Missile Wars: What Awaits*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski, Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, 2021, ISBN 978-1-7371113-0-6, p.198-232] \*[language modifications]

The long-term prospects for nuclear missile controls are as urgent as they are unpromising. Legacy international controls are moribund or unravelling. The paradigm of bilateral US-Russian nuclear arms control—which for decades has provided the world’s only binding missile controls—is nearing the end of its rope. Meanwhile the global missile nonproliferation regime— always relatively week—is increasingly ineffective in the face of steady missile technology diffusion and the mounting pressures of a dangerously fluid international security environment. Most alarmingly, these extant arrangements are woefully ill-equipped to control the emergence of new technologies, notably maneuverable hypersonic missiles.

The deterioration of international missile controls is nothing new. It has been happening in slow motion fits and starts for almost two decades. It is newly worrying, however, because the United States now confronts a new age of multipolar nuclear competition with a gathering missile arms race as its central feature. All the major nuclear powers are modernizing their nuclear missile forces, and most are racing to field revolutionary new types of missiles including intermediate- and intercontinental-range maneuverable hypersonic missiles, air launched ballistic missiles (ALBM), and in the case of Russia, a nuclear-armed and powered cruise missile of almost limitless range. Now unshackled [freed] by the demise of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, both Washington and Moscow are racing to deploy intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles—Russia having gotten a head start by blatantly violating INF—to offset China’s overwhelming advantage in these dual-purpose conventional and nuclear systems. Meanwhile North Korea and Iran continue to expand and improve their already formidable arsenals of nuclear-cable missiles as they stretch toward intercontinental range. This volatile combination of missile racing among the major nuclear powers and nuclear and missile proliferation by hostile regional powers could provoke other countries to seek long-range missiles as a hedge for going nuclear later. In sum, the nuclear missile environment is deteriorating across the board with no end in sight.

This chapter explores the prospects for strengthening international controls on nuclear missiles over the next decade or more. The chapter begins by the exploring why missiles matter as organic components of nuclear forces and how this makes missile controls an essential feature of any viable nonproliferation or arms control regime. It then examines how the erosion of the post-Cold War order has opened the door for nuclear missile races in the face of increasingly contested regional and global nuclear landscapes. It then suggests the most plausible prospects for negotiating new or stronger nonproliferation and arms control measures to put guardrails on this increasingly uncontrolled global missile competition. Finally, it concludes by warning that these prospects are poor in today’s fluid geopolitical and geostrategic circumstances and that the United States and its allies will need to play a long game to convince China, Russia, and others to come to the negotiating table.

Why Missiles Matter

When we talk about nuclear weapons we are really talking about missiles as well as the explosive warheads that they carry. Missiles are at the heart of both sides of the nuclear competition equation: new countries seeking to join the nuclear club (nuclear proliferation) and rivalry among the existing nuclear powers (nuclear postures and arms racing). Therefore, although the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) does not restrict missiles, preventing nuclear proliferation nevertheless requires preventing missile proliferation. For countries like Iran and North Korea to become formidable nuclear powers they must not only obtain nuclear explosives, but also the means to deliver them. Likewise, nuclear balances among the major nuclear powers like Russia, the United States, and China are measured in large part by their missile delivery systems, and defenses against them, rather than warhead inventories per se. This is the case particularly for the United States and Russia, which have large reserve stockpiles of warheads and fissile materials to make more if necessary. To the extent that warheads are the focus, it is largely how many are operationally deployed on missiles. In a nutshell, nuclear delivery systems are a lynchpin of controlling nuclear dangers. President Ronald Reagan had it exactly right when he conflated things by referring to nuclear missiles. 488

Ballistic and cruise missiles can have both conventional warfighting and nuclear deterrence roles. These roles tend to be defined by their ranges. Shorter-range systems are associated primarily with conventional warfighting and thus are seen as less relevant as nuclear delivery systems, although what counts as shorter-range is variously defined from below 300-1000 kilometers.489 Medium-range systems (commonly defined as 1000-3000 kilometers) and intermediate-range systems (commonly defined as 3000-5500 kilometers) play both conventional and nuclear roles.490 Although this may be changing, intercontinental missiles above 5500km to date have been exclusively nuclear missiles.491 Despite these different uses, it is their singular role as rapid and reliable nuclear delivery systems that sets ballistic and cruise (and now hypersonic) missiles apart from conventional weaponry, especially at longer ranges.

For this reason, the common distinction that is made between nuclear weapons and the missiles that carry them is not only misleading, but also misguided. The more inclusive concept of nuclear forces encompasses nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. For example, although the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was hailed as a breakthrough for nuclear disarmament, it was in fact a missile treaty that did not actually ban any nuclear weapons. Even long-range strategic bombers, like nuclear missile submarines, are really forward deployed staging platforms for long-range missiles. For example, the only reason that aging B-52s can still be effective against modern air defenses is down to the modern long-range air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) that they carry.492 Indeed, other than comparatively antiquated nuclear gravity bombs intended for tactical nuclear warfighting, and Russia’s new autonomous intercontinental-range nuclear torpedo (in effect an underwater missile), nuclear forces are missile forces. In other words, controlling nuclear forces mostly means controlling missiles.

Missile Proliferation Is Nuclear Proliferation

Despite the organic relationship between nuclear weapons and the missiles that carry them, missile nonproliferation is too often treated as separate and secondary to nuclear nonproliferation.493 For example, the nuclear deal that the Obama administration negotiated with Iran did not include any missile controls, leaving missiles to be addressed in a separate UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) that merely "called upon" Iran to suspend its missile activities—a request Iran has blithely ignored without violating the core agreement.494 More significantly, the formal multilateral institutions responsible for preventing nuclear proliferation—the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) setting the rules and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verifying and implementing them—do not address missiles. This nuclear-only nonproliferation paradigm stands in sharp contrast to the Cold War nuclear arms control paradigm that focused holistically on weapons and delivery systems.

Focusing on long-range missiles brings into sharp focus that outright nuclear proliferation along the lines of North Korea and Pakistan is the tip of a potentially larger nuclear hedging iceberg—that is, countries that are deliberately acquiring the wherewithal to quickly become a breakout nuclear power should the need arise (sometimes also referred to as nuclear latency). Missiles play a key and integral role in nuclear hedging. It has long been understood that civilian nuclear energy programs can be used for nuclear hedging. For example, leading experts believe that Saudi Arabia and Japan are rather blatantly using their nuclear energy programs to hedge against growing nuclear threats from hostile neighbors.495 But for these and other NPT countries there is still the safeguard (albeit imperfect) of IAEA oversight and the prohibition against moving beyond nuclear latency. By contrast, there is no international treaty that prohibits missile proliferation. Therefore, developing long-range missile capabilities—either overtly, or covertly within a civilian space launch program—is a much less restricted aspect of nuclear hedging.

Needless to say, there are some good reasons for prioritizing preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. First and foremost, even without missiles in the equation there is a strong case that nuclear weapons in the wrong hands pose a dire risk in that they could be used in a cataclysmic terrorist attack.496 From the standpoint of purely military use, there is still always some risk posed by bombers or short-range missiles, especially for neighboring countries. Given that the expertise, equipment, and fissile materials that are required to produce nuclear weapons are extremely difficult to attain without outside assistance, thwarting nuclear weapons programs makes sense as a top nonproliferation priority. After all, if aspiring nuclear powers can be denied the wherewithal to produce nuclear weapons, then their aspirations will come to nothing with or without long-range missiles.

By the same token, however, a country that has nuclear explosives but lacks the capability to deliver them with missiles cannot be considered a formidable nuclear power. An underappreciate aspect of preventing nuclear proliferation is preventing the means for long-range and large-scale nuclear delivery. For instance, from a US perspective, while a nuclear-armed country without long-range missiles may menace American allies or overseas forces, it still does not pose an existential threat to the American homeland. In other words, the threats posed by nuclear weapons sans long-range missiles boils down to local or terrorist threats. Giving short shrift to missile nonproliferation therefore makes little sense if the goal is to prevent countries like North Korea and Iran from becoming formidable entry-level nuclear powers like India and Pakistan.

How important are missiles for an aspiring nuclear power? Important enough that long-range missiles are a remarkably reliable indicator of any country’s ultimate nuclear intentions. In fact, the lack of indigenous long-range missile programs is arguably the single most reliable indicator that a country does not harbor covert or latent nuclear ambitions—and vice versa. History shows that long-range missile programs tend to make military, political, and economic sense only in the broader context of an ambition to become a latent or actual nuclear power.497 Nuclear weapons and long-range missiles go hand in glove, to the extent that no country has pursued nuclear weapons without also pursuing at least medium-range ballistic missiles. Conversely, countries that have reversed course on pursuing or possessing nuclear weapons, like South Africa and Libya, have also abandoned associated missile programs.498

It is difficult to overstate the correlation between long-range missiles—especially ballistic missiles—and nuclear weapons. No country without nuclear weapons or ambitions possesses intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) or intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMS).499 These longest-range systems are exclusively the domain of the existing nuclear powers and Iran.

As for medium-range systems, it is vanishingly rare for a country without nuclear weapons or ambitions to seek or possess missiles at this range. The few exceptions only serve to demonstrate the rule. Saudi Arabia is the only non-nuclear country with medium range ballistic missiles (MRBMs). However, these are not indigenous systems, but instead relatively antiquated missiles that Riyadh purchased decades ago ‘off the shelf’ from China.500 Tellingly, the Saudis have long been suspected of nuclear hedging—with speculation that there are covert elements to the Kingdom’s civilian nuclear energy program, or that Pakistan could be on tap to supply nuclear weapons for those missiles—and in recent years the Saudis now openly threaten to acquire nuclear weapons if Iran does so.501 The other contemporary cases are South Korea and Taiwan, both of which are developing medium-range cruise missiles.502 Yet these governments have unique in-depth warfighting needs against hostile nuclear-armed neighbors (and perhaps these new missile programs should raise questions about nascent nuclear hedging behavior). Past cases of countries pursuing longer-range missiles while proclaiming their non-nuclear status within the NPT include Iran and North Korea. In both cases the missiles turned out to be overt leading indicators of covert nuclear ambitions.

Missiles are not only integral to nuclear proliferation, but they also pose one of the most significant hurdles for wannabe nuclear powers to overcome. As North Korea and other cases demonstrate, it is often a faster feat to develop nuclear explosives than long-range missiles capable of reliably delivering them to distant targets. North Korea conducted successful nuclear tests before fielding what it claims are ICBMs that can hit the continental United States, and even those claims remain in serious doubt including whether these missiles can even carry a nuclear warhead.503 This helps explain why, when Iran suspended its nuclear weapons program under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), it eschewed missile constraints to continue to press forward on improving its missile capabilities.504 Because building reliable and accurate longrange missiles that can carry nuclear weapons is as challenging as building those nuclear weapons. Indeed, one of the biggest nuclear challenges for new nuclear entrants like North Korea is designing nuclear warheads that are actually small and hardy enough to be delivered by ballistic missiles.505 This ranking of difficulty tracks with the initial arc of nuclear history, in which the atomic age dates to the 1940s, the thermonuclear age to the 1950s, and the nuclear missile age to the 1960s.

As of now only the five recognized NPT nuclear powers have nuclear missiles at intercontinental ranges over 5500 kms, but others are on a path to join this club.506 India, Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan already deploy robust medium- and/or intermediate-range ballistic missile forces below the intercontinental threshold.507 But deploying nuclear-armed ICBMs would put countries like Iran and North Korea in a different league in terms of being able to hold the American homeland at risk. In sum, the argument here is that nuclear and missile proliferation are effectively two sides of the same coin.

A Dangerous New Nuclear Missile Race

Preventing and countering nuclear proliferation by hostile regional powers has been the top priority of American nuclear policy for almost three decades. But now this focus is changing. In the coming decade worries about nuclear and missile proliferation are likely to be supplanted by a more existential global concern: the return of nuclear competition among the major nuclear powers. This is not to say that nuclear and missile proliferation are likely to recede in the years ahead, to the contrary. It is rather to say that despite the potential for regional proliferation spirals—particularly in the Greater Middle East and East Asia—these regional nuclear threats will be dwarfed [overshadowed] by nuclear weapons’ return to the center stage of international relations in a new multipolar era of great power competition. This is likely to be a qualitative technology race more than a numbers competition between the United States and Russia (although a narrower quantitative race could emerge for novel capabilities like long-range hypersonic missiles.) However, China and others such as India and Pakistan are likely to continue racing to both modernize and expand and diversify their nuclear forces.508

Within American strategic circles it has been widely understood for half a decade or so that a new nuclear arms race is underway and gathering steam.509 This is the first global nuclear arms race since the Cold War and only the second in nuclear history. However, it is utterly unprecedented in its character as the world’s first tripolar nuclear arms race—between the United States, Russia, and China— in which each country is competing against both others. In fact, it can more properly be categorized as a multipolar arms race, because France and Britain are also competing with Russia (and potentially China) and India is also competing with China (as well as Pakistan). This unprecedented nuclear multipolarity is described by some as the dawn of a third nuclear age. 510 The realization that the world is facing a new nuclear arms race—and a perilous new kind of arms race—is even starting to seep into the popular imagination after decades of public inattention to nuclear dangers.511 What is less appreciated, however, is that this new tripolar-cum-multipolar nuclear arms race mostly boils down to a missile technology race.

As in the Cold War nuclear arms race but even more so, today’s calculations about adversarial nuclear balances—especially strategic forces capable of attacking a rival’s homeland—center on quantity, quality, and capabilities (types) of nuclear delivery systems and defenses against them. To be sure, missiles have military uses other than nuclear. This has been increasingly the case for missiles with rangers over 500 kilometers that until recently were banned for the United States and Russia under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. For example, China deploys thousands of such systems for area denial, most of which are thought to be for conventional warfighting.512 For its part the United States has long been pursuing Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS) capabilities— essentially intercontinental range conventional systems.513 However, the race for new and better nuclear missiles lies at the heart of current long-range missile racing dynamics.

As of this writing, the New START Treaty appears set to be extended for a few more years as the last vestige of bilateral nuclear arms control. However, this brief and temporary reprieve will do little to alter the fundamental dynamics of a globe-spanning missile race that is for all intents already uncontrolled, New START notwithstanding. Not just Russia and the United States, but all the other existing nuclear powers are moving aggressively to modernize their nuclear missile forces. Russia and China are also deploying new generations of road-mobile heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) armed with multiple independent reentry vehicles (MIRVS) as well as exotic new missile variants such as air-launched ballistic missiles (ALBMs) and, in Moscow’s case, a nuclear-powered and armed cruise missile capable of virtually unlimited range.514 Moscow also claims that it has started to deploy its monster new Sarmat ICBM (also known as the Satan-2), which Russian state television boasts will be able to carry enough high-yield MIRVs for a single missile to obliterate the entire state of Texas or nation of France.515

Although Beijing is thought to have up to no more than a few hundred nuclear warheads to arm its much larger and mostly conventional missile forces, this estimate has long been contested by some prominent Russian analysts.516 In any case, Beijing now fields a modern strategic nuclear triad and is on track to double its nuclear weapons arsenal over the next decade.517 Moreover, senior US officials have indicated that China is driving toward nuclear parity with the United States.518 China already enjoys an overwhelming advantage in intermediate-range ballistic and cruise missiles. Although these are mostly thought to be conventionally armed, many are dual-capable to carry either conventional or nuclear weapons.519 This has Russia and the United States scrambling to develop and deploy new intermediate-range systems now that neither is constrained by the INF Treaty.520

Far more significant than modernizing and expanding existing types of long-range missile forces is the breakneck race among several major nuclear powers—China, Russia, the United States, France, and India—to develop and deploy intermediate- and intercontinental-range hypersonic missiles. Technically known as maneuverable hypersonic vehicles (MHVs), these systems can come in either boost-glide (launched by missiles or planes and then gliding to target) or air-breathing cruise-missile varieties. MHVs combine the speed of a ballistic missile with the maneuverability of a cruise missile.521 Hence, MHVs can reach targets faster and with less warning, and, even more important, they are virtually invulnerable to existing missile defense technologies.522 Put bluntly, these systems promise to eclipse the capabilities of today’s ballistic and cruise missiles. It is therefore no exaggeration that the coming hypersonic revolution puts global and regional nuclear balances completely up for grabs. Hypersonic missiles are therefore arguably the single most destabilizing aspect of the burgeoning new nuclear arms race.

It should be noted that only Russia has announced a strategic nuclear strike role for MHVs. In fact Moscow claims already to have started deploying what ultimately will be a force of sixty Avangard boostglide MHVs on ICBMs, each armed with massive 2-megaton nuclear warheads.523 Moscow also plans to begin arming its submarinelaunched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with nuclear MHVs by 2024, and may even deploy nuclear hypersonic missiles across its entire navy fleet.524 Washington and Beijing also plan to deploy MHVs at intermediate and intercontinental ranges.525 Chinese hypersonic programs remain shrouded in secrecy and its intentions remain opaque in terms whether its MHVs will have a nuclear strike role. For its part Washington plans to deploy an array of MHVs starting in 2022-23 including road-mobile systems and MHVs launched from strategic bombers and fast-attack nuclear submarines.526 Although it is unclear if any of these systems will be nuclear-armed there are indications that this possibility is at least being considered.527 India and France round out the race for hypersonic missiles by nuclear powers, the latter moving quickly to deploy what is thought to be intended as new hypersonic nuclear delivery system.528

Meanwhile, today’s nuclear missile race is not happening in splendid isolation. There is an accelerating military space race that threatens to give Russia and China antisatellite capabilities that could impact nuclear command and control..529 Rapid developments in the cyber and artificial intelligence domains could also impact nuclear targeting, command and control, and crisis stability.530 Meanwhile in a direct spinoff of the missile race, the threat of long-range hypersonic missiles is leading Washington to pursue space-based missile defenses against them.531 But perhaps the most significant spinoff as this uncontrolled nuclear missile race accelerates could be to spark a new wave of nuclear missile proliferation. Controlling the nascent nuclear arms race and controlling nuclear proliferation thus may turn out to be intersecting goals.

There is every reason to suppose that a multipolar nuclear missile race could sooner or later provoke other great and/or regional powers to seek or expand their own missile arsenals as a nuclear hedge or even to breakout with nuclear weapons to arm them. This could include countries that currently rely on others to deter nuclear coercion against them—e.g., allies under Washington’s nuclear umbrella of extended deterrence—should they lose confidence in relying on others for nuclear security guarantees. A ramped up nuclear missile race could thus expand missile and nuclear proliferation beyond NPT scofflaws like Iran and North Korea to countries ranging from Australia, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.532 For example Japan, which has long been seen to have a nuclear hedging strategy, is now developing an indigenous hypersonic missile.533 It also has an extremely unusual three-stage, solid-fuel space launch vehicle that some experts believe gives Tokyo latent ICBM capabilities.534 In other words, today’s burgeoning nuclear missile race may herald the start of wider missile rivalries within and across key regions of geostrategic competition.

The Need and Difficulties for New Controls

Preserving and strengthening the few existing guardrails on nuclear missile proliferation and arms racing faces daunting hurdles and negotiating new controls even more so due to broader and structural geopolitical and geostrategic trends. The systemic forces that are driving today’s intensifying nuclear rivalries among the major nuclear powers—and which could exacerbate tomorrow’s nuclear proliferation spirals—are part of a wider transition of the international system to a new era of great power competition. While not a unanimous consensus, disparate voices from across the ideological spectrum are converging on acceptance that the post-Cold War era of American global hegemony is over, or at the very least eroding beyond the point of no return.535 But what new international order will replace the Pax Americana that has reigned since the Cold War ended three decades ago? This is the question that will shape the prospects and contours of nuclear competition and controls over the coming decade and beyond.

The question revolves mostly around the rise of China. The United States now believes that China is seeking to supplant it as the world’s top economic and military power with malign designs on American interests and those of the wider liberal international order.536 At the same time Russia is increasingly aligning with China geopolitically to work against the United States and its allies. Washington thus faces the challenge of competing against two rival great powers that are working together to undermine its global standing. Yet Moscow and Beijing still have latent geostrategic tensions with each other. Some experts argue that superficial Sino-Russian cooperation masks deeper fissures that will erode this geopolitical marriage of convenience over time.537 There is therefore still a tripolar nuclear rivalry underlying a nascent bipolar alignment that may or may not endure through the swirl of broader global power realignments.

The difficulty for analysts and statesmen alike is that almost everything about the rise of China and its potential geostrategic reverberations remains up in the air. Will China rise to surpass the United States as the world’s leading power as many assume or is it already showing signs of faltering as some contrarians suggest?538 If China does become the leading global power, then could its ambitions be checked by other powers that bandwagon with the United States to balance against it? Or will a bipolar order emerge akin to the Cold War with China and the United States leading opposing ideological coalitions? Or might all this turn into a more fluid multipolar system akin to the 19th Century’s Concert of Europe as various powers bandwagon with or balance against China and the United States to preserve a balance of power? Within these scenarios will Russia continue to be drawn further into the Chinese orbit or will historic tensions reemerge between the two land giants of Asia? Will Europe finally coalesce as a unified superpower to rival the United States and China or will it fracture into less significant geostrategic parts? Will India rise to become a major axis of global influence as a first-tier great power? As all of this plays out will America’s allies feel confident continuing to rely on Washington for their security or will they increasingly feel the need to fend more for themselves?

Because such basic questions about the emerging world order are unanswerable with any high degree of certainty, hedging behavior and security dilemmas are likely to abound among the major global and regional powers until a clearer picture comes into focus. Given that most of the primary players in this great power jockeying other than Japan are already major nuclear powers—America, China, Russia, Europe (Britain and France) and India—this is not a good recipe for a preserving a stable nuclear landscape; all the more so because today’s nuclear multipolarity is asymmetric and misaligned relative to broader measures of global power. Russia is the poorest and militarily weakest of the leading great powers but also has the world’s largest and most formidable nuclear arsenal. This includes a massive advantage in tactical systems designed for nuclear warfighting rather than strategic deterrence. The United States still has a large strategic nuclear force but has fallen far behind Russia and China on strategic modernization. China is rising to become the world’s leading power but still is presumed to have much smaller nuclear forces than either Washington or Moscow even as it presses forward with aggressive nuclear expansion. Again, these asymmetries do not augur well for nuclear cooperation or stability.

#### Missile diffusion alone fuels local counter-value targeting critical infrastructures, and independently act as a nuclear catalyst.

Sokolski 21 [Henry D. Sokolski, Executive Director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center and teaches graduate nuclear policy at the University of Utah and the Institute of World Politics, Senior Fellow for Nuclear Security Studies at the University of California at San Diego, former Deputy for Nonproliferation Policy at DoD, former consultant to the National Intelligence Council, former member of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Senior Advisory Group, MA political science, University of Chicago, “Missile Wars: What Awaits,” Chapter 6, *Space and Missile Wars: What Awaits*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski, Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, 2021, ISBN 978-1-7371113-0-6, p.187-193]

Plus Other Not-So-Great-Power Missile Competitions

In addition to contemplating future missile competitions with Moscow or Beijing, the United States and its friends will also have to contend with the spread of advanced, accurate missile systems and drones to medium powers, weak states, to sub-nationals. These actors’ acquisition and possible use of these weapons could be used to catalyze wars.

Hezbollah’s, Houthi, Iranian, Saudi, Turkish, UAE Israeli, Pakistani, Indian, South and North Korean and Taiwanese military forces all are developing and deploying such precision missiles. Any one of them may try to deter or to escalate conflicts by threatening value targets (not just population centers, but sympathetic systems including reactors, petrochemical plants, natural gas depots, dams, desalination units, electrical, water distribution systems, and communication nodes) with accurate missiles or drones. Such strikes, in turn, could escalate into much larger conflicts, which could conceivably engage nuclear-armed states, including China, Russia, Pakistan, India, Israel, the United States or NATO.

Three recent developments are suggestive:

September 14, 2019 a missile attack against the oil facilities at Abqaiq in Saudi Arabia477 penetrated three missile defense systems. The attacking missiles hit their targets with pinpoint accuracies. This was arguably the first time highly accurate missiles were aimed at point targets protected by several layers of air and missile defenses (none of which were engaged).

August 4, 2020, an ammonium nitrate explosion 0.5 to 1.1 kiloton in yield was set off in Beirut.478 Unlike other previous, massive, chemical explosions, this one was televised internationally. As such, it established a new normal for high-end urban eruptive disruptions.

July 15, 2020, an Azerbaijani defense ministry spokesman threatened Armenia with accurate missiles strike against its Metsamor nuclear power plant.479 This was the first time a government publicly threatened to attack a civilian reactor with accurate missiles. Shortly thereafter, Russian President Putin called Turkish President Erdogan to join him in “stabilizing” the crisis.480

Previously, Armenian and Azeri officials threatened to attack other value targets with missiles including petrochemical plants, dams, and cities.481 In 2020, both Armenia and Azerbaijan used drones and missiles against civilians. They used these same systems for pinpoint strikes against military assets.

These events should be viewed in the context of the dramatic spread of increasingly accurate, ever longer range cruise and ballistic missiles and drones to weak states and state-sponsored proxies, such as the Houthis482 and Hezbollah.483

#### NPT compliance concerns over China’s pursuit of nuclear parity as a precondition for Article 6 talks are shared by non-aligned middle powers – and an opportunity to engage them on their own terms – but that requires undertaking restrictions in disarm formats.

Sokolski et al 22 [Henry D. Sokolski, Executive Director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center and teaches graduate nuclear policy at the University of Utah and the Institute of World Politics, Senior Fellow for Nuclear Security Studies at the University of California at San Diego, former Deputy for Nonproliferation Policy at DoD, former consultant to the National Intelligence Council, former member of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Senior Advisory Group, MA political science, University of Chicago; and Andrea **Beck**, Nonproliferation Policy Education Center; “Arresting Nuclear Adventurism: China, Article VI, and the NPT,” Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, Occasional Paper 2201, June 2022, https://npolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/China-NPT-Wargame-Report-2201.pdf]

Executive Summary:

Given the current crisis in Ukraine, it’s tempting to consider focusing on Chinese compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) to be an academic indulgence. Giving into this inclination, however, would be a mistake. As dangerous as Russia currently is, China will be more threatening in the long run. As we are learning with Russia’s violation of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, enforcing binding understandings is critical lest violators run roughshod over law and good order. This is true with Russia’s behavior in Ukraine. It is no less so with China’s nuclear weapons buildup and its repeated refusal to join in good faith negotiations to limit its nuclear weapons activities, which is required by Article VI of the NPT.

This buildup and refusal clearly flies in the face of China’s legal NPT obligations. The question is what might bring Beijing back into compliance. To get the answers, NPEC held a battery of workshops last fall, followed by a week-long diplomatic simulation. The game participants included U.S., Japanese, and Australian former and current officials and staff as well as outside experts.

The group concluded that Beijing is unlikely to comply willingly with the NPT anytime soon, but that U.S. and international security would still be best served by spotlighting Beijing’s nuclear adventurism and suggesting diplomatic off-ramps to arrest its nuclear buildup.

What this entails can best be summarized by the group’s four key findings:

1. China’s nuclear weapons buildup and its refusal to negotiate in good faith to limit its nuclear arsenal constitutes a clear NPT compliance concern. Article VI of the NPT stipulates that each of the parties to the treaty “undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” It has specific, enforceable meaning. China’s unwillingness to join in nuclear arms reduction talks with Russia and the United States until American and Russian arsenals come down to Chinese levels as China more than doubles its own nuclear numbers constitutes a not-so-subtle evasion of Article VI. Beijing’s prevarication is compounded by evidence of China’s nuclear buildup (e.g., the construction of hundreds of new missile silos, Beijing’s crash “civilian” plutonium production efforts to expand its nuclear stockpile, the suspicious activities China is conducting at its nuclear test sites, etc.). China gives token support to gridlocked talks to ban “weapons” in space and discussions on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). It also participates in a dedicated forum that brings together the five nuclear weapon states of the UN Security Council. It supports disarmament resolutions at the UN and professes a no first use policy. None of this, however, releases China from its Article VI requirement to negotiate in good faith with the United States and other NPT nuclear weapons states to limit nuclear arms. At best, referring to these forums and proposals constitutes diplomatic smoke designed to deflect requests China join in specific negotiations to reduce nuclear numbers. Given bureaucratic conservatism within the U.S. Department of State, finding China in clear, legal violation of Article VI is unlikely. Finding that its nuclear behavior raises NPT compliance concerns, however, is bureaucratically feasible.

2. Pressuring Beijing to uphold its NPT obligations may afford strategic benefits to Washington and its allies, but these are unlikely to be realized unless the United States and other NPT nuclear weapons states back effective nuclear restraints. None of the game’s participants believed pressuring China to enter in earnest nuclear talks would be easy. Yet, all believed taking China to task regarding its Article VI obligations could help increase the diplomatic costs of China expanding its nuclear arsenal, maintain the integrity of the NPT, and strengthen U.S.-allied ties and U.S. relations with nonaligned states. None of this is likely to obtain, however, if Washington and its nuclear-armed allies are seen to be trying to gain greater nuclear superiority over China and have no serious nuclear limitation proposals to offer. In this case, nonaligned states would continue to attack the United States, the UK, and France at the United Nations and in other multilateral disarmament forums (e.g., in Geneva, New York, and Vienna). If, on the other hand, Washington and its nuclear armed allies promoted new, effective nuclear controls (limits that might be made contingent on China or Russia also agreeing to comply in some fashion), the group thought many states, including nonaligned nations, would likely support efforts to get China to reciprocate and uphold its Article VI obligations. All of these observations are salient to what America and like-minded states might say at this August’s NPT Review Conference; the annual sessions of the UN First Committee; the sessions of the Conference on Disarmament; and at the meetings of the IAEA Board of Governors this September and November.

3. A successful NPT campaign regarding China’s noncompliance, would require Washington to shed normal modes of operation. At a minimum, Washington would have to share much more sensitive intelligence on Chinese nuclear activities than it has with allies as well as nonaligned nations. It would have to declassify much of this information to convince the world that China’s nuclear buildup is both real and threatening. Beyond that, Washington would need to promote talk on nuclear limits to uphold its Article VI obligations. Ideally, this would entail proposing nuclear control positions with other nuclear armed states — e.g., by restricting plutonium production for any purpose, establishing nuclear hotlines, clarifying the terms of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (perhaps at a P-5 meeting), adopting new nuclear transparency measures (including more reporting to the UN, the IAEA, and IAEA safeguarding of Chinese and nuclear states’ most militarily useful “civilian” nuclear facilities), freezing or reducing strategic nuclear weapon numbers, etc. Care would have to be taken, however, not to rush to get to yes embracing positions — e.g., jettisoning missile defenses or of America’s extended nuclear deterrence policies — that might fray Washington’s ties with its closest allies. Securing the active support of our allies and that of non-nuclear weapon states (e.g., members of the Nonproliferation and Disarmament Initiative or NPDI, the Stockholm Initiative, etc.), would be critical to any effective Article VI China compliance campaign. Washington also would have to take an even more active role than it currently does in international nuclear control forums in Geneva (at the Conference on Disarmament), Vienna (at the International Atomic Energy Agency), and New York (at the UN First Committee, UN Disarmament Committee, and the NPT Preparatory Committee and Review Conferences).

4. Military leverage will be important to move China on Article VI, but, in the short and long-term, the highest military leverage may not be nuclear. Trying to leverage China’s strategic nuclear buildup by keeping up or getting further ahead quantitatively on a nuclear-warhead-for-nuclear-warhead or nuclear-missile-for-nuclear-missile basis will hardly play to America’s advantage. For the next decade or more, China will be able to produce new nuclear warheads and missile delivery systems much more cheaply and quickly than the United States. Rather than enter into a quantitative nuclear arms race with China, the United States should make it more difficult for China to target America’s nuclear weapons. This should be done by making U.S. nuclear systems more difficult to locate, disable, and destroy. There are several ways to do this. The U.S. can make its ballistic missile submarines stealthier and its land-based missiles mobile. Virtually proliferating the number of possible air-based nuclear delivery systems by basing a few nuclear weapons on platforms that are numerous and making U.S. command, communications, control, and surveillance systems far more secure and survivable would also help. Ultimately, it is unclear how important nuclear weapons will be to providing strategic deterrence as more discriminate ways of disabling countries are developed in the coming decades (e.g., with high-precision, long-range unmanned conventional strike systems; cyber warfare and crypto technologies; unmanned surface and underwater naval warfare and sensors systems; resilient space-based military systems etc.). Conversely, America and like-minded nations will hardly be able to isolate China regarding Beijing’s nuclear buildup, if the United States, which currently has more nuclear weapons than China, chooses to acquire even more.

#### It's NOT about “revisionism” or “polarity” itself — existential conflict’s more likely to emerge from interactions with non-aligned middle powers whose perceptions generate resistance to cooperation.

Sweijs et al 23 [Tim Sweijs, director of research at the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, senior research fellow at the Netherlands’ War Studies Research Centre, Research Affiliate at the Center for International Strategy, Technology and Policy in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute for Technology, PhD, MA War Studies, Msc International Relations and Philosophy, King’s College, London and the University of Amsterdam; and Michael J. **Mazarr**, senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, PhD public policy, University of Maryland, MA security studies, Georgetown University; “Mind The Middle Powers,” War On The Rocks, 4-4-2023, https://warontherocks.com/2023/04/mind-the-middle-powers/] \*[language modifications]

Asked to provide a recipe for World War III, many historically minded analysts might mention growing belligerence by dissatisfied great powers; inconsistent system responses; and a succession of economic downturns and domestic political upheavals, followed by a short-term crisis that pushes the system to the brink. Yet a new set of risks is emerging. Today, the ambitions and risk-taking of a jostling, often increasingly assertive crowd of middle powers seeking a larger voice in world politics is causing widespread turbulence in the global system as well as new challenges for U.S. statecraft.

In such a context, international stability and the outcome of great-power rivalries will be a product of many factors beyond Russian and Chinese agitation. One of the most important will be the behavior of middle powers — the growing number of developed and developing countries uninterested in a new bipolar stand-off and determined to chart an independent course. They, as much as the United States or its great-power rivals, will play pivotal roles in determining the future of the international system. The United States has yet to demonstrate that it can operate effectively in this new context. To adapt, Washington should directly address the ambitions and disputes of middle powers — especially those that are not close U.S. allies — and to revise its strategy for competition with Russia and China in ways that take seriously the autonomous position of these other states.

In its relations with middle powers, Washington should not hesitate to insist upon a very short list of norms of acceptable behavior. But while doing so, it should move decisively toward a more inclusive and less coercive approach that prioritizes relations with middle powers as a critical component of U.S. statecraft. This means leading with a broader global agenda that addresses the concerns of middle powers, rather than seeking to exclude states from global networks through overly simplistic frames such as democracy versus autocracy. And while the Indo-Pacific is certainly a principal concern, the United States should not overshoot in regional prioritization. This will generate power vacuums that other powers rush to fill. Finally, Washington should do more to address the systemic risks of conflict escalation between small and middle powers.

Why Middle Powers Matter

In international relations literature, the concept of middle powers is fairly vague. It generally refers to nations that are not strong enough to count as “great” powers but still have significant influence and strategic importance. Typically, middle powers are characterized by a certain degree of heft — in economic, geographic, demographic, or military terms — but some relatively small states can vault into the category as a function of their international activism and influence.

As a result, the set of countries typically identified as middle powers varies. Some are fully developed, former colonial powers like Germany and Japan. Some are smaller developed nations that punch above their weight in global role and influence, including Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, and South Korea. Some are petro-powers — Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, as well as smaller Gulf states like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Others are large developing states such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, and Vietnam.

One of the leading trends in world politics — in the long run, just as important as intensifying great-power rivalries — is the growing desire of these countries for more control over the shape of the global order and greater influence over specific outcomes. This trend emerges in Turkey’s ambitions for a regional voice and influence, its attempt to position itself between the United States and Europe on the one hand and their main rivals on the other, and its growing military presence abroad. It is evident in Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s vision of a more multipolar world with a greater voice for the Global South. It shows up in European goals for greater strategic autonomy, South Korea’s renewed emphasis on a bigger regional role (with President Yoon Suk-yeol’s stated desire to become a “global pivotal state”), and Poland’s military ambitions. Some middle powers have a sense of exceptionalism that parallels those of great powers: Karen Elliott House has compared Saudi leader Mohammed bin Salman to Chinese leader Xi Jinping — technocrats with grand ambitions for their countries who “see themselves as symbols of proud and ancient civilizations that are superior to the West.”

Recent months have shown the challenge to the United States of a world in which middle-power activism is a feature rather than a bug in the international system. Saudi Arabia’s defiance of the Biden administration’s efforts to lower oil prices, Turkey’s extended blockade of Sweden’s NATO membership bid, Indonesia’s refusal to bar Russia’s entry to the G20 summit in Bali, and India’s continued cultivation of economic and military equipment ties with Russia all reflect the same trend. This emerging reality is amplifying the uncertainty and the clashes of regional ambitions in world politics, and molding a significant geopolitical space between the great powers.

The rising activism of middle powers can theoretically contribute to stability by providing additional sources of balancing and diplomacy. But an equally likely outcome is that the ambitions of these countries will exacerbate other rising instabilities of the international system.

Previous power transitions show that major powers are by no means doomed to trip into the Thucydides Trap during an era of fluidity. But periods of transition do inflame a whole basket of risks. The uncertainty associated with crumbling hierarchies and the militarization of foreign policies to compensate for perceived weaknesses can heighten the dangers of advertent and inadvertent escalation associated with closing windows of opportunity. These periods are also associated with the tightening of alliances and the accumulation of crises, as well as the spillover of conflicts between political, economic, and ideological domains amid declining ideological agreement between major powers.

All these systemic instabilities increase the probability of war — and they do so in large part through the dynamics unfolding among middle and smaller powers. Worrying about how power shifts drive direct conflict between great powers is not wrong but incomplete. System-shaping wars often grow out of ambitions, aggressions, and miscalculations involving other states, which eventually pull opposing great powers into major wars, crises, and proxy wars. This pattern crops up again and again: Serbia and Austria-Hungary before World War I, the division of the Korean peninsula and the Korean War, the Suez Crisis, the Kosovo War (with the infamous Pristina Airport Incident), the Syrian and Libyan civil wars (with foreign powers vying for influence), and on to the current Russia-Ukraine war (with Western support for Ukraine via money and military equipment). The assortment of “dangerous dyads” scattered over the globe — including in the Caucasus, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia — does not bode well for regional stability.

Focusing on great-power relationships alone therefore risks ignoring the ultimate catalysts of system-changing wars. It is also a recipe for forfeiting a significant competitive advantage in great-power competition.

Happy to Hedge

Perhaps the single geopolitical stance most characteristic of middle powers is an allergy to being recruited into a new bipolar stand-off between great powers. Middle powers display many variants of this. Some are pursuing rigid non-alignment, some want to affiliate more with the United States while still pursuing “soft balancing” vis-à-vis China, and some maintain formal alliances with the United States but take a starkly different view [opinion] of key rivalries. As political scientist Hunter Marston has recently argued, all these strategies make hedging not merely a matter of wanting to “balance” or “bandwagon” but instead a comprehensive and essential foreign policy vision.

This is not a 21st century Non-Aligned Movement, where a handful of activist developing nations try to build a coherent, anti-colonial third bloc in word politics. It is a more disaggregated mosaic motivated primarily by nationalism — a collection of self-interested, independent-minded nations, with far more power than their Cold War forebears, who accelerate the arrival of a complex and fluid global pattern of alignments, coalitions, and issue-specific accords.

Examples are legion. India and Indonesia both adhere to formal, longstanding grand strategies of non-alignment. Vietnam also has a formalized policy of non-alignment and a foreign policy that seeks “loose, non-binding and multidimensional” relations with great powers and others. One analyst notes that “[Turkey’s] new foreign policy is best understood not as a drift toward Russia or China” but as a “desire to keep a foot in each camp and to manage great-power rivalry.” Even Israel may become more determinedly independent of U.S. policy under its new hard-right government.

France and Germany, while turning strongly against Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, are carving out less confrontational positions on China. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has offered a foreign policy vision that rejects the idea of a “new Cold War” with China, suggesting that “China’s rise does not warrant isolating Beijing or curbing cooperation.” France’s 2022 National Strategic Review states that “France, a balanced power, refuses to be locked into bloc geopolitics.”

Michael Singh of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy argues that Middle Eastern states increasingly reflect the same mindset: “A growing number of U.S. partners are seeking to avoid choosing sides altogether and to maintain relations with all the great powers at once.” Saudi Arabia may be the leading example of this increasingly multi-dimensional, multi-partner approach to balancing. Aaron David Miller contends that “[in] today’s Cold War 2.0,” Saudi Arabia will not simply “refuse to choose sides,” but most likely “move closer to Beijing and Moscow as its own interests warrant.” Karen Young adds that bin Salman “believes Riyadh has the right to work with a shifting constellation of partners” in an increasingly “malleable” world order.

These geopolitical strategies are reflected in public attitudes. A recent meta-review of public opinion data in dozens of developing countries concluded that many “have moved closer to China and Russia over the course of the last decade. As a result, China and Russia are now narrowly ahead of the United States in their popularity among developing countries.”

Taking Middle Powers Seriously

The most recent U.S. National Security Strategy envisions a world divided between two camps — the United States and most liberal democracies on one side, Russia and China and their handful of misfit devotees, such as Iran and North Korea, on the other. There is of course an important truth in that dichotomy. But the increasing self-confidence and assertiveness of middle powers suggests a more complex geopolitical map, one with a kaleidoscope of overlapping and conflicting nodes of influence, interests, and goals on dozens of issues rather than a pair of dominant blocs. This pattern is likely to be shifting rather than static, and spectral rather than binary. It will confront the United States with a dilemma-strewn basket of issue-specific shared interests, desires to collaborate, historical baggage, disagreements, and disputes with just about any middle power.

This budding reality poses two challenges to U.S. and allied statecraft. The first is managing the risks to stability from multiple sources. The second is promoting U.S. influence in a world resistant to being recruited into Team America. Some of the implications are reasonably well-appreciated: Such a context will defeat extreme strategies of either primacy or retrenchment, to avoid overextension and power vacuums that rivals could fill. The United States should not count on strong-willed middle powers for more than they are willing to provide, especially in military terms. Washington should focus on establishing a few clear norms of shared behavior and enforcing them credibly. And it should remember that most middle powers consider themselves neither allies nor “faithful” friends: Most will expect U.S. administrations to push them on selected issues, and Washington will have to engage in a competition of coercion from time to time with Russia and/or China. With this in mind, the following four principles can help Washington to engage with middle powers more effectively.

#### Resulting collective action problems broadly determine existential risks.

Park 22 [Albert Sanghoon Park, affiliated lecturer at the Department of Politics and International Studies, Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge, his research bridges the politics of public policymaking with the politics of knowledge production, reframing geopolitics in decolonial perspectives, “Beyond Great Powers: Middle Power Paths to Resilient Multilateralism,” Asian Journal of Peacebuilding, 10(1), 2022, pp.131-157, DOI 10.18588/202205.00a274]

Introduction: The Problem of Global Collective Action

How can middle powers best promote global collective action? This question may strike some as peculiar or even paradoxical. For one, middle powers are inherently constrained in their global role. Their ability to steer global action remains decidedly limited relative to their great power counterparts. Yet, two current and interconnected strands compel a reconsideration of middle power roles today.

First, growing global challenges have already left an indelible mark on the present century. The COVID-19 pandemic adds yet another example of global challenges, in addition to climate change and lasting effects from the global financial crisis and war on terror. Shared across these is an inability to reckon with an increasingly enmeshed and entangled 21st Century. As noted in Park (2020, 8), “Globalization may have brought human lives closer together, but we do not yet seem to know how to live so close to one another.” Like Bhagwati’s (1995, 4) depiction of “spaghetti bowl” trade policies, globalization brings complexity, uncertainty, and system-wide risks. Further, its ties that unite are inherently ties that bind. One thus finds backlash (à la Schiller’s “bent twig”) where one sees more harm than help from globalization’s ties (Berlin 1972, 18). Echoed in Brexit, former US president Donald Trump’s “make America great again,” and Alternative für Deutschland’s “Deutschland. Aber normal” (Germany. But normal), these attempts to turn back time attest to growing entanglements in 21st Century life.

Second, returning great power politics compound these global challenges. Global integration has brought a retrenchment of geopolitical divides. Contrary to post-Cold War visions of an “end of history,” the world has not coalesced in a universal liberal order (Fukuyama 1989). Unlike hopes of a conversion of the USSR via shock therapy or China via market reforms, economic liberalism has not meant political liberalism. Despite their close ties in US liberal thought, economic integration has coincided with growing political divides. Reflecting old First versus Second World rivalries, geopolitical fault-lines are again re-emerging, from Ukraine to Syria to the South China Sea—to note only the more obvious examples.

These global challenges and great power politics raise collective action problems amidst post-Cold War globalization. Prior existential risks like nuclear war now extend to climate change, global health, finance, trade, migration, inequality, and beyond. These systemic threats demand greater cooperation and collective action to sustain co-existence into the 21st Century (Fennell 2022). As countries rechart their geopolitical risks and trajectories amidst growing uncertainties, it is worth exploring alternative paths, framings, or contingency plans to realize global action.

Herein enters this article’s turn to middle powers to reconsider paths to global action. Relative to the standing of great powers in international relations (IR) theory, the use of “middle powers” in IR remains fuzzier and more sporadic (Brattberg 2021; Cooper and Dal 2016; Jordaan 2017). This may be understandable, given the larger influence of great powers in global governance and international order. At the same time, there may be vested interests underlying this knowledge gap. As reminded by scholars in global IR, academic knowledge production is shaped by the interests of its creators (Colgan 2019; Kristensen 2015; Levin and Trager 2019). With IR framed by Hoffmann (1977, 41) as an “American social science,” Engerman (2007, 599) reminds of the ties between “American knowledge and global power.” Here, academic theories and theorists act as an invisible hand shaping global realities (see Chang 2002; Gendzier 1985; Gilman 2003; Mackenzie 2006; Packenham 1973; Park 2020).

In the case of IR, the field remains closely tied to Eurocentric worldviews and US interests (Goh 2019; Kang and Lin 2019). With the US setting its global standards, even European contributors are placed into niche schools (e.g., the English school, Copenhagen school). Leading to a tacit “methodological nationalism,” to cite Unger (2016), it is less surprising to note the peripheral status of middle powers in IR. However, this can render major blind spots for such a purportedly global field—as unpacked in a 2019 special issue on American bias in the Journal of Global Security Studies (Avant et al. 2019).

This work correspondingly frames its turn to middle powers amidst not just uneven IR realities, but an uneven IR scholarship. The ensuing historical approach explores four case studies on middle power multilateralism. Capturing geopolitical shifts from the 1970s onwards, they render a policy framework for middle power multilateralism. Proposing “resilient multilateralism” as an alternate strategy, its principles on context specificity, complementarity, consensus building, and non-confrontation embrace global complexity to expand multilateral options. Though not without limitations, resilient multilateralism thus offers a response to growing barriers to global action.

Literature Review: The Lesser Status of Middle Powers

When examining the English-language IR literature, a curious feature can be observed in the lesser status of middle powers as a research topic. For example, a cursory search for “middle powers” in all IR journals listed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) yields seventy-six articles from the past five years. By comparison, a search for “great powers” yields 345 articles in the same period (a 4.5-fold difference).1

A deeper look at this middle power literature finds the topic concentrated in lower impact factor journals. Amassed in the third and fourth quartiles, this is not a judgement of scholarly quality so much as it is evidence of lesser citation or circulation in IR debates. Tellingly, many of these journals are based in middle power countries. Examples include the Australian Journal of International Affairs, International Journal (Canada), International Relations of the Asia Pacific (Japan), and Pacific Focus (South Korea).

With that noted, these latest works present marked growth in middle power research. In contrast to earlier post-Cold War decades, IR scholarship since the 2010s shows notable interest in middle powers (see Figure 1). These latest works reveal a number of motivating factors.

One is a marked shift in geoeconomic contexts by the 2010s. Contrasting a faltering First World with the 2008 global financial crisis and 2013 Eurozone crisis are emerging markets and rising powers. Spurring Cooper and Dal’s (2016) third wave in middle power diplomacy, this ties to the growing role of the G20, the BRICS economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and MIKTA middle powers (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, and Australia). A number of works thus explore prospects for an expanded role of middle powers in regional and global governance in the present century.

[Figure 1 OMITTED]

Highlighting new contexts post-2008 global financial crisis, Yi, Sohn, and Kim (2018) map new risks and trajectories for social policy. Of key importance here are growing strains as incumbent ideas and institutions fail to match unfolding contexts under globalization. Kim (2015) finds challenges in development that echo the social policies and welfare systems above. Faced with a new donor landscape for development cooperation, Kim thus revisits the role of South Korea in the contexts of the Sustainable Development Goals and middle power initiatives like MIKTA.

Similarly, Onis and Kutlay (2017) highlight the role of Turkey as an emerging middle power in global and regional governance. Again highlighting BRICS and MIKTA, they foresee turbulence for middle powers. Namely, domestic political constraints are illustrated in Turkey with the rise of Erdoğan and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi). This intersection of domestic politics and international relations is further explored by Lee (2017) and Nayan and Shekhar (2020) in broader Asian contexts. Highlighted are possibilities for not just regional cooperation, but also global conflict as a growing focal point for geopolitical and geoeconomic interests.

For better or worse, these views find grounding in present realities, whether in a US pivot to Asia or a UK tilt to the Indo-Pacific (UK Cabinet Office 2021). Correspondingly, recent works combine geoeconomic with more explicit geopolitical concerns. Here, rising US unilateralism—from the war on terror to actions under Trump—finds a US increasingly distanced from Western allies. Attempts to mend ties (e.g., US President Biden’s “America is back” and “Build back better”) have done little to stem returning great power overtures from Russia and China. The ensuing great power tensions have increasingly left middle power policymakers in a diplomatic bind.

In Europe, Siddi (2019) thus highlights Italy’s balancing act between Russian and Euro-Atlantic relations. To this, Græger (2019) finds Norway in a similar bind between US/NATO and Russian ties. Paltiel (2018) further adds Canada’s embattled role in US-China tensions. Shifting to the US-China trade war, Jeong and Lee (2021) address the risk of escalation into military conflict. In search of countering strategies, Katsumata and Nagata (2019) investigate the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a successful case of navigating US-China tensions. Bearing constraints and possibilities, Do (2021) finally adds a silver lining in the case of Vietnam’s rise despite geopolitical constraints in the South China Sea.

In this shifting policy space, a recurring argument arises in the need for middle powers to ballast volatility and sustain international cooperation/security (Brattberg 2021). Added to global challenges like climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, this turn to middle powers attests to growing recognition of declining unipolarity and the need to reckon with an increasingly multipolar world.

#### BOTH prolif optimism and unqualified nuclear primacy are oversimplifications – only perception of power transition has explanatory power, and is as much a question of conventional balance and coalitions as nuclear parity.

Kang et al 23 [Kyungkook Kang, Loma Linda University and TransResearch Consortium; and Jacek **Kugler**, Claremont Graduate University and TransResearch Consortium; “Beyond deterrence: Uncertain stability in the nuclear era,” Conflict Management and Peace Science, 2-10-2023, DOI 10.1177/07388942221149670]

This proposition of deterrence failure is consistent with the empirical observations by early power transition theorists (e.g. Kugler and Lemke, 1996; Organski and Kugler, 1980; Tammen et al., 2000). Once the dissatisfied challenger (ρA>0) achieves equal strength (RA=RB=0) to match with the satisfied defender (ρB<0), the challenger is likely to initiate a high-intensity conflict that would end up with a decisive result (high V).

Implications of power transition deterrence

Figure 4 examines a crucial case where contenders do not trust each other while the challenger is risk-acceptant and dissatisfied. Consistent with the historical records of major wars, the rare condition of nuclear and conventional parity is associated with war, not peace. We preserve the format previously applied to summarize deterrence implications to facilitate the comparison among different views.

A diagram of a nuclear explosion

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Figure 4. Power transition deterrence.

The key predictions for the stability of deterrence from the power transition perspective differ radically from previous models of deterrence. Based on our game-theoretical analysis above, we locate several important equilibrium outcomes on the surface of the figure and highlight their salient conditions in the context of deterrence.15

Stable massive retaliation (area A)

Deterrence is stable when a dissatisfied risk-acceptant challenger is inferior in relative capabilities to the satisfied defender. The challenger adheres to the status quo and is unlikely to initiate a military crisis. The preponderant satisfied power does not wish to risk altering the established status quo. Historically, this condition produced the stable deterrence between the satisfied United States and the dissatisfied Soviet Union. The United States was always conventionally preponderant during the Cold War, while the Soviet Union was conventionally inferior but only achieved nuclear parity.

Unstable massive retaliation (area B)

Deterrence is unstable when a dissatisfied risk-acceptant challenger gains nuclear preponderance. Historically, this condition has not emerged yet between global or regional powers.

Nuclear warfighting (area C)

Deterrence becomes unstable when a dissatisfied risk-acceptant challenger approaches power parity and is technologically capable of nuclear warfighting with anticipated bearable cost. Unlike classical deterrence, the power transition perspective anticipates that the potential for a nuclear war between a dissatisfied nuclear Iran and Israel is real, given the level of mutual dissatisfaction and the relatively lower levels of nuclear capabilities required to destroy both societies.

Mutual assured destruction (area D)

Deterrence becomes tenuous when the two great powers approach nuclear and conventional parity. The military conflict can start with a tactical nuclear strike but can lead to the use of strategic nuclear weapons. Although the challenger and the defender may share an interest in limiting their uses of nuclear capabilities, there is a possibility of expansion and escalation to all-out war. This is likely to be the case when the losing side in a limited conflict becomes motivated to fight a higher-intensity war to compensate for the regional defeat. For example, as the conventional capabilities of China keep rising and its nuclear arsenal approaches parity with that of the United States, our model expects that the probability of major nuclear war would increase rather than decline as classical deterrence postulates. The deployment of effective damage limitation technologies that aim to reduce the costs of war—like the anti-ballistic missile defense systems—will increase the stability of deterrence only when held by satisfied nations. In contrast, if acquired by dissatisfied nations, they will reduce stability. Anti-ballistic missile strategies will be counterproductive in the long-term because they trigger another arms competition, accelerating technological development for offensive weapons and the further buildup of nuclear arsenals.

Comparing the stability of deterrence strategies

In Figure 5, as proliferation expands nuclear capabilities, the dotted line displays the theoretical prediction of classical deterrence, and the solid line shows the implication of power transition deterrence.16 The vertical axis reflects anticipated levels of deterrence stability, and the horizontal axis summarizes the implications of variations in nuclear capabilities. Nuclear proliferation is the primary factor that generates new opportunities for stable and unstable deterrence.

A graph of a nuclear threat

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Figure 5. Contrasting assessments on nuclear proliferation.

First, consider one more time classical deterrence arguments that balanced nuclear arsenals ensure peace. The search for MAD (in Figure 2) implies that proliferating nuclear weapons and achieving MAD prevents nuclear war. Following the balance of terror logic, the more horrible the prospect of war is, the less likely it is that it will occur. The lethality of conflict can escalate rapidly if only one nation holds MR. The preemptive use of strategic weapons under MR is likely when a nuclear power uses a preemptive strike to thwart a serious conventional threat—as is the case between Israel and Arab nations. Only MAD ensures stable deterrence. Classical deterrence concludes that persistent terror is the price of peace in the nuclear era. This argument is reflected in the “deterrence/proliferation optimism” during the Cold War and continues to be advanced (Kroenig, 2015).

Despite the popularity of this perspective, it is perplexing that the actual strategic decisions of policymakers are inconsistent with the fundamental tenet of classical deterrence. If the advantage of MAD were fully recognized, then the deployment of tactical nuclear warheads or anti-ballistic missile systems would not proceed. Thus, if a nuclear threat ensures peace, Israel should follow Waltz’s (2012) advice and welcome Iran's nuclear capabilities seeking to achieve MAD. They do not. We now know that all nuclear powers have chosen to prevent proliferation and add defensive and tactical weapons to their arsenals. The viability of classical nuclear deterrence is clearly challenged.

Power transition deterrence acknowledges that high costs diminish the likelihood of war but proposes that nuclear weapons do not guarantee stability. Power transition theory challenges both the stability of nuclear parity and the viability of nuclear deterrence under proliferation. Power transition deterrence proposes that MR held by a preponderant satisfied nuclear power ensures peace, as shown in the case of the United States in the years immediately after the Second World War. Indeed, after the collapse of the Soviet Union along with the Warsaw pact, the United States once more emerged as a single global superpower, and did not act. Long-term, stable nuclear deterrence is in question.17 **[FOOTNOTE 17]** 17. We share some implications with Sagan (1993) and other proliferation pessimists, emphasizing a tenuous link between proliferation and peace. What one should expect from our model is, however, that nuclear weapons concurrently have both stabilizing and destabilizing effects. The United States subsidized British nuclear development (and provided tacit support to France) to enhance stability, but it also has led international efforts to impose sanctions against North Korea and Iran's nuclear programs for the same reason. We all agree that any nuclear explosion is catastrophic, but the imminent issue is not an accident or other vagaries of imperfect organizations. Rather, the real fear has to do with discordant political objectives that would warrant a risk of nuclear war, given what is at stake. The Chernobyl accident in 1986 led to the coordination of international efforts to mitigate the damage, but a similar accident at Zaporizhzhia in 2022 would trigger further escalation among the contending powers. **[/FOOTNOTE 17]**

The critical difference between the classic and power transition perspective is nuclear stability under MAD. In this critical dimension, the deductions of two different deterrence theories are fundamentally at odds. According to power transition theory, the balance of terror opens the windows of opportunity for dissatisfied contenders to challenge existing norms rather than preserve stability. Nuclear weapons make a dissatisfied challenger perceive a risk confrontation as an “opportunity” rather than a “danger”. During the Cold War, strategic stability was backed by the conventional preponderance of NATO. However, a confrontation with a new dissatisfied, conventionally and nuclear contender at parity likely set the preconditions for global war. Nuclear MAD does not guarantee that peace will be preserved as the distribution of conventional capabilities changes. Instead, a large nuclear arsenal can allow a dissatisfied challenger to escalate a conventional conflict to an all-out war even when a potential nuclear exchange looms large. Theoretically, after the once-mighty Soviet Union collapsed, the missed opportunity was great without building a preponderant nuclear coalition of the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China. Today, as we know, core disputes with China over the China Sea and Taiwan suggest interactions where deterrence is tenuous. Without a political accommodation that leads to mutual satisfaction, the current trend in China's nuclear buildups and weapons technology improvements suggests that we may face challenges to global nuclear peace in the long term. Similar conditions in disputed regions like the Middle East and future Sub-Saharan Africa suggest possible replications of conventional and nuclear parity at the regional level, implying the possibility of future regional nuclear exchanges.

The final and most perverse challenge to nuclear stability will emerge when or if non-state challengers acquire limited nuclear capabilities. While such actors are too small and weak to conduct conventional regular warfare, they maintain no fixed locality and are not exposed to retaliation from preponderant state defenders. Deterrence cannot address conflict without a viable retaliation option. Preventing such threats would be extremely challenging because the punishment required for deterrence is not feasible when the source of strikes and perpetrators cannot be effectively located and attributed. Although the destructive power of a terrorist attack is limited, a low-yield nuclear weapon or a radiological dispersion “dirty-bomb” device would be sufficient to disrupt any modern society. The incentive to use such a weapon is deep and immense. Thus, with minimal nuclear or weapons of mass destruction proliferation, a “terrorist” challenger such as Al-Qaeda likely initiates a risky attack taking advantage of their limited exposure to retaliation. None of the deterrence proposals explored in this work address this contingency.

Conclusion

Classical deterrence theories argue that states will not intentionally seek to fight a nuclear war. We disagree. Nuclear initiation is rational. As Zagare (2004:116) correctly put, in classical deterrence, “the only way to explain the remarkable stability … is to assume that the players are at once rational or irrational”. In our view, rational actors have a reason for what they do. They have motivations and strive to respond to them with available resources. The choice of a particular warfighting doctrine—choices between local and central war—should be a product of the calculated strategic process regarding different combinations of military options (Halperin, 1963). We accept Rosecrance’s (1966) observation that the nuclear force is a synthesis of the physical capability and the incentives to use it. There is no reason to view nuclear escalation as the process of unleashing “autonomous” risk (Powell, 1987). Rather, nuclear war is a calculated decision seeking to attain policy goals that may require the use of nuclear weapons. One important implication of the model developed here is that the fragility of nuclear deterrence is characterized without having to appeal to the common but yet indeterminate contention over whether nuclear war will occur only in an inadvertent or accidental manner. As Zagare and Kilgour (2000) rightly observed, “nuclear war has been avoided not because of nuclear weapons, but in spite of them” (p. 25).

Our analysis of deterrence shows that policymakers consider nuclear war as an extreme but rational option. Indeed, contrary to arguments advanced by Brodie in the early statement of deterrence, nuclear nations are not committed to a no-first-use option. Reversing the tenets of classical deterrence, great powers seek nuclear superiority rather than balanced capability. They continue to deploy tactical nuclear weapons designed for warfighting as well as anti-ballistic missile systems that can, if successful, minimize losses and even reimpose nuclear preponderance among balanced nuclear contenders. Gorbachev's 1986 Reykjavik proposal for drastic reductions of nuclear arsenals was rejected by Reagan, who wanted to preserve the Strategic Defense Initiative “Star Wars” program that promised preponderance for the United States.

The power transition deterrence perspective we propose indicates that while the costs of war have exponentially increased in the nuclear era, a valid grand strategy that promotes the long-term stability of deterrence should be informed by our historical observations empirically—the rare events of power parity between great powers were associated with wars, not peace. Simultaneous parity condition of conventional and nuclear capabilities was never met during the Cold War. However, for the first time in the nuclear era, two global contenders—the United States and China—are now approaching conventional and nuclear parity. In both China and the United States, policymakers correctly see [perceive] such developments with caution, reserve or fear.

In sum, power transition deterrence suggests that doing nothing will eventually lead to war. Proliferation alters the likelihood of nuclear stability, but the direction depends on politics, not the cost of war. The task of sustaining stability and even maintaining the international order can be achieved only by the collective effort of satisfied great powers seeking the preservation of the nuclear preponderance. No proposal or set of actions by a single state is likely to ensure stability; rather, a host of actions from many actors in concert is required. The specter of increasing regional nuclear conflicts is unfortunately alive and well.

Postscript (amid the Russia–Ukraine war)

This paper was completed before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As a response to reviewers’ supportive suggestions, we add this postscript to describe what our model tells about the ongoing war: the danger of a tactical nuclear strike in Ukraine is real. National decision-makers choose war as an attempt to coordinate their military influence with political objectives. The likelihood and magnitude of a nuclear strike directly depend on what is at stake rather than the vagaries of humans or other beings. The war in Ukraine has disclosed that Russia is now a second-tier power unable to impose its objectives in eastern Europe with conventional force. Given the prolonged conventional defeat, we anticipate that Putin may well fight what Halperin called a “local” nuclear war in which the stakes would be the annexation of the contested regions. Russia's threat of using a tactical nuclear weapon is not empty, but this regional crisis fails to meet the structural preconditions for escalation to a massive nuclear exchange. It is not an existential war fought by superpower rivalry. If any person has influence over Putin, it is Chinese President Xi. An essential lesson from Ukraine is that global nuclear stability can be guaranteed only by the joint effort of two global powers. The United States and China can reduce confrontation postures and work toward establishing a partnership that deters a nuclear first strike and resets a new global status quo. A failure of such coordination at the top of the international hierarchy, triggered by the crisis over Taiwan, can rekindle a new Cold War, which this time points to the real risk of “Armageddon”.

#### Plan solves:

#### disarm-offer-meant-to-be-refused – is the only way to provide the right kind of political cover to align against China on security – failed votes spin off to bolster minilateral cooperation – including on nuclear hedging and missile diffusion.

Cooper 21 [David A. Cooper, Professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, formerly served for nearly two decades as an official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, including as Director of Nonproliferation Policy and Director of Strategic Arms Control Policy, PhD political science and international relations, Australian National University, MA international affairs, Columbia University, “Long-Term Prospects for Nuclear Missile Controls,” Chapter 7, *Space and Missile Wars: What Awaits*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski, Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, 2021, ISBN 978-1-7371113-0-6, p.198-232] \*added [overshadowed]

The upshot is that none of the major nuclear powers, or nuclear aspirants, or countries that may prefer to leave the door open to acquiring long-range missiles for nuclear hedging purposes, have common or even similar incentives to cooperate on new missile controls. This makes any multilateral missile nonproliferation treaty about as far-fetched as a sweeping disarmament agreement among the major nuclear powers to reduce or eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The most realistic approach in these unpromising circumstances is to focus on preserving what can be preserved and seeking modest and/or narrow new measures to address the most urgent gathering perils. This may require bringing sustained international pressure to bear on reluctant nuclear powers like China—which has a mixed record in supporting nuclear nonproliferation and rejects participating in nuclear arms control out of hand—and other countries pursuing long-range missile programs. The most optimistic long-term goals would be to strengthen the existing missile nonproliferation regime while in parallel reinventing the bilateral Cold War nuclear arms control paradigm to fit today’s asymmetric tripolar-cum-multipolar nuclear arms race.

Strengthening Missile Nonproliferation

The international missile nonproliferation regime primarily comprises a pair of rather weak arrangements, one an informal supply-side mechanism to coordinate export controls and the other a feeble global norm against ballistic missile proliferation. The supply-side of this equation is a loose arrangement among thirty-five partner countries called the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The demand-side is a broad multilateral agreement open to all countries called the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (sometimes also known as the International Code of Conduct or ICOC). While neither of these arrangements are especially robust, the MTCR is by far the more effective of the two.539 The question is whether these existing missile nonproliferation pillars can be strengthened and if there are workable prospects for any new controls to augment them.

There is certainly some scope to strengthen the MTCR, although probably only on the margins. By contrast HCOC is likely too thin a reed to build upon as such. That said, it could provide a useful starting point as a venue in which to elevate the profile of missile nonproliferation. The best opportunity to bolster nuclear missile nonproliferation, however, may be to try to negotiate a new, narrowly focused, global nonproliferation regime to nip the longest-range hypersonic missiles in the bud. Finally, the looming proliferation challenges suggest the need to look beyond diplomatic solutions to bolster extended deterrence by the United States (and perhaps others) to provide a disincentive for certain non-nuclear great and regional powers such as Japan, South Korea, and Germany to pursue long-range missiles as a nuclear hedge. These are limited and imperfect options, but they are worth exploring.

Strengthening the MTCR is low hanging fruit. This export control arrangement arose from a US initiative with six of its close allies in the 1980s to coordinate national export controls on missiles and related dual-use technology.540 The regime comprises a set of agreed guidelines that provide for a "strong presumption of denial" on exports of any missile that can carry a 300kg payload to ranges above 500km and vigilance on exporting periodically updated lists of dualuse materials and technologies that could contribute to such missiles.541 The MTCR has worked reasonably well as far as it goes, but its long-term potential suffers from partners that are not always on the same political page. This is not surprising considering that it has expanded over the years to include countries that often do not see eye to eye with the United States and its allies on various issues, such as Russia, South Africa, and Brazil. Because the MTCR operates by strict consensus, any of these countries can block any proposal intended to tailor, expand, or strengthen the scope of controls. Moreover, enforcement relies on good faith interpretation and implementation by each partner country, which naturally invites potential differences. Even the United States itself has been reluctant to enforce some MTCR rules, although Washington argues that this is because inertia has prevented these from being updated to reflect current technological and national security realities.542 In effect the MTCR is a useful technical regime that is often stymied by political inertia and the looseness of its structure and rules.

One obvious workaround for some of these issues would be to retain the MTCR while in parallel the United States seeks to organize a smaller caucus of its closest and most important allies to see if there is scope for this core group to go further amongst themselves than the more unwieldy larger group is willing or able. This would amount to creating a new regime within a regime. Such an informal core group could meet initially at higher political levels to scope out areas for enhanced cooperation. These could include going beyond what is strictly required by the MTCR rules in order to impose stricter controls on certain missiles, for example stealthy, hypersonic, or longer-range systems. Core group members could implement these among themselves while working as a unified caucus to encourage to wider group to follow suit. A core group could also agree among themselves to subject countries of particular proliferation concern like Iran to additional scrutiny. They could also agree to enhanced implementation of the existing MTCR rules by subjecting especially sensitive export licenses to post-licensing verification through export license terms that require recipients to allow on-site inspections to guard against items being diverted to improper uses. This is an underutilized verification technique that currently only the United States implements in any significant way. None of these are new ideas.543 Nor are they especially dramatic. Instead, they are modest technical and process improvements. But that is the nature of multilateral export controls— the unglamorous workhorses of supply-side nonproliferation. It is also as much as the political traffic of thirty-five disparate partner countries is likely to bear. These incremental supply-side improvements could nonetheless be useful to impede the further diffusion of missile technology and in any case are more likely to bear fruit than anything on the normative side of the equation.

There is no global missile nonproliferation treaty. Nor is there likely to be one for the foreseeable future given the reliance of the NPT nuclear weapons states (and nuclear powers outside NPT) on long-range missiles, in conjunction with the reluctance of many other countries to agree to another discriminatory treaty along the lines of the NPT that provides for haves and have-nots. The closest thing to a demand-side global norm is the HCOC, but it is an utterly feckless arrangement that has no enforcement mechanisms and, in any case, does not actually prohibit much of anything and does not even address cruise or hypersonic missiles.544 It is at most a normative confidence building measure to demonstrate hortatory support for ballistic missile nonproliferation. For all of these conspicuous shortcomings though, it could still be used as a platform to stir international attention on missile proliferation. What is offers in this regard are annual meetings of a majority of the world’s countries pledging to work together against ballistic missile proliferation. Although HCOC now boasts 140 subscribing states, there are key countries that are conspicuous by their absence, including China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.545 Elevating the level of HCOC meetings could provide opportunities to advance ideas that would bring helpful political pressure to bear on these holdouts. Annual HCOC meetings have always been obscure bureaucratic af fairs, but this need not be the case. The United States could easily up its representation in coordination with other key players to introduce ambitious proposals that align with the goals and purposes of the agreement.

One such initiative might be to work with Moscow to use HCOC as a vehicle to revive a 2007 joint US-Russian proposal to globalize the now defunct INF Treaty that called on all countries to join them in "renunciation of ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers, leading to the destruction of any such missiles, and the cessation of associated programs."546 The United States and Russia in effect would offer to rejoin the INF Treaty—with its basic terms non-negotiable—but only if others follow suit. To be clear this proposal would stand no chance of gaining traction given that China enjoys a huge advantage in these types of systems and that they represent the mainstay of the missile forces of countries like Iran, North Korea, and India. However, an actual treaty could be negotiated with willing countries by incorporating a provision into the relevant INF prohibitions that would require all countries with prohibited missiles or programs to join before the treaty enters into force, along the lines of a similar provision in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). This would allow the United States to adopt a ‘we’ll sign if you do’ stance with those already deploying systems that would be banned.547 This would set the stage for a long-term norm-building effort. By offering to reconstitute INF as a global missile nonproliferation and disarmament treaty, such an initiative could provide a rare point of alignment between Washington and Moscow against Beijing. It would afford Washington the nonproliferation high ground while shining the spotlight on China and others as the root problem, even as Washington and Moscow reconstitute their own post-INF intermediate missile forces. This is a longstanding idea that has never gone anywhere and there is a good chance that even Russia might now shy away for fear of straining its cozy relations with Beijing. Then again, Russia has more reason to be concerned about these Chinese missiles—which can hit it territory but not the United States—and this was initially a high-profile proposal by President Vladimir Putin that he might find difficult to disavow.548

#### The vast majority of middle powers will join – which isolates and pressures most hedgers to follow suit – BUT only disarm formats force holdouts to publicly reject.

Cooper 13 [David A. Cooper, Professor and Chair of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, formerly served for nearly two decades as an official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, including as Director of Nonproliferation Policy and Director of Strategic Arms Control Policy, PhD political science and international relations, Australian National University, MA international affairs, Columbia University, “Globalizing Reagan’s INF Treaty Easier Done Than Said?” The Nonproliferation Review, 20(1), March 2013, pp.145-163, DOI 10.1080/10736700.2013.769373] \*[language modifications]

No, the real telling argument here is that states that have or aspire to nuclear weapons and associated missile delivery systems would resist joining Global INF, potentially rendering the enterprise little more than an empty symbolic gesture. This is a reasonable near-term forecast, particularly for a treaty that had been foisted on an unsuspecting world without the legitimacy of emerging from negotiations within the UN system. However, this argument misses the sometimes long-term horizon in establishing a new treaty-based global nonproliferation norm. As one recent study observes [notes], the advent of any such a treaty simultaneously provides a vehicle for: 1) the vast majority of states with low compliance costs (in this case, non-nuclear/non-missile states) to join as an easy symbolic gesture; 2) states with intermediate compliance costs (nuclear/missile “hedgers” and early-stage/investment developers) to be cajoled by the United States and others to join through bilateral incentives/disincentives; and, 3) states with high compliance costs (nuclear/missile possessors and late-stage/investment developers) to be punished over time by the United States and others for failure to join. The study notes that this is precisely the dynamic that the United States and Soviet Union successfully applied in putting the NPT in place and then systematically and incrementally expanding adherence.Footnote51 Applying this hierarchy to Global INF, the vast majority of states in the first grouping should be persuadable in reasonably short order, essentially comprising all states not listed in Table 1 (with the possible exception of a few radical fellow travelers who may make a show of solidarity with the “hard cases,” as well as any passive hedgers hoping to keep their options open). In the second category, Egypt and Saudi Arabia—with deep security ties to Washington, obsolete missile programs, and an untarnished status as NPT members in good standing with no known nuclear weapons programs—represent potentially easy pickups (along with any closet hedgers that might have been revealed by their reluctance to join).Footnote52 In the third category, China represents the ripest target for applying international pressure, because it alone among the remaining states in Table 1 is a member in good standing of NPT and the wider community of responsible nonproliferation actors. Indeed, perhaps the single most persuasive reason for the United States and Russia to launch a declaratory Global INF initiative is to challenge China's long habit of disarmament freeriding by focusing international pressure on Beijing to bring a key part of its growing nuclear arsenal to the disarmament table.Footnote53 As for the remaining proliferation “hard cases” like Iran and North Korea, forcing them to reject Global INF would add one more visible strike against their international credibility.

A Gambit Worth Trying?

If the most successful imaginable outcome of a Global INF initiative is nothing more than laying the groundwork for an incremental norm-building effort, would it still be worth trying? Assuming the risks and costs are relatively low, as the present analysis suggests, then yes. At a minimum, it would augment current international ‘‘best practices’’ for nonproliferation, thereby further stigmatizing scofflaws. This, in turn, would afford the United States and its nonproliferation partners a new source of leverage to induce joining by these outliers and the moral high ground in the meantime to pursue supply-side remedies against them.

#### NPT compliance – amending Article 6 to incorporate disarming INF would become disarmament as more than the sum of its parts and is most solvent.

Morris 17 [P. Sean Morris, Faculty of Law, University of Helsinki, “Is Zero Disarmament Possible? Multilateralism and Nuclear Arms Control Treaties,” William & Mary Policy Review, 8(1), 2017, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=3374482] \*[language modified]

Given how effective the INF Treaty has been in nuclear disarmament,39 especially in its early years when more than 2,600 missiles were eliminated after the INF Treaty came into force,40 it has the potential to replicate that success at the global level via multilateralism. But in recent years, the INF has been in a state of de-compliance—an intricate process of compliance and deception of compliance— where the parties uphold the tenets of the document, but at the same time carry out testing on modern nuclear weapons vehicles such as nuclear capable ground cruise missiles. When the United States and Russia pledged to prevent conflicts or casualties in case of an attack by eliminating tactical nuclear weapons vehicles such as ground-to-air cruise missiles under the INF Treaty, some measure of disarmament was reached. Both Russia and the United States committed themselves to eliminate nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of up to 5,500 kilometers.41

While most weapons designated in the INF Treaty were eliminated, there has been continued fear that each party, in their quest to modernize their nuclear arsenal, broke the terms of the INF Treaty. This occurred in spite of the compliance mechanism that the INF treaty establishes under Article XIII— the Special Verification Commission (SVC)42—to resolve questions relating to compliance43 and to take measures to “improve the viability and effectiveness” of the INF Treaty.44 The INF Treaty itself has been a peculiar treaty in that it is the only strategic treaty that actually leads to disarmament, and that is significant when compared to previous treaties such as SALT I 45 and II 46 that lead to the START treaties 47 , and also the 2010 START (Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms), which foresees a reduction of nuclear weapons. 48

The success of the INF Treaty in banning nuclear short-and intermediate-range cruise missiles could serve as a tool to give some impetus to the NPT Treaty, in particular banning tactical nuclear weapons. Both the NPT Treaty and the INF Treaty serve essentially the same goal of disarmament, and the INF Treaty should be incorporated into the NPT Treaty to ban tactical nuclear weapons, as the INF Treaty has now become somewhat outdated as new technologies eclipse its terms. One way of incorporating the INF Treaty into the NPT Treaty is to amend Article VI of the NPT Treaty. I will return to this point shortly, but first, some context within broader international law.

The problem of nuclear weapons in international law has always been a contentious issue and even the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is so aware of the problems relating to nuclear weapons that it saw fit to stay neutral on such matters. For instance, when the ICJ was faced with the question of whether nuclear weapons should be a prerogative of the World Health Organization (WHO)49 , the ICJ in an advisory opinion reinforced the disarmament provision of the NPT Treaty and proclaimed that states have an obligation to pursue nuclear disarmament treaties.

Whether or not it was the prerogative of the WHO, the ICJ stayed clear of that and instead argued that the conclusion of disarmament treaties should be done in good faith. In the WHO Legality Opinion, the ICJ was called upon to interpret Article VI of the NPT which called upon states to negotiate in good faith nuclear disarmament treaties, and the Court explained that “there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations to nuclear disarmament in all its aspect under strict and effective international control.”50 At the heart of the WHO Legality Opinion was the NPT Treaty that entered into force in 1970 and how it has been essential to world peace.

The NPT Treaty was given a new lease on life in 1995 when it was extended to remain in force indefinitely and thus making it the [crème-de-la-crème] avenue for disarmament. 51 The NPT Treaty has also been responsible for a sort of MAD-détente in world peace and security in that signatory members agreed to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons technology. The Strategic Concept of NATO also envisages a world free of nuclear weapons52 and the NPT Treaty has been at work to accomplish that goal.

The NPT Treaty was born out of fear of the destructive nature of nuclear weapons (strategic and tactical) and, in a way similar to that of the INF Treaty, brought home some amount of disarmament. The NPT Treaty also sought disarmament, because disarmament, non-proliferation, and the right to peacefully use nuclear technology are the backbone of the NPT Treaty or the so called “pillar” structures.

According to Article I of the NPT Treaty, member states committed themselves “not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosives” and to also take measures from preventing non-nuclear states from acquiring nuclear weapons. 53 And equally, under Article II of the NPT Treaty, non-nuclear states pledged not to acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons technology. While under Article III, the task of safeguards and verification has been entrusted to the International Atomic and Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure that members are in compliance with the NPT Treaty or that nuclear technology is used for peaceful purposes.54 Thus, in Articles I-III of the NPT Treaty, the pillars of peaceful use of nuclear technology and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology are embedded whilst the third pillar— disarmament—can be found in Article VI of the NPT Treaty.55

In terms of disarmament, the NPT provides in Article VI that there is an obligation on members to pursue disarmament. The exact provision states, “[e]ach of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”56 When the terms of this provision are closely analyzed one interpretation is that there is a need for a global disarmament treaty without the piecemeal approach such as in the START treaties or the INF Treaty.57

As this paper has pointed out, given the success of the INF Treaty, it could transform into a global disarmament treaty if it were to be incorporated into the NPT Treaty. This could be done by amending Article VI of the NPT Treaty. Though the INF Treaty is limited to certain transport vehicles for nuclear warheads, such limitations contributed in its early success on disarmament.

However, the INF Treaty could be expanded into a multilateral treaty so that the remaining nuclear-armed states sign up to it. One way of expanding the INF Treaty into a multilateral treaty is to amend Article VI of the NPT Treaty, so that it is incorporated fully under the NPT Treaty to include all nuclear-armed states, and an obligation to disarm all tactical nuclear weapons. By doing so, a global disarmament treaty could be negotiated in good faith, and thus comply with Article VI—the disarmament provision of the NPT Treaty. The revision clause of the NPT requires the Parties to convene a conference 25 years after its entry into force “to decide whether the [NPT] shall continue in force indefinitely, or shall be extended for an additional fixed period or periods.”58 The parties used this opportunity in 1995 to allow the NPT to continue in force indefinitely, and this clause could also be used to reflect incorporating the INF Treaty into the NPT Treaty.

The most effective way of amending the NPT Treaty to ban tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and globally would be for Europe to lead initiatives and convince the non-nuclear weapons member states that banning of such weapons will make the world somewhat safer. If non-nuclear weapons states are fully engaged in the disarmament process they would be able to extend leverage over other nuclear armed states to seek their commitments that, in the event of further conflicts, they will refrain from introducing tactical nuclear weapons in the theatre of combat.59

On a broader level where the strategic and tactical nuclear weapons of both Russia and the United States are concerned, their commitment under an amended NPT Treaty to limit their nuclear arsenal to less than 200 each per country would be the ultimate goal of disarmament where a zero endgame would prove impossible. Two hundred might be seen as an unrealistic figure, but it would be a massive reduction from current figures and inching towards zero. Furthermore, a revised NPT Treaty incorporating the INF Treaty should address nuclear warheads as opposed to the vehicles and technology capable of delivering those warheads, because the INF Treaty has fallen into a state of quiescence since the 2003 sitting of the SVC. Nor did the 2016 sitting of the SVC produce any results apart from commitments to work together in the future. In light of this, an amended NPT Treaty may yet deliver the international nuclear arms control process from the shadows of the adversarial relations of the Cold War.

#### It’s NOT arms control – the difference is an entire category is eliminated within a process that has zero as a long-term goal – competing interps argue de lege ferenda.

Ushioda 92 [Setsuko Ushioda, JD candidate, Institute of Air and Space Law, McGill University, Montreal, “Satellite-Based Multilateral Arms Control Verification Schemes and International Law,” JD thesis, November 1992, https://dam-oclc.bac-lac.gc.ca/download?is\_thesis=1&oclc\_number=897920127&id=6e19a580-c21b-4e1b-841a-2fe14e99ef29&fileName=3n2040700.pdf] \*[language modifications]

E. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Starting with 1960, no discussion relating to arms limitation is possible without using the term "arms control", by now the standard expression in American vocabulary.33 The difference between the terms "arms control" and "disarmament" is obvious despite the fact that they are often used interchangeably. The definitions of the two terms offered by Professor Hedley Bull are both simple and easy to understand:

Disarmament is the reduction or abolition of armaments. It may be unilateral or multilateral; general or local; comprehensive or partial; controlled or uncontrolled.

Arms control is restraint internationally exercised upon armaments policy, whether in respect of the level of armaments, their character, deployments or use.34

Professor Bull notes that disarmament and arms control interact with one another: "there can be disarmament which is not controlled, and control which does not involve a reduction of armaments".35 There are, of course, many other definitions and explanations of these terms, as can be seen from the illustrations that follow.

According to an official publication of the Ministry of External Affairs of Canada,

Arms control refers to measures that limit the growth of or otherwise regulate weapons, military forces and/or their supporting activities. Such measures can include restrictions on numbers, types, testing or training, stationing, acquisition and use. The Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) of 1963, which bans nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, is an example of an arms control agreement. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to countries that don't already have them, is another example.36

Disarmament, in contrast, refers to the actual reduction or elimination of weapons and/or military forces, as for example, the U.S.-USSR Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1987.37 It follows that "if weapons or equipment have to be dismantled or destroyed, or troops returned to civilian life, it is disarmament. If not, it is arms control".38

According to Professor H. Lauterpacht, "disarmament" means "not the abolition of armaments, but their reduction to limits reasonably commensurate with a State’s national safety and the discharge of its international obligations."39

Alva Myrdal in her seminal book The Game of Disarmament40 states that she uses the term "disarmament" as the generic one to be given a larger connotation than "elimination of armaments". She refused to use "arms control" as an overall term for both semantic and political reasons. Semantically, the term "control" should be exclusively applied to verification measures; politically, "arms control" is an American invention which is likely to have scant or nil disarmament effect, emphasizing the control factor.41 Disarmament, therefore, "covers all degrees of reduction of armaments, and it includes the preemption of options for further arms development (non-armament) as well as measures for regulating the production or use of arms quantity or quality".42 "Arms control" is also seen [characterized] as a "watered-down, bland and lesser version of disarmament".43

According to Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, the term "arms control" is meant:

to include all the forms of military cooperation between potential enemies in the interest of reducing the likelihood of war, its scope and violence if it occurs, and the political and economic costs of being prepared for it. The essential feature of arms control is the recognition and cooperation even between potential enemies with respect to their military establishments. Whether the most promising area of arms control involves reduction in certain kinds of military force, increases in certain kinds of military force, qualitative changes in weaponry, different modes of deployment, or arrangements superimposed on existing military systems, we prefer to treat as an open question.44

Similar views are found in Herman Kahn's writings45 and in the Harvard Nuclear Study Group's essay on nuclear weapons.46

For the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency "arms control" includes "all those actions, unilateral as well as multilateral, by which we regulate the levels and kinds of armaments in order to reduce the likelihood of armed conflicts, their severity and violence if they should occur, and the economic burden of military programs."47

The choice of the term, accordingly, reflects political as well as ideological positions and different approaches towards national security. Lawrence Freedman rightly points out that the term "arms control" became popular as "the notion of managing rather than eliminating the arms race" was gaining ground in the United States48 and that, hence, it was more acceptable than disarmament to the powerful military-industrial complex.

According to Professor Tadashi Tanaka, the choice of the term stems from the fact that some approach problems de lege lata and others de lege ferenda.49 A closer examination of the term "disarmament", he writes, suggests that in most cases the notion of disarmament is used as the ultimate goal of negotiations, "arms control", on the other hand, only promotes movement towards the reduction or abolition of armaments.50

The choice of one or the other term seems to depend on the nature of the measures contemplated or agreed upon and on the politics of the parties involved. Hence, most of the multilateral agreements and the resolutions of international organizations use the term "disarmament",51 while arms control is largely limited to bilateral agreements to which the United States is a party.

Other related terms such as "arms limitation", "regulation of armaments" and "reduction of armaments" are not always clearly defined and could cover a great variety of measures. The Stanford Arms Control Group uses the terms "arms control" and "arms limitation" interchangeably with the understanding that each of them "involves limitations on the number or types of armaments or armed forces, on their development or disposition, or on the use of particular types of armaments".32 The Stanford Arms Control Group, however, gives the term "arms control" a broader meaning than "arms limitation", because "arms control" encompasses "measures designed to reduce the danger of accidental war or to reduce concern about surprise attack".53 "Disarmament" is defined by that group as "the reduction of armaments or armed forces".54 Similarly, the Ministry of External Affairs of Canada regards "arms limitation" and "arms regulation" as being used as alternatives to "arms control".55

Alva Myrdal believes that the expression "regulation of armaments"56 is more appropriate as a specific term in the context of international agreements involving armaments57 because it does not necessarily refer to the decrease of armaments unlike the word "reduction of armaments".58

As can be seen, the two terms and other variants of the two are used all too frequently interchangeably. Based on the above survey, in the present study, the term "disarmament" is used when (i) the reduction or the elimination of some or all weapon categories or armed forces is contemplated; and (ii) this expression has become standard regardless of the substantive content of the agreement or proposal. The term "arms control" will be employed when used in the original documentation referred to and also in mechanisms for reducing the likelihood of armed conflicts.

#### Only our interpretation comports with Article 6’s contradistinction to “complete,” “total” and “eliminate,” and the historical record.

Kiernan ‘12

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Returning to the provision at hand, Article VI provides: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”56 A natural reading reveals an undertaking with the following structure:57

Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith

• on effective measures relating

– to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and

– to nuclear disarmament, and

• on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The use of the prepositions “to” and “on” renders this sensible.58 In addition, that a comma separates out the undertaking to pursue negotiations in good faith “on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament” means that that undertaking must be distinguished from the pursuit of good faith negotiations “on effective measures relating to . . . nuclear disarmament.” Though the meaning of Article VI in its entirety is in one sense beyond the scope of this paper, the relation of the term “nuclear disarmament” to the Article as a whole nonetheless affects its meaning.

B. VCLT Article 31—Ordinary Meaning and Context

Applying Article 31, the ordinary meaning of “nuclear disarmament” could be two different things: (1) disarmament of the entirety of the parties’ nuclear weapons arsenals; or (2) the act of disarming such arsenals. 59 “Nuclear disarmament” could therefore require negotiations of total nuclear disarmament, partial disarmament steps, or both. If both, then the good faith pursuit of negotiations on effective measures relating to either one could satisfy the “nuclear disarmament” component of Article VI.60 (continues to footnote 60 – no text omitted) 60. That “nuclear disarmament” is a disjunctive requirement that obliges states to engage in either partial or total disarmament is crucial in this regard. If the term were conjunctive, that is, if both total disarmament and partial disarmament were necessary to satisfy this requirement, there would be no point in allowing room for partial disarmament in the first place. Accordingly, the very allowance of partial disarmament measures entails that either total or partial measures satisfy this prong of Article VI. (end footnote 60). Here, therefore, is the VCLT’s “starting point.”61 The next task is to examine as context the remaining treaty language to “moderate” that meaning.62 (continues to footnote 62 – no text omitted) 62. See id.; ~~see~~ (consider) also GARDINER, supra note 41, 59-60, 63 (discussing the primacy of the text, and, the context as extending beyond a particular part of the instrument to the whole instrument) (end footnote 62).

~~Looking to~~ (Reviewing) the remainder of the NPT, no other article sheds light on the meaning of “nuclear disarmament.” Article VII provides that nothing in the NPT affects the right of any states parties to conclude other regional treaties “to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories.”63 “Total absence” indicates a permissible objective but of other treaties, not the NPT or Article VI in particular. While it would be strange to permit an objective inconsistent with the purposes of the NPT, the conclusion of regional nuclear-free zones is not necessarily inconsistent with a requirement that states parties engage in disarmament ~~steps~~ (efforts). Thus, we are left with the Preamble.64

The pertinent preambular language includes a declaration of “intention to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the arms race and to undertake effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament.”65

Thus, the states parties declared their intent to stop the arms race and to take measures “in the direction of nuclear disarmament.” Certainly, “measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament” cannot be read to exclude reductions in nuclear armament. More broadly, this declaration of intent cannot but reflect a precise understanding of the states parties at signing, that intermediate steps would be required before reaching an end state of total nuclear disarmament. Finally, although “nuclear disarmament,” here, could very well refer exclusively to this end state, it could just as well refer to partial reductions.

The preamble also includes a desire to “facilitate . . . the liquidation of all . . . existing stockpiles, and the elimination from national arsenals of nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery pursuant to a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control . . . . “ To be sure, this language provides much to analyze, but for now it suffices to observe (1) that the states parties explicitly included their desire to achieve total nuclear disarmament, and (2) that this statement used terms other than “nuclear disarmament.” Thus, this language provides for a desirable trajectory and end state, but not necessarily anything more.66

Furthermore, the very different—and physically separate—treatment given to “nuclear disarmament” versus “liquidation,” “elimination,” and “general and complete disarmament” indicates that these could be overlapping but not coextensive or coterminous concepts. Any divergence would provide “context” for understanding Article VI, and reflect the twofold meaning of “nuclear disarmament” in Article VI. Indeed, this aspect of the Preamble could demonstrate that the states parties intended partial disarmament steps to satisfy the “nuclear disarmament prong of Article VI.

C. Object and Purpose

The object and purpose of the NPT must now be considered to shed further light on the ordinary meaning of “nuclear disarmament.” Object and purpose are in fact two different things: the former involves the legal rights and obligations created under a provision; the latter, the general result that the parties want to achieve.67 In divining object and purpose, the whole text of the treaty is taken into account.68 To bear on the interpretation of “nuclear disarmament,” an exhaustive inquiry into the NPT’s purpose should prove unnecessary. The sole question is whether the proposed interpretation of “nuclear disarmament” clearly runs afoul of the general result the states parties wished to achieve. Here, partial nuclear disarmament would not contradict any of the relevant preambular language.69 The question posed with regard to the treaty’s object is not so easily disposed of, however.

A treaty’s object involves the legal bundle of rights and obligations agreed to in the particular provisions of a treaty.70 Here, the states parties have agreed to some notion of “nuclear disarmament” in Article VI. Because this aspect of Article VI is squarely at issue, as an analytical matter, consideration of its object within the treaty is too circular to be of much use. Put differently, leveraging the nature of an obligation to provide context for understanding a particular provision is of no help if the initial problem is uncertainty regarding the nature of the obligation. In this instance, the uncertainty-generating problem is linguistic: “disarmament” cannot be used to clarify the meaning of “disarmament;” we do not yet know disarmament’s meaning. Thus, we turn to the final consideration under VCLT Article 31.

D. Subsequent Agreement of the Parties

A subsequent agreement of the parties can in certain circumstances derive an authentic interpretation that must thereafter be read into the initial treaty.71 In this case, a review conference has taken place every five years since the NPT’s entry into force in 1970. Though states parties did not reach consensus in 1980, 1990, 1995, or 2005,72 the documents agreed to in 1975, 1985, 2000, and 2010 are instructive at least to show political commitment, and to “moderate” the ordinary meaning described supra, in addition to the NPT’s context and object and purpose.73

The 1975 review conference resulted in various references to Article VI. First, the conference expressed its conviction that the objective of preventing proliferation remained relevant to averting nuclear war, and that “more rapid progress was required towards cessation of the arms race and the ‘limitation and reduction of existing nuclear weapons with a view to their eventual elimination, pursuant to a treaty on general and complete disarmament . . . . ‘“74 Confirming that the parties clearly envisioned partial reduction steps in order to reach an end state of nuclear disarmament, the conference reaffirmed the undertaking of “effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament.”75 Third, the conference “welcom[ing] the various agreements on arms limitation and disarmament . . . over the last few years as steps contributing to the implementation of Article VI . . . .” 76

The 1985 review conference called for the “progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles . . . leading to their ultimate and complete elimination.”77 In addition, the conference “welcome[d] . . . bilateral negotiations . . . [and ] hope[d] that these negotiations will lead to early and effective agreements aimed at . . . limiting and reducing nuclear arms, and at strengthening strategic stability.”78 The conference thus evinced an appreciation for the logical progression of partial disarmament reductions ultimately leading to total disarmament, as well as an understanding of the relevance of strategic stability.

Although the 1995 review conference failed to yield a consensus-based final document, it did produce a “decision” on nuclear disarmament.79 At least as a political matter, the conference found important to the full implementation of Article VI, “[t]he determined pursuit … of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons . . . with the ultimate goals of eliminating those weapons . . . .”80 Thus, the conference considered “progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons” critical to “implementation” or satisfaction of Article VI. Importantly, this relationship of disarmament steps (increments) to Article VI compliance received recognition again in 2000, where the conference took the unusual ~~step~~ (stage) of agreeing upon “practical steps (increments) for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI . . .

Welcoming what it termed “significant progress achieved in nuclear weapons reductions made unilaterally or bilaterally under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) process, as steps towards nuclear disarmament,”82 the conference expressed “deep concern” with the fact that “despite the achievements in bilateral and unilateral arms reduction, the total number of nuclear weapons deployed and in stockpile still amounts to many thousands.”83 More pointedly, however, the conference unveiled a disarmament wish list that included thirteen steps, four of which dealt with disarmament directly.84 Generally speaking, the conference restated the states parties’ “unequivocal undertaking . . . to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament,” while calling for “further reduction” and a “process leading to the total elimination of . . . nuclear weapons.”85

Finally, the 2010 conference noted again “with concern that the total estimated number of nuclear weapons deployed and stockpiled still amounts to several thousands.”86 On this issue, however, the conference failed to achieve consensus on disarmament progress.87 Thus, the Secretary-General appended a five-point proposal,88 which included: (1) multilateral disarmament efforts, a resumption of U.S.-Russia negotiations aimed at achieving deeper and verifiable reductions, and verification research and development; (2) P5 discussions of security issues pertinent to the disarmament process, such as security assurances for NNWS; (3) effectiveness of CTBT, FMCT and IAEA safeguards;89 (4) increased accountability and transparency; and (5) complementary measures regarding other WMD, terrorism, and conventional arms.90 Clearly undergirding this proposal is a common understanding that disarmament refers to a process as well as an end state.

E. VCLT Article 32—Supplementary Means

Last, supplementary means include the preparatory work and the circumstances of conclusion of a treaty. Recourse to supplementary means of interpretation may be had either in order to confirm a meaning determined in accordance with the general rule in Article 31, or, to determine the meaning if the general rule leaves the term ambiguous.91 It is important to note that international tribunal decision-making in this area has proven somewhat opaque. While parties often reference preparatory work, and tribunals may call attention to such sources,92 the actual extent of tribunals’ reliance on such means is far from clear.93

With respect to the NPT, negotiations on disarmament consisted, more or less, of three positions: (1) some states insisted that the treaty list specific disarmament obligations binding on NWS;94 (2) other states sought to avoid this at all cost;95 and (3) still other states desired to add as much weight to the obligation of nuclear disarmament as they could without jeopardizing conclusion of a nonproliferation treaty.96 On disarmament, these camps in fact entertained an entire spectrum of disarmament obligations, ranging from the gradual elimination of nuclear delivery vehicles,97 to a manufacture ban,98 total nuclear disarmament,99 and a treaty on general and complete disarmament.100 How each of the three negotiating positions ultimately came to agree upon the language in the NPT Preamble and Article VI is instructive, since each state proffered measures most in line with its initial position.

Part of the explanation for the compromise owes to the allocation of bargaining power: all states parties wanted to limit the risk of “nuclear catastrophe” that was “bound to increase with every new addition to the nuclear club,”101 but the U.S. and the Soviet Union had to agree to whatever instrument was intended to achieve this.102 Yet, the nature of disarmament obligations entertained by the parties also mattered a great deal. Individually, proposed obligations ran the gamut from “complete nuclear disarmament”103 to an “undertaking of disarmament,”104 but even states that demanded the former recognized from the outset the effectiveness and legitimacy of partial disarmament and reductions.105 Thus, such piecemeal measures formed part of the very fabric of the bargain reached on July 1, 1968.

F. Summary

Synthesizing the results reached by applying VCLT Articles 31 and 32 to Article VI, the NPT, the product of the review conferences, and the preparatory work,106 several conclusions follow:

i. The ordinary meaning of “nuclear disarmament” and Article VI indicate that partial disarmament ~~steps~~ (increments) could satisfy Article VI;

ii. The NPT as context provides evidence that the states parties intended partial disarmament measures, in the direction of nuclear disarmament, to satisfy the “nuclear disarmament” prong of Article VI;

iii. Partial disarmament measures are implicit in, and not contrary, to the NPT’s purpose;

iv. Nuclear disarmament refers to a process as well as an end state, and progress on either front helps satisfy Article VI;

v. Reductions were originally intended as part of the fabric of Article VI and the NPT.

Thus, this paper’s application of international rules of interpretation comes to a close, leaving only the “progressive encirclement” required of an independent tribunal.107 Even a quick glance at (review of) the conclusions derived above reveals but one legitimate interpretation of the term “nuclear disarmament.” It encompasses partial as well as total nuclear disarmament. Therefore, reductions short of total nuclear disarmament fall within its scope and satisfy the “nuclear disarmament” prong of Article VI.108

G. ICJ Advisory Opinion on Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons

Finally, in handling a matter as delicate as the interpretation of a key term in an international agreement, pronouncements of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on topics relevant to that agreement warrant consideration. Indeed, in an oft-cited 1996 advisory opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons,109 the ICJ offered several such pronouncements, including the following unanimous statement: “There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”110 Some consider this an “elaboration” on Art. VI;111 others, a call for the opinion’s enforcement.112 Regardless of which view prevails, the express objective of “nuclear disarmament in all its aspects” hardly forecloses our interpretation of “disarmament.” To the contrary, “nuclear disarmament in all its aspects” cannot be read to exclude partial disarmament steps that lead to total disarmament.

Moreover, the real contribution this opinion ostensibly makes to nuclear disarmament law is that it “sets forth an obligation to bring the specified negotiations to a conclusion.”113 In addition, the opinion does not touch upon “general and complete disarmament,” the third objective expressed in Art. VI.114 Some leverage this omission to argue that the ICJ intended to remove from the field any argument that general and complete disarmament might somehow condition nuclear disarmament.115 This may be correct as far as it goes, but it merely commences the analysis undertaken in this paper. Nuclear disarmament encompasses partial as well as total disarmament, and achievement of the latter presupposes the former’s occurrence.

CONCLUSION

Thus ends the case giving legal scope for the contention that reductions, followed through upon, should shift diplomatic pressure onto other states. After all, Henry Kissinger once asked, “‘What in the name of God is strategic superiority? What is the significance of it, politically, militarily, operationally, at these levels of numbers? What do you do with it?’”116 This is what you do with it: you exchange it for durable security gain.

Even though strategic superiority can still increase the reluctance of potential adversaries to initiate nuclear or other violent conflict, and can still achieve actual victory in nuclear or other conflict, it is equally true that when the number of nuclear weapons deployed rises high enough, victory in nuclear conflict ceases to carry much meaning. Furthermore, above a certain threshold, large arsenals can actually destabilize relations between nucleararmed states and defeat the very purpose of their deterrent mission. Thus, the size and characteristics of a nuclear arsenal matter: appropriate limits can preserve victory in some real sense, and they can prevent deterrence from breaking down.

Of course, deterrence and victory still require ab initio a lower number of nuclear weapons controlled by hostile entities. The overarching objective is strategic superiority at numbers that both preserve deterrence and avoid nuclear ~~holocaust~~ (annihilation) . Depending on geopolitical realities, and leaving specific numbers for planners, at a minimum, partial disarmament ~~steps~~ (efforts) should serve both victory and deterrence better than an equal measure of arms build-up or improvement. In response to very real concerns over giving up too much, it is useful to recall that “[w]orld peace [once] hinged on a stable relationship between the U.S. and Soviet arsenals, and . . . on apparently tiny details.”117 Perhaps coordinated, calculated reductions can take us back to an insistence on tiny details, which can drive stability just as it did during the Cold War. If so, then Article VI, properly understood, makes it easier for states to find it in their interests to observe the NPT.

Surveying the terrain from this height, specific caps, reciprocal reduction ratios, and so on seem to lose much of their meaning, when full stock is taken of the sheer magnitude of the geopolitical challenges we confront. Threatening nuclear conflict and outwardly impervious to navigation, these will prove the crux of the twenty-first century. Though other options must not be discounted, clever combinations of nuclear disarmament could open a route through.

# 2AC

## ADV1

### Modernization

#### ZERO link to Chinese modernization – honestly, our internal link’s just not good enough to support the notion that we halt or reverse it – that was never our argument, only that we increase the diplomatic costs to China’s demand for parity, slowing their ability to outpace US modernization and thereby achieve parity – but if modernization’s in their interests, there’s no reason they’d stop, which is the threshold for their link

Squassoni 22 [Sharon A. Squassoni, Research Professor of International Affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University, has held senior positions at the State Department and Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, MA National Security Strategy, National War College, MA Public Management, University of Maryland, “China and Article VI: Death Threats to the NPT,” NPEC Virtual Meeting, 6-16-2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gmq\_T9Pdvtw, machine transcribed by temi.com, manually corrected by Kevin McCaffrey]

Sharon Squassoni (33:40):

Most of those 13 steps were geared towards US and Russia. So it's like, well, you guys should take your, you know, missiles off alert status. You know, there a lot of things you can do. One of them is, I think, particularly relevant here, and that is, you know, reduced reliance on nuclear weapons in your defense posture. I think we don't have a bad story to tell on that, and I think we should be pushing China to clarify what it's you know, how it's viewing nuclear weapons now. You know, none of these things, you, you're not gonna solve <laugh> what China is doing through the NPT process, but you can you know, place a little bit of pressure on them, get them to be more open. Maybe there's a possibility that they will step up to the plate. I put in my paper, you know, historically they've never been forward-leaning here. And so I'd, I'd be interested to hear from folks in this virtual room what they think the, the prospects are for any of these ideas. Thanks, Henry.

## ADV2

#### Yes middle power wars – whether as proxies or provocateurs – AND perception of transition in combination with ahistorical diffusion of power and capability makes them uniquely likely to escalate – that’s Sweijs

#### AND…

Hersman 20 [Rebecca Hersman, director of the Project on Nuclear Issues, senior adviser for the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, former deputy assistant secretary of defense for countering weapons of mass destruction, US Department of Defense, MA Arab studies, Georgetown University, “Wormhole Escalation in the New Nuclear Age,” Texas National Security Review, Summer 2020, pp.90-109, DOI 10.26153/tsw/10220]

Nuclear Escalation in the Second Nuclear Age

The risk of asymmetric escalation is not exclusively a feature of direct competition and conflict between great-power adversaries. Sudden and indirect escalation to a strategic crisis can also result from the fragmentation of power on the global geopolitical landscape and the multipolar dynamics emanating from regional nuclear powers. Today’s great-power competition occurs in a context of rising regional tensions and growing nuclear capabilities of previously second- or third-tier nuclear-armed states, adding risk and complexity to escalatory dynamics and giving smaller states a larger vote in the nature and intensity of large-state competition. In addition, the lack of clear thresholds and triggers for possible conflict and divergent nuclear doctrine and declaratory policies further complicate attempts at escalation management.

Complex regional competition dynamics among nuclear-armed states will further complicate our understanding of nuclear escalation and crisis management. For example, the traditional measure of strategic stability — the presence of a secure second-strike capability — is problematic for smaller nuclear-armed states that may lack sufficient geographical depth or balance to credibly absorb an attack and still respond with sufficiently devastating effect. As Lieber and Press argue, regional nuclear powers are at a considerable resource disadvantage and may not be able to effectively conceal their nuclear arsenals from the rapidly improving intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaisance technologies­ of the United States.54 Also, while movement toward increasing strategic transparency greatly facilitated strategic stability between the United States and Russia, the stabilizing effect of transparency among smaller nuclear powers is far less clear since many such states — Israel most notably — depend on opacity and ambiguity to manage complex regional dynamics and prevent costly arms racing. Multipolar strategic stability probably won’t play out according to traditional concepts and rule sets — such as stability-instability — or at least not in the same ways as in the past.

Escalating Off-Ramps

Complex regional escalation dynamics that occur under a nuclear shadow may also play out at the geostrategic level such that “small-state” conflicts can escalate to “big-state” wars in unexpected ways. In a regional conflict or crisis, participants (states and actors who are directly engaged) and stakeholders (states and actors who are indirectly engaged) may possess different views about the value and risks of escalation. There is also the potential for states with smaller nuclear arsenals to draw big states into conflict in ways that defy the stability-instability paradox, which assumes that lower levels of conflict can be enabled rather than dampened by stability at the nuclear level because of self-regulating behavior by the states involved. However, this theory did not envision a circumstance in which smaller nuclear-armed countries might engage in more aggressive or violent competition because they believe that large countries will step in to create face-saving backstops or escalation “off ramps” and save them from themselves. Indeed, Feroz Khan has argued that deterrence in South Asia now depends on intervention by the United States to manage and minimize the consequences of either side’s destabilizing behavior.55 For example, amid an escalatory spiral with Pakistan, India may call on the United States to step in or risk allowing it to cross the nuclear threshold. In this scenario, both global and regional strategic stability dynamics shape the way these actors interpret conflict, and by extension their perceived freedom of action and relative dominance.

The 1999 Kargil Crisis is representative of a crisis-escalation scenario in which smaller nuclear-armed states perceive that bigger powers will swoop in to save them from nuclear confrontation. Just one year after India and Pakistan became overt nuclear powers, the two countries approached the brink of nuclear war. Following an attempted land-grab by Pakistan in the hotly contested Kashmir region, the United States provided an off-ramp to de-escalate the conflict. At the height of the crisis, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif “insisted” on meeting with President Bill Clinton, according to Clinton’s senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council, Bruce Riedel.56 The United States stepped in after Clinton called both India’s and Pakistan’s leaders. Washington also sent its senior military commander in the region and a senior State Department official to Islamabad. Later, former deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott wrote that the world was closer to nuclear confrontation than during the Cuban Missile Crisis.57 Clearly, diplomatic interventions that can deescalate a crisis and forestall a nuclear conflict should always be pursued. However, expectations that the great powers will step in to rescue small nuclear states caught in an escalatory spiral may shift the burden of restraint and reduce accountability and responsibility for managing strategic stability among regional actors in ways that may reinforce rather than reduce risk-taking. In such a scenario, the United States may not initiate an escalation wormhole, so much as get pulled through one.

## T

#### There are THREE categories of “its nuclear forces” – “theater” is ours

References:

USIA: U.S. Information Agency – Arms Control and Disarmament – Glossary of Terms

USDoD: U.S. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms

NATO 7 [North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Online Library, Official Texts, NATO-Russia Glossary of Nuclear Terms and Definitions, PART 1 Nuclear Terms and Definitions in English, APPENDIX 3 Definitions of Nuclear Forces, 2007, p.1-27, https://www.nato.int/docu/glossary/eng-nuclear/nuc\_glos-e.pdf]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| United States | Non-strategic nuclear forces  Those nuclear-capable forces located in an operational area with a capability to employ nuclear weapons by land, sea, or air forces against opposing forces, supporting installations, or facilities. Such forces may be employed, when authorized by competent authority, to support operations that contribute to the accomplishment of the commander’s mission within the theatre of operations. (USDoD)  Theatre nuclear forces  Nuclear forces designed for localized military missions. (USIA) | Strategic nuclear forces  Land-based ballistic missiles with ranges over 5500 kilometres, modern submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers. (USIA) |

#### Prefer the only viable middle ground – must still eliminate ALL of ONE category OR deep cuts of ALL

* **\*\***IMPORTANT NOTE – Singer is ***NOT*** our Aff INTERP card(s). Those cards are in the 1AC.
  + Singer is AN IMPACT CALC CARD that compares various items that fall on what he describes as a “Disarmament Continuum”.
  + Singer EXPLICITLY says he is not defining the term “disarmament” … so – yes – this card does say several things “are on the Disarmament ***CONTINUUM***”… However, not only is A DISRMAMENT CONTINUUM not a synonym for “disarmament” (it includes adjacent items that are neighbor VIA A CONTINUUM) – BUT Singer goes out of his way to clarify that he is NOT DEFINIING THE TERM. And – instead – is comparing items THAT OTHER PEOPLE sometimes place or misplace on the “continuum”.
  + Better put, Singer is explaining the merits of various interpretations – some of which we are defending (“partial disarmament”) AND some of which we are not defending (i.e. – “Complete disarm” – which is akin to the Neg interp… or “Arms control” – which is a common Neg de-limits arg that Singer says IS DISTINCT from “partial disarm”).
  + It is very hard to contend that the “Aff interp delimits to Arms Control” on the basis on this Singer card. Singer is NOT DEFINIING THE TERM – so it’s hard to pin us with baggage from “his definition”. And, we could not more explicitly be reading other ev that divorces us from “arms control” and other aspects of the Neg’s de-limits arg.

Singer – No date

But sort of in 2018 - J. David Singer was an American professor of political science at the University of Michigan. Singer was a pioneer in the application of quantitative methods to puzzles in the field of international relations. Singer’s encyclopedia entry regarding “disarmament” was republished by the Cengage Group in 2018. Cengage Group is an Educational content, technology, and services company for Higher Education. It operates in over 20 nations. Gale is Cengage's library reference wing and specializes in e-research and educational publishing for libraries, schools and businesses. “Disarmament” - Updated May 23 2018 - #E&F - modified for language that may offend - <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/political-science-and-government/international-affairs-diplomacy/nuclear-disarmament#:~:text=The%20elimination%20of%20all%20weapons,goal%20in%20the%20twentieth%20century>.

Types Of Disarmament

No formal definition of disarmament has been offered here since the phenomenon may take many forms. In the light of historical experience as well as logical possibilities, it is useful to classify the types of disarmament *along* two particular *dimensions.* One such dimension is the degree of arms reduction, and the other may be called the reciprocity dimension. The first refers to the quantitative and qualitative extent of a nation’s military reductions, the second to the extent to which its reductions are matched, or in some fashion reciprocated, by other nations.

Degree of arms reduction

The “degree of dis-armament” continuum is not, in fact, limited to disarmament measures in the literal sense. In accord with diplomatic custom and scholarly usage, we include arms control as well as a number of intermediate restraints that fall well short of reduction.

Total disarmament. At the upper end of the continuum is total or complete disarmament, involving the elimination of all military capability beyond that defined as necessary for the maintenance of domestic order. That minimal level may include local and national police, border guards, or perhaps even a modest paramilitary force for antiriot types of duty, depending on the treaty provisions, the requirements imposed by other nations, or the unilateral decision of the disarming nation itself. Complete disarmament has been proposed frequently (most recently in the partially compatible Soviet and American draft treaties on general and complete disarmament of March 22 and April 18, 1962, respectively) but it has never been achieved by formal negotiations among the major powers. It has, however, been imposed on defeated nations by victorious ones at the close of war, but seldom with lasting effect. As commitments shift according to the vagaries of international alignments, the victors either acquiesce in gradual rearmament, as after World War I, or even encourage it, as did the United States and the Soviet Union soon after World War II.

Arms control. At the opposite and lowest end of the degree continuum are arms control measures. These are provisions that may not call for reduction or prohibition of any weapons, yet have the effect of inhibiting a nation’s full development of a given weapon category. Arms control measures do not directly prohibit the production or possession of that weapon type but rather seek to work indirectly by limitations or prohibitions on the testing, deployment, or use of it. Leaving out the last (once weapons are made and deployed, any commitment not to use them is unlikely to survive even the mildest temptation after hostilities begin), we note that limits or prohibitions on testing may well prevent, retard, or diminish the quality of the weapon’s production. Or, for a variety of political, military, or technological reasons, it may be desirable to permit production (and thereafter possession) but to restrict or ban their deployment within a given geographical region. One of the rare successes in negotiating a reciprocal ban on testing was the August 5, 1963, Treaty of Moscow, which prohibited the signatories from experimental detonations of nuclear weapons in outer space, in the atmosphere, or under water. Although a number of demilitarized frontiers have been arranged in the past, today’s major powers have been unable to negotiate any regional deployment prohibitions.

Arms control also may be applied to certain less obvious measures having no effect at all on the quantity or quality of a nation’s armed forces. Normally, they deal with information about military capability rather than the capability itself and generally require more information than is available through normal military intelligence channels. In the past, much emphasis of this sort was on publishing military budgets, war college curricula, manning and organization tables, results of weapon experiments, inventories, and war plans; often observers were invited to attend maneuvers or to verify published information. As the advance of military technology enhanced the offense at the expense of the defense, however, surprise attack became an increasingly serious concern for the defenders of the status quo. As a consequence, much of the information exchanged (or proposed for exchange) in earlier days has become a potential aid to the aggressor; the types of information exchange proposed in the post-1945 era are intended to redress that imbalance and to aid the defender (more accurately, the retaliator, since effective strategic defense has become nearly impossible). For example, it has been proposed that information regarding the location of land-based or sea-borne retaliatory weapons be kept secret and that the potential adversary commit himself not to seek out such information. In a similar vein, but tending toward more information, foreign observation posts and limited aerial inspection within a nation’s boundaries have been discussed as a means of improving the early-warning system of its neighbors.

Closely related to such techniques for reducing the advantage of the attacker are those intended for crisis control. In 1963 the Soviet Union and the United States installed a direct communication line between their two capitals, so that prompt and reliable information might be sought and transmitted during crises; the objective here was to mitigate the ever-increasing probability of accidental war because of erroneous reading of intelligence reports or radar and sonar displays. As in prior periods, the intent is to reduce the incentive to attack by reducing the fear of being attacked, and the objective remains one of preserving the relative military status quo.

A final form of arms control (liberally defined) is neutralization. In such a case, the neutralized nation or region is not necessarily prohibited from acquiring or maintaining armed forces but is prohibited from joining a military alliance. Generally, the neutralized region is either outside the sphere of influence of two potential enemy coalitions or in an area in which they overlap; hence such an arrangement usually requires formal or tacit negotiation between major powers. Although the enforcement of neutralization may be assigned to an international organization or an ad hoc multinational commission, its continuance depends on the major powers’ willingness to merely deny the region to the other rather than acquire it for themselves [seeDisengagement].

Partial disarmament. In the middle of the continuum are those measures known as partial disarmament. They may cover (a) incomplete reductions in all weapon categories or (b) complete reductions in some categories, or (c) some combination of the two. In the first case, the tendency has been to seek across-the-board cuts or limits based on a budgetary or ~~a manpower~~ (human resource) ceiling, the idea being that adherence to such a ceiling will compel nations to keep their armaments down. Normally, the plan is to permit each nation to allocate its military resources, within the budgetary restriction, to whichever weapon types it sees fit. The monetary maximum for any given year or period may, in turn, be based on average expenditures during a prior period, on the highest expenditure during a given prior period, or on some ratios among the signatories, to preserve their relative power positions. If a mobilized manpower ceiling is contemplated, similar baselines or else a percentage of each nations’ total of male population or of males in a given age bracket, may be used. Normally, a manpower ceiling prescribes numerical and age limits not only upon active duty personnel but on reserves of different categories, and it will also set minimum periods of active duty in order to prevent the rapid training of many reserves by high turnover in a relatively small active force.

Another version of the across-the-board, but partial, measure is that based on real or hypothetical war-making units. A German periodical in 1909 proposed, for example, that each nation be allotted one unit for each 700 in its population and that 10 army men or 50 tons of ship be thought of as one unit. Thus, under this scheme the 63 million Germans would have been entitled to 90,000 units and the 45 million British to 64,300, to be allocated among ships and men as the decision makers of each country thought best.

When the second type of partial reduction—complete prohibitions in a few categories—is attempted, the prospective signatories are left free to arm fully in the nonproscribed categories; such partial provisions are also referred to as qualitative disarmament. This type may be negotiated, imposed, or unilaterally undertaken in order to (1) avoid the expenditure for more elaborate or costly weapons, (2) eliminate the more inhuman ones if war occurs, (3) make the soldier’s burden lighter in weight, (4) strengthen the defense vis-ãvis the offense in order to make aggression less attractive, or (5) compensate for the asymmetries arising out of the different geographical or technological security needs of particular nations. All of the above considerations have been explicitly noted either in formal proposals or in actual agreements. Qualitative measures might embrace the prohibition, elimination, or a ceiling upon mobile artillery, rifles above a certain caliber, bullets under a certain weight, railroads within a certain distance of a border, ships above a certain length or tonnage, ships capable of submerging, armor plates of a given thickness or hardness, aircraft capable of carrying bombs, chemical weapons, nuclear weapons on board space satellites, delivery vehicles of given range, and so forth; they may also embrace certain classes of trained personnel. The incentives may not be completely pacifistic, and the results may actually be to increase a nation’s over-all military capability, but these partial measures clearly belong under the rubric of disarmament.

## Consult NATO

#### “Restrict” doesn’t delimit process

Graber 95 [Susan P. Graber, **Supreme Court of Oregon**, Bayridge Assocs. Ltd. Partnership v. Department of Revenue, 321 Ore. 21, 4-21-1995, Lexis]

We use the foregoing principles in interpreting ORS 308.205(2) (1989). That statute did not define "restriction." In ordinary usage, a "restriction" is: "1: something that restricts: QUALIFICATION: as a: a regulation that restricts or restrains \* \* \* b: a limitation placed [\*\*\*9] on the use or enjoyment of real or other property; esp: [\*28] an encumbrance on land restricting the uses to which it may be put." Webster's Third New Int'l Dictionary, 1937 (unabridged ed 1993). A restriction thus is "a limitation placed on the use or enjoyment" of the property, without any necessary reference to the process that led to the placement of that restriction, without any necessary reference to the form of the restriction (e.g., by statute or by contract), and without any necessary reference to the absence of an economic benefit in exchange for placement of that restriction.

#### Perm: do the plan and do prior binding consultation on missile deployments – NOT intrinsic because it’s the status quo

Thomas 14 [Jim Thomas, Vice President and Director of Studies, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, statement before the House Armed Services Committee on Strategic Forces on the Future of the INF Treaty, 7-17-2014, http://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/Thomas-INF-testimony1.pdf]

1. Multi-Lateralization. The United States should seek to multi-lateralize the restrictions of the treaty to eliminate or place substantial limits on other states’ intermediate-range missiles.5 Some might argue that non-signatory states—especially those that already possess intermediate-range missiles—will never join the treaty, as they would lose the military advantages they have accrued outside its framework. Indeed, the United States and Russia attempted to “globalize” the treaty in 2007-2008 with no takers.6 But missile-armed states might have greater incentives in the years ahead to accept some limits on their own forces, especially if they assess a credible possibility that the United States and Russia might amend or quit INF themselves. This threat might be particularly salient for China. With the treaty no longer in force, the United States would be able to deploy forward-based, ground-launched systems capable of ranging its territory—as would Russia. Efforts to multi-lateralize the treaty should entail publicizing how existing intermediate-range missile capabilities undermine crisis stability, especially in the absence of any symmetrical countermeasures.7 Allied consultations will also be critical. Because U.S. allies and partners are most at risk from the missile forces [of] China, North Korea and Iran, they have the greatest interest in seeing the treaty universalized. The United States should enlist its allies and partners to apply greater pressure on states possessing missile forces proscribed by the INF treaty, to include signaling their willingness to host forward-based U.S. missile forces if no progress can be made toward multi-lateralization. Pursuing such a strategy would exploit one of the greatest asymmetric forms of leverage the United States possesses: the strength of its alliances. While multi-lateralization efforts may ultimately fail, they would still be important in terms of setting the narrative and building allied support for any future military measures that the United States might explore.2. Amendment. If multi-lateralization is not achievable, then the United States might choose to negotiate with Russia to amend the treaty in order to redress the theater missile threats posed to U.S. forces and allies in key regions around the world.8 A potential step the United States and Russia might explore would be to relax limitations on missile forces outside an area roughly defined as 30° West to 60° East longitude and 30° North to 0° North latitude. An amendment would permit deployment of forward-based, ground- launched systems (conventional weapons delivery only) outside that geographic area with ranges between 500-2,000 km, which would confer sufficient targeting range to address the most pressing threats, while maintaining prohibitions on ground-launched intermediate-range systems between 2000-5,500 km. Such an amendment would allay concerns of European allies by extending prohibitions against Russian missile forces west of the Urals, while reassuring Russia by limiting any future American conventional missile deployments in Asia or the Middle East to ranges that would not threaten Moscow. If the treaty ceased to be in force and Russia began deploying treaty-proscribed missile forces west of the Urals, Central European states would likely request in-kind deployments by the United States to enhance the credibility of American extended deterrence. There would likely be fewer qualms about such an amendment on the part of Middle Eastern partners, some of which might welcome forward-based missile deployments to offset Iran’s growing inventory of missiles capable of reaching its neighbors. For instance, some of the Gulf Cooperation Council states might be open to hosting U.S. deep strike ground-based missile forces, especially if Iran continues to pursue a nuclear weapons capability and expand its own missile forces. Deployments in Asia would be more controversial. On the one hand, such deployments would offset some of the ground-launched ballistic and cruise missile systems already deployed by China and North Korea. Japan might be interested in U.S. deployments of forward-based IRBMs and GLCMs, which could provide in-theater conventional response capabilities in the event of an attack on its territory. Similarly, the Republic of Korea (ROK) might welcome the deployment of an extended-range version of the MGM-164 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) batteries with terminally guided “smart” sub-munitions, which could play a counter-battery role against North Korean road-mobile missiles and launchers. In both cases, forward-based missile forces would not only deepen reassurance, they would also enhance deterrence by dramatically raising the costs of aggression against key allies and reducing an aggressor’s probability of success. On the other hand, allies in northeast Asia would have to weigh these potential benefits against possible drawbacks, including a decision by Moscow to deploy IRBMs to its far eastern territory. Nevertheless, while Russian missiles could certainly threaten the ROK and Japan, they would pose a far greater long-term challenge to China. Similarly, some might argue that pursuing an amendment to the INF Treaty might prompt China to step up its own deployments of intermediate-range missiles. Yet this would only trigger a multilateral arms race. Moreover, because missile forces can be easily redeployed, an accelerated missile buildup directed against the United States and Russia would also threaten China’s other neighbors—including nations that have their own missile capabilities (such as India), nations that might pursue their own missile forces (South Korea and Vietnam), and nations that might host U.S. missiles (Japan and the Philippines).9 3. Withdrawal. If the United States is unable to ensure Russia’s compliance, or is subsequently unable to multi-lateralize or amend the treaty, it would have little choice but to scuttle INF—either with Russia or unilaterally. Paradoxically, though, American willingness to entertain and prepare for the possibility of withdrawal may increase U.S. bargaining leverage in negotiating multi-lateralization or amendment. 4. Military Measures. To backstop diplomatic efforts and ensure the United States can negotiate from a position of strength on Russian compliance, multi-lateralization, and/or amendment of the treaty—while hedging against the failure of these diplomatic efforts—the United States will need to create military “breakout” options. Such options should make credible the prospect of swift U.S.—and potentially allied—deployments of conventionally-armed, forward-based intermediate-range missile forces. If the political decision were taken to withdraw from or amend the treaty, it would likely take several years to deploy INF-proscribed systems. The United States should, therefore, begin taking steps now to reduce the decision-to-deployment cycle, with an eye to reinforcing its negotiating leverage to maintain the viability of the INF regime or reducing its window of vulnerability if a political decision is taken to withdraw. The Department of Defense should undertake studies to examine how existing capabilities could be modified for new roles. It should assess the feasibility of employing a sea-launched missile for land-attack at ranges beyond 500 km, as well as the feasibility and cost to extend the range of MGM-164 ATACMS (which, if mated with sub-munitions, could execute a wide range of missions, including as a counter-battery system against enemy missile launch sites). A complementary step might be to evaluate the tradeoffs and relative costs of restarting production of Pershing II IRBMs as opposed to adapting existing missile systems or starting a completely new IRBM development program. Additionally, the Department of Defense should investigate development of a road-mobile, land-based variant of the US Navy’s Mark-41 or Mark-57 Vertical Launch System (VLS) and evaluate tradeoffs between adopting a common launch system across the Services versus modifying the Army’s existing M-270 Multiple Launch Rocket System or developing a new road-mobile transport-erector launcher (TEL) for IRBMs or GLCMs. At the same time, the Department of Defense should provide key allies with additional information about suspected Russian treaty violations and efforts to circumvent the INF Treaty, as well as information about other countries’ 500-5,500 km missile systems. Armed with such information, allies and partners in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia should be expected to increase pressure on Russia diplomatically to ensure its full compliance with the existing INF Treaty and on other missile-armed states to either join the INF Treaty or accept binding and verifiable limitations of their missile forces. The United States should also seek to explore the willingness of allies and partners to host forward-based U.S. intermediate-range missile forces on their territory if the treaty is amended or terminated. In some cases, allies could contribute to the development and production of missile systems (thereby defraying costs), field their own missile forces, or join U.S. forces in combined deep strike ground units. Importantly, allied testing, production and fielding of IRBM and GLCM systems could occur without violating the INF Treaty.

## ADV CP

#### Solves nothing – miscalc is NOT accidents – leaders choose not to use mechanisms like the counterplan in our scenarios – because of tech aversion, or they think the firebreak’s already crossed or disinfo-driven domesitc politics – that’s Hersman and Johnson

#### < 1AC Johnson 22--- FOR REFERENCE---ACTUAL HIGHLIGHTING MAY NOT MATCH >

...if one side considers...regime survival...tying-hands...or...use...or lose...then...other de-escalation measures will be unable to prevent...instability from intensifying...affects whether nuclear war remains...taboo...

#### Solves nothing – only a missile disarm treaty’s failure legitimates participation in nuclear missile counter-prolif

Cooper 13 [David A. Cooper, Professor and Chair of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, formerly served for nearly two decades as an official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, including as Director of Nonproliferation Policy and Director of Strategic Arms Control Policy, PhD political science and international relations, Australian National University, MA international affairs, Columbia University, “Globalizing Reagan’s INF Treaty Easier Done Than Said?” The Nonproliferation Review, 20(1), March 2013, pp.145-163, DOI 10.1080/10736700.2013.769373]

There may also be lingering worries that Global INF could undermine the MTCR. This was a valid and oft-expressed concern when the idea was initially proposed, but now represents far less of a risk, particularly for a declaratory scenario. When Global INF was first being considered in the late 1980s and early 1990s, nonproliferation export controls were new and controversial tools, particularly as applied to missiles by MTCR partners in the absence of any treaty prohibition. Likewise, the MTCR itself was small, immature, homogeneous (read Western), and the target of incessant questions about its international legitimacy. Furthermore, missiles with ranges less than 500 kilometers—like the notorious SCUD-B—were still the prevailing focus of efforts to nip missile proliferation in the bud. Today, by contrast, national export controls on missile technology are mandated by the UN Security Council, the MTCR just celebrated its silver jubilee as a large, diverse, and widely respected bulwark against proliferation, and, regrettably, the problem of missile proliferation has largely graduated to INF ranges and beyond. Under these changed conditions, a global missile treaty could arguably now reinforce MTCR by bolstering the political legitimacy of supply-side efforts against countries that decline to join. This in turn would provide an incentive for states without missile aspirations to join the new treaty as a way to burnish their nonproliferation bona fides, thus further sharpening the focus of supply-side attention on the holdouts.

#### Fails absent the plan’s catalyst – adding highlighting to 1AC Cooper

Cooper 21 [David A. Cooper, Professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, formerly served for nearly two decades as an official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, including as Director of Nonproliferation Policy and Director of Strategic Arms Control Policy, PhD political science and international relations, Australian National University, MA international affairs, Columbia University, “Long-Term Prospects for Nuclear Missile Controls,” Chapter 7, *Space and Missile Wars: What Awaits*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski, Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, 2021, ISBN 978-1-7371113-0-6, p.198-232] \*added [overshadowed]

The upshot is that none of the major nuclear powers, or nuclear aspirants, or countries that may prefer to leave the door open to acquiring long-range missiles for nuclear hedging purposes, have common or even similar incentives to cooperate on new missile controls. This makes any multilateral missile nonproliferation treaty about as far-fetched as a sweeping disarmament agreement among the major nuclear powers to reduce or eliminate their nuclear arsenals. The most realistic approach in these unpromising circumstances is to focus on preserving what can be preserved and seeking modest and/or narrow new measures to address the most urgent gathering perils. This may require bringing sustained international pressure to bear on reluctant nuclear powers like China—which has a mixed record in supporting nuclear nonproliferation and rejects participating in nuclear arms control out of hand—and other countries pursuing long-range missile programs. The most optimistic long-term goals would be to strengthen the existing missile nonproliferation regime while in parallel reinventing the bilateral Cold War nuclear arms control paradigm to fit today’s asymmetric tripolar-cum-multipolar nuclear arms race.

Strengthening Missile Nonproliferation

The international missile nonproliferation regime primarily comprises a pair of rather weak arrangements, one an informal supply-side mechanism to coordinate export controls and the other a feeble global norm against ballistic missile proliferation. The supply-side of this equation is a loose arrangement among thirty-five partner countries called the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The demand-side is a broad multilateral agreement open to all countries called the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (sometimes also known as the International Code of Conduct or ICOC). While neither of these arrangements are especially robust, the MTCR is by far the more effective of the two.539 The question is whether these existing missile nonproliferation pillars can be strengthened and if there are workable prospects for any new controls to augment them.

There is certainly some scope to strengthen the MTCR, although probably only on the margins. By contrast HCOC is likely too thin a reed to build upon as such. That said, it could provide a useful starting point as a venue in which to elevate the profile of missile nonproliferation. The best opportunity to bolster nuclear missile nonproliferation, however, may be to try to negotiate a new, narrowly focused, global nonproliferation regime to nip the longest-range hypersonic missiles in the bud. Finally, the looming proliferation challenges suggest the need to look beyond diplomatic solutions to bolster extended deterrence by the United States (and perhaps others) to provide a disincentive for certain non-nuclear great and regional powers such as Japan, South Korea, and Germany to pursue long-range missiles as a nuclear hedge. These are limited and imperfect options, but they are worth exploring.

Strengthening the MTCR is low hanging fruit. This export control arrangement arose from a US initiative with six of its close allies in the 1980s to coordinate national export controls on missiles and related dual-use technology.540 The regime comprises a set of agreed guidelines that provide for a "strong presumption of denial" on exports of any missile that can carry a 300kg payload to ranges above 500km and vigilance on exporting periodically updated lists of dualuse materials and technologies that could contribute to such missiles.541 The MTCR has worked reasonably well as far as it goes, but its long-term potential suffers from partners that are not always on the same political page. This is not surprising considering that it has expanded over the years to include countries that often do not see eye to eye with the United States and its allies on various issues, such as Russia, South Africa, and Brazil. Because the MTCR operates by strict consensus, any of these countries can block any proposal intended to tailor, expand, or strengthen the scope of controls. Moreover, enforcement relies on good faith interpretation and implementation by each partner country, which naturally invites potential differences. Even the United States itself has been reluctant to enforce some MTCR rules, although Washington argues that this is because inertia has prevented these from being updated to reflect current technological and national security realities.542 In effect the MTCR is a useful technical regime that is often stymied by political inertia and the looseness of its structure and rules.

One obvious workaround for some of these issues would be to retain the MTCR while in parallel the United States seeks to organize a smaller caucus of its closest and most important allies to see if there is scope for this core group to go further amongst themselves than the more unwieldy larger group is willing or able. This would amount to creating a new regime within a regime. Such an informal core group could meet initially at higher political levels to scope out areas for enhanced cooperation. These could include going beyond what is strictly required by the MTCR rules in order to impose stricter controls on certain missiles, for example stealthy, hypersonic, or longer-range systems. Core group members could implement these among themselves while working as a unified caucus to encourage to wider group to follow suit. A core group could also agree among themselves to subject countries of particular proliferation concern like Iran to additional scrutiny. They could also agree to enhanced implementation of the existing MTCR rules by subjecting especially sensitive export licenses to post-licensing verification through export license terms that require recipients to allow on-site inspections to guard against items being diverted to improper uses. This is an underutilized verification technique that currently only the United States implements in any significant way. None of these are new ideas.543 Nor are they especially dramatic. Instead, they are modest technical and process improvements. But that is the nature of multilateral export controls— the unglamorous workhorses of supply-side nonproliferation. It is also as much as the political traffic of thirty-five disparate partner countries is likely to bear. These incremental supply-side improvements could nonetheless be useful to impede the further diffusion of missile technology and in any case are more likely to bear fruit than anything on the normative side of the equation.

There is no global missile nonproliferation treaty. Nor is there likely to be one for the foreseeable future given the reliance of the NPT nuclear weapons states (and nuclear powers outside NPT) on long-range missiles, in conjunction with the reluctance of many other countries to agree to another discriminatory treaty along the lines of the NPT that provides for haves and have-nots. The closest thing to a demand-side global norm is the HCOC, but it is an utterly feckless arrangement that has no enforcement mechanisms and, in any case, does not actually prohibit much of anything and does not even address cruise or hypersonic missiles.544 It is at most a normative confidence building measure to demonstrate hortatory support for ballistic missile nonproliferation. For all of these conspicuous shortcomings though, it could still be used as a platform to stir international attention on missile proliferation. What is offers in this regard are annual meetings of a majority of the world’s countries pledging to work together against ballistic missile proliferation. Although HCOC now boasts 140 subscribing states, there are key countries that are conspicuous by their absence, including China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.545 Elevating the level of HCOC meetings could provide opportunities to advance ideas that would bring helpful political pressure to bear on these holdouts. Annual HCOC meetings have always been obscure bureaucratic affairs, but this need not be the case. The United States could easily up its representation in coordination with other key players to introduce ambitious proposals that align with the goals and purposes of the agreement.

One such initiative might be to work with Moscow to use HCOC as a vehicle to revive a 2007 joint US-Russian proposal to globalize the now defunct INF Treaty that called on all countries to join them in "renunciation of ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers, leading to the destruction of any such missiles, and the cessation of associated programs."546 The United States and Russia in effect would offer to rejoin the INF Treaty—with its basic terms non-negotiable—but only if others follow suit. To be clear this proposal would stand no chance of gaining traction given that China enjoys a huge advantage in these types of systems and that they represent the mainstay of the missile forces of countries like Iran, North Korea, and India. However, an actual treaty could be negotiated with willing countries by incorporating a provision into the relevant INF prohibitions that would require all countries with prohibited missiles or programs to join before the treaty enters into force, along the lines of a similar provision in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). This would allow the United States to adopt a ‘we’ll sign if you do’ stance with those already deploying systems that would be banned.547 This would set the stage for a long-term norm-building effort. By offering to reconstitute INF as a global missile nonproliferation and disarmament treaty, such an initiative could provide a rare point of alignment between Washington and Moscow against Beijing. It would afford Washington the nonproliferation high ground while shining the spotlight on China and others as the root problem, even as Washington and Moscow reconstitute their own post-INF intermediate missile forces. This is a longstanding idea that has never gone anywhere and there is a good chance that even Russia might now shy away for fear of straining its cozy relations with Beijing. Then again, Russia has more reason to be concerned about these Chinese missiles—which can hit it territory but not the United States—and this was initially a high-profile proposal by President Vladimir Putin that he might find difficult to disavow.548

## Deterrence

#### ZERO link uniqueness – IRMs won’t actually be nuclear – and Biden’s NOT a primacist – Cross-Apply Burt

Burt 21 [Richard Burt, President at Global Zero, lead negotiator of START, former Ambassador to Germany; and Jon Wolfsthal, Senior Advisor at Global Zero, former Senior Director for Arms Control at the National Security Council, helped support negotiation and approval of New START; “Why Joe Biden Needs to Go Big on Nuclear Arms Control,” The National Interest, 6-1-2021, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-joe-biden-needs-go-big-nuclear-arms-control-186642]

Perhaps the most challenging related issue is Moscow’s new intermediate-range, ground-based missiles, including the 9M729 missile that Moscow deployed in violation of the now-defunct 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Shorter-range, nuclear-armed missiles presented a danger to stability in the Cold War and the same is true today. With short flight times, these systems force leaders to make snap nuclear decisions that could cost millions of lives when time to gather information and make decisions can prevent disaster. The best outcome would be a renewed ban on all INF weapons, nuclear-armed and conventional, but Moscow’s violations of past deals may make that impossible. Instead, the United States and Russia (and possibly China) should consider a ban on nuclear-armed INF missiles alone, a step that can be verified. America has no plans to develop nuclear-armed INF systems. Russia’s stocks of nuclear 9M729s are thought to be quite small. China has a large arsenal of INF range missiles, but few are deployed with nuclear weapons. While Russia’s offer to not deploy INF missiles in and around Europe is worth pursuing, accepting such a plan could put U.S. allies in Asia at greater risk, just as similar proposals in the 1980s would have done. If an outright ban on nuclear INF missiles is not possible, strict numerical limits and ensuring any such systems are not co-located with conventional missiles would be preferable and more predictable than one where all such systems are unconstrained.

#### Russia only reciprocates – flips the link

Charap 19 [Samuel Charap, senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, former senior advisor to the undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security and on the Secretary’s Policy Planning Staff, covering Russia and Eurasia at the U.S. Department of State, “The Demise of the INF Implications for Russia-China Relations,” CT-507, RAND Corporation, testimony submitted 4-9-2019 to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission as a statement for the record for the hearing 3-21-2019, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT500/CT507/RAND\_CT507.pdf]

Russia has publicly stated that it will not deploy any future INF missiles in a particular regional theater unless the United States does so first.22 (One should interpret that statement to exclude the SSC-8, the Russian missile system that the United States believes to be inconsistent with the INF, which is already deployed and which Russia continues to insist is not subject to the treaty’s provisions). If the United States follows through on its plans to deploy ground-based missiles in the Asia-Pacific and Russia responds in kind, China is likely to be more concerned with these U.S. missiles than with any Russian retaliatory deployments, assuming relations between the countries are broadly similar to what they are today. If the current cooperative climate of Russia-China relations persists, there are consultative mechanisms in place that could allow Moscow and Beijing to avoid public friction over such deployments and to mitigate substantive concerns behind the scenes. If Russia were not to follow through on its pledge and instead deploy INF missiles (including to Asia) without a first U.S. move and without prior consultation with Beijing, relations could deteriorate. However, such a development seems highly unlikely.

#### INF have no added value, even if Russia were to deploy – strategic nukes, countermeasures and conventional superiority solve

Kühn et al 17 [Ulrich Kühn PhD, Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Fellow with the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg, Germany; and Anna Péczeli, PhD, Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University, Research Fellow at the Centre for Strategic and Defence Studies, National University of Public Service, Hungary; “Russia, NATO, and the INF Treaty,” Strategic Studies Quarterly, 11(1), Spring 2017, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-11\_Issue-1/Peczeli.pdf]

While responding in kind to the deployment option might sound logical at first glance, it has a number of obvious downsides, even from a military point of view. First, even if Russia were to deploy a limited number of INF systems—say on the order of 50 to 100 missiles—such a deployment would not immediately alter the overall military balance between NATO and Russia, given the general conventional superiority of NATO. It would also not constitute a completely new type of threat because of the existing Russian ability to modify its strategic nuclear forces. In addition, the United States already deploys conventionally armed intermediate-range cruise missiles from the sea and on aircraft, which are perfectly capable of reassuring allies and protecting US military bases overseas.80 Even during Cold War times, US leaders saw only limited military value in the deployment of ground-launched intermediate-range ballistic missiles, and they developed several other military capabilities to protect their allies. Therefore, reintroducing such weapons would have very little added military value.81 The United States not only has plenty of other means to reassure its allies, but it also has the necessary military capabilities (for example missile defense and aerial detection systems) to offset a potential Russian GLCM deployment.82

#### That means plan’s key to deterrence:

#### 1 – enables forward basing

#### 2 – resists crisis coercion

#### 3 – preserves allied cohesion

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Edelman et al 22 [Eric S. Edelman, Counselor at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), formerly served in senior positions at the Departments of State and Defense as well as the White House, including as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, U.S. ambassador to Finland in the Clinton administration and Turkey in the Bush administration; Josh **Chang**, analyst at CSBA, MA Security Studies; and Tyler **Hacker**, analyst at CSBA, formerly at the Congressional Research Service, MA Security Studies, Georgetown University; “Arming America’s Allies: Historical Lessons for Implementing a Post-INF Treaty Missile Strategy,” The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2022, https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/CSBA8323\_(Arming\_Americas\_Allies)\_web-9-1-22.pdf]

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019, then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper indicated that he believed it would be useful to deploy conventional intermediate-range ballistic missiles in the Indo-Pacific region. As he notes in his memoir, his statement caught the attention of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) leadership in Beijing. It also, however, elicited initial statements from allied leaders, including in Australia, indicating minimal enthusiasm for the idea of hosting U.S. ballistic missiles, despite the fact that he was talking about the development by the U.S. and its allies of conventional ballistic missiles and their deployment in East Asia.1 Prominent critics argued that:

It remains to be seen whether the Pentagon could find a place to base intermediate-range missiles in East Asia outside the U.S. territory of Guam. Despite concerns about China’s growing military power and more assertive behavior in the region, allies such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines aren’t exactly rushing to host them. Following Esper’s comments, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison stated that basing intermediate-range missiles has “not been asked of us,” is “not being considered,” and has “not been put to us.” “I think I can rule a line under that,” he added. And a South Korean defense ministry spokesperson said, “We have not internally reviewed the issue [of basing U.S. intermediate-range missiles] and have no plan to do so.2

Moreover, a recent RAND study has also concluded that the “likely receptivity to hosting such systems is very low as long as current domestic political conditions and regional security trends hold.”3

These systems, in fact, should be considered much less controversial than the nuclear deployments that the United States undertook in the Cold War. Having said that, however, it is difficult to completely disentangle conventional missile deployments from nuclear weapons capabilities, not because of U.S. intent but because these systems are inherently dual-capable. That is certainly true of the PRC’s deployments of medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles as well as Russia’s deployments of SS-26 short-range ballistic missiles to Kaliningrad (and its development of capabilities that violated the INF Treaty’s range limits). Although the United States is currently developing conventional intermediate-range missiles—and we are not currently advocating nuclear deployments in the Rings of Fire companion report—the fact remains that Chinese and Russian systems are either already nuclear-capable or could be put to use as nuclear delivery systems. Moreover, Russian and China will undoubtedly object (indeed, one can already hear such objections) to any U.S. deployments of missile capabilities on the grounds that they are dual-capable. This reality guarantees that such deployments will arouse domestic political controversy in both the United States and prospective host nations.4

The United States’ historical experience with the deployment of controversial military capabilities on the territory of its allies, including missiles in both Europe and Asia, provides us with an opportunity to draw some lessons about the policy and diplomatic challenges involved. No historical analogy is perfect, and the fact that the Cold War experience was largely, but not solely, a question of nuclear weapons means that one must be even more circumspect than normal in attempting to draw useful “lessons from the past.” Nonetheless, as Mark Twain is reputed to have said, “history doesn’t repeat itself, but it rhymes.” Although the deployment of conventional missiles should be less controversial than the nuclear capabilities of the Cold War era, revisiting those earlier episodes is still valuable. After all, the initial introduction of those capabilities took place over the first decade or so of the last time the United States was engaged in a great power competition, and the final deployment of capabilities to Europe came at the tail end of that competition and indeed contributed to the end of the Cold War itself. Examining that experience can allow us to derive a better understanding of alliance management, capability development, and political leadership to inform the current debate about medium and intermediate-range missile capabilities. Moreover, the historical record shows that exogenous shocks to the international system can lead to rapid changes in threat perceptions and the broader security outlook of allies. Having capabilities in hand to deploy and manage allied political concerns in a deft and skillful manner can make possible in the future things that are considered impossible today.5

This report consists of four chapters that constitute mini-case studies of U.S. deployment of controversial military capabilities (including both nuclear weapons and their means of delivery) to allied territory in both Europe and East Asia during the Cold War.

The first chapter revisits the question of how NATO became a nuclear alliance with forward-deployed nuclear weapons systems throughout Europe, expanding from no weapons to some 3,000 over the course of five years.

The second chapter examines how two of the U.S. bilateral security alliances in East Asia allowed for the deployment of both ballistic missiles and associated nuclear warheads during roughly the same period of time that the NATO alliance was becoming a multilateral nuclear alliance.

The fourth chapter revisits the better-known story of the 1979 NATO Double-Track Decision and INF deployments in the early 1980s that ultimately led to the conclusions of the INF Treaty in 1987.

Finally, the conclusion seeks to draw some relevant diplomatic and politico-military lessons from the historical cases that can inform policymakers’ considerations about today’s geopolitical environment in the Indo-Pacific and Europe.

CHAPTER 2

NATO Becomes a Nuclear Alliance

NATO was not born a nuclear alliance but became one in the wake of multiple strategic and political shocks, including Stalin’s blockade of Berlin, the detonation of a nuclear device by the Soviet Union in late 1949, the eruption of the Korean War in June 1950, and the clear failure of the European members of the Alliance (who were reconstructing their shattered economies and societies) to generate the conventional military power that most observers believed would be necessary to deter Soviet aggression. American policymakers were forced to engage in a large military buildup and contemplate a large-scale and expensive conventional military presence in Europe. The Eisenhower Administration instead sought to offset Soviet conventional power with an asymmetric deployment of relatively less expensive nuclear forces as the United States moved from an era of nuclear scarcity to one of nuclear plenty as economies of scale and more efficient production of nuclear weapons enabled the United States to offer a capability that it could deploy on allied territory. Winning allied assent to the deployment was not assured but became a major, game-changing Cold War accomplishment of the Eisenhower Administration.6

After the Second World War, the United States briefly possessed a nuclear monopoly that initially bred complacency among national security leaders. As historian Melvyn Leffler has noted, “modest estimates of the Soviets’ ability to wage war against the United States generated the widespread assumption that the Soviets would refrain from military aggression and seek to avoid war.”7 The U.S. nuclear arsenal remained small, and although several early war planning exercises suggested that a U.S. air atomic offensive would not suffice to defeat the Soviet Union in a war in Europe, U.S. officials believed that the fact of the U.S monopoly would be sufficient to deter the USSR even as concerns mounted about Soviet policy in 1947 and early 1948. This complacency was shattered by the Soviet blockade of the western sector of Berlin in June 1948. As part of the U.S. response to the Soviet moves, B-29 aircraft—which were notionally meant to carry nuclear weapons—were deployed to the United Kingdom (although the aircraft were not carrying nuclear weapons, nor had they undergone the modifications which would have allowed them to do so). It was the first use of deployment of weapons systems as an implied nuclear threat; although it was primarily a bluff, it prompted the National Security Council to consider, for the first time, how the use of nuclear weapons in conflict would be managed. NSC 30 established the President as the national command authority when it determined that “The decision as to the employment of atomic weapons in the event of war is to be made by the Chief Executive when he considers such decision to be required.”8

This first phase of nuclear deployment to the United Kingdom, which consisted of bombers using British airbases, was initially accomplished on the basis of informal, military-to-military understandings which, over a decade, gave way to more formal understandings and quite close collaboration between U.S. and U.K. governments, although there has been some controversy about how much British civilian leaders were aware of the specific undertakings and whether or not Britain gave up any role in nuclear decision-making.9

The Berlin crisis had barely been resolved when a series of geopolitical shocks once again revised U.S. strategic thinking. The Soviets tested a nuclear weapon in the late summer of 1949, the Kuomintang government in China fell and Mao Tse-Tung declared the People’s Republic of China in October 1949, and in June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The impact of the Soviet atomic test had prompted a review of U.S. national security policy led by Paul Nitze of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff. The resulting document, NSC 68, called for a rapid buildup of U.S. conventional and nuclear capabilities. After some initial hesitations over the budgetary implications, the crisis of the Korean War impelled Truman to sign off on a tripling of defense spending and an expansion of U.S. nuclear capabilities.10

Although Secretary of State Dean Acheson had notably not included South Korea inside the U.S Defense Perimeter in early 1950, the United States had strong motivations to defend it. U.S. commitments to Europe had only recently been enshrined in the North Atlantic Treaty, a sharp departure from more than 100 years of U.S. traditional wariness of formal alliances, which raised doubts about U.S. reliability. Meanwhile U.S. officials were concerned that the Soviets would use the hostilities on the Korean Peninsula to distract the United States from Soviet activity in Western Europe. Some historians and political scientists have argued the Korean War was really a war to protect NATO.11 As Samuel Wells notes,

during the war in Korea, Dean Acheson kept the government focused on the priority of rebuilding the defenses and increasing the security of Western Europe… He orchestrated the transformation of the Alliance from a loose organization for political reassurance into a functioning defensive Alliance with an international staff led by an American as supreme commander and dedicated forces, including six divisions of US troops stationed in Europe…. he brought about the admission of Greece and Turkey to NATO and the acquisition of basing rights for Strategic Air Command bombers in Europe, Turkey, and North Africa.12 Access to these bases would be crucial for carrying out the atomic air offensive that military planners believed would be necessary to fight and win a war against the Soviet Union.13

The end of the Korean War coincided with a renewed concern for the security of Europe as it became clear that European would not be able to generate sufficient conventional combat power to meet the obligations that they had set for themselves in NATO under the so-called “Lisbon Goals” adopted in early 1952. Moreover, U.S. nuclear weapons would be needed to offset Soviet conventional advantages in a potential European war. These concerns about putting NATO on a sound footing for the long-term coincided with U.S. internal deliberations on developing what President Eisenhower termed a strategy for the “long haul” that would not undermine the health of the U.S. economy and turn the nation into a garrison state. Eisenhower called for a review of U.S. national security strategy as he looked past the end of the Korean War and sought to put the nation’s defenses on a sustainable fiscal footing in the face of the inflation that had followed the Truman buildup and the Korean War. The review also coincided with the creation of new nuclear capabilities that initially appeared to be useful for limited nuclear use on the battlefield. The review concluded with the elaboration of the Eisenhower’s Administration’s “New Look” defense policy (based on the notion of “massive retaliation” by U.S. nuclear forces against Soviet aggression) and the subsequent adoption by NATO of a “New Approach” to defense, predicated on first use of nuclear weapons to blunt a Soviet conventional assault on Europe.14

Even before the Eisenhower Administration had entered office, NATO, with a strong push by the UK, had been moving in the direction of predicating its defense on nuclear weapons. Ike himself had made it clear before he departed as Supreme Allied Commander for NATO to run for President that if new nuclear capabilities for battlefield use were available, he intended to use them in his planning for war. In late 1952, NATO formally recognized that it might need to incorporate nuclear weapons into its war plans when the Military Committee adopted strategic guidance MC 14/1, noting that:

All types of weapons, without exception, might be used by either side. It has been assessed by sources with knowledge of weapons of mass destruction that, although by the period 1953–54 their effect on the conduct of war will not dictate a need to reduce current NATO force goals, greater availability of such weapons and increased delivery capability during the period 1954–56 may then necessitate re-evaluation of the requirements for a successful defense of the NATO area.15

Luckily, although the 1952 Presidential election might have disrupted the process, Eisenhower’s election ensured a great deal of continuity in thinking and policy on the role of nuclear weapons in transatlantic relations. Indeed, part of Ike’s motivation for running was to ensure continued U.S. support for the alliance and an enduring transatlantic strategy.16

Eisenhower, who had begun the process of developing NATO’s strategy before leaving Europe, arranged to change the nation’s military leadership as President, and put in place processes both at home and at NATO that came back together with adoption of MC48 by NATO in 1954. The underpinning of the strategy, as summed up by Marc Trachtenberg, was “that Europe could be defended, even with numerically inferior forces, provided a massive air attack was launched at the outset of the war.”17 The “Solarium” review of U.S. policy was completed in 1953, with the adoption of NSC 162/2 in October 1953 which concluded that “within the free world, only the United States can provide and maintain, for a period of years to come, the atomic capability to counterbalance Soviet atomic power. Thus, sufficient atomic weapons and effective means of delivery are indispensable for U.S security.” But the document stressed that the United States required allies to be able to execute this strategy.

The effective use of U.S. strategic air power against the USSR will require overseas bases on foreign territory for some years to come. Such bases will continue indefinitely to be an important additional element of U.S. strategic air capability and to be essential to the conduct of the military operations on the Eurasian continent in case of general war. The availability of such bases and their use by the United States in case of need will depend, in most cases on the consent and cooperation of the nations where they are located. Such nations will assume the risks entailed only if convinced that their own security will thereby be best served.

The importance of getting the allies on board was particularly ticklish since discussion of atomic weapons use could be politically difficult for allies. It was, wrote Paul Nitze, in early 1953 a subject of the “utmost delicacy.”18

Such concerns put a high premium on Secretary of State John Foster Dulles’s efforts to socialize these ideas with the European Allies. This was an undertaking that began with his report to a closed session of the allied Foreign Ministers on April 23, 1954, where he welcomed the opportunity to clarify U.S thinking on the role of nuclear weapons in the “free world system of defense against the Soviet Union.” Dulles began by emphasizing that the “primary purpose of the United States…. was to deter aggression and prevent the outbreak of war.” He went on to argue that offsetting “the great concentration of military power within the Soviet bloc” could only be accomplished with “the integration of effective atomic means within our overall capability.” Dulles was explicit that “we and our allies have placed great reliance upon new weapons to compensate in part for the numerical disparity between NATO and Soviet forces.” Dulles stressed that the U.S. would consult closely with allies and “to cooperate with them fully…that is the essence of collective security.” In December, the North Atlantic Council approved MC48, which, as Dulles reported to President Eisenhower, codified that “if an all-out Soviet attack occurred, whether atomic or otherwise, the NATO response would be a defense employing atomic weapons.” That fundamental NATO strategy of using nuclear weapons to repel massive conventional aggression in Europe has remained in place until this day.19

As Marc Trachtenberg has noted, “if the Americans dominated the process” of developing MC48, “that does not mean that the European accepted it reluctantly. One can almost say the opposite.”20 The U.S. provided the basic military capabilities—gravity bombs and soon nuclear artillery—and ultimately framed the concepts adopted by the alliance, but the role of other allies was also important at the critical juncture when NATO became a nuclear alliance. British strategic thinking in some ways prefigured but certainly paralleled the approaches that evolved from the Eisenhower policy review of 1953. Chief Air Marshall Sir John Slessor articulated those views and proselytized them with American officials. There is little doubt that the British influenced but did not determine the outcome of U.S. deliberations and helped make the sale for reliance on U.S.-provided nuclear weapons inside NATO. The French also largely shared the assumptions that underpinned the NATO “new approach.” U.S. decisions to increase the nuclear arsenal’s size and develop nuclear artillery and short-range rocket launched systems enabled the allies to reach a consensus on nuclear strategy and build political cohesion in the alliance.21The nuclearization of Europe followed the adoption of MC48 with nuclear weapons deployed not only to Britain but to West Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Greece so that by the end of the decade, there were some 3,000 U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe. The initial deployments to the UK and FRG in 1954-55 were composed of gravity bombs, artillery shells for 280 mm guns, solid propellant Honest John rockets, and liquid-fueled short-range Corporal ballistic missiles, as well as Matador cruise missiles. As technology matured, developing missiles of both intercontinental (ICBMs) and intermediate ranges (IRBMs) became a priority, despite inter-service rivalries and jockeying over control of programs. After the Suez crisis, the possibility of sharing IRBMs with the United Kingdom seemed a reasonable salve for Britain’s wounded feelings. The Soviet launch of Sputnik turned the prospect of IRBMs for other European partners into a more urgent alliance concern. Ultimately Thor IRBMs were deployed to the United Kingdom, and Jupiter IRBMs to Italy and Turkey.22

One should not exaggerate how easy it was for the Eisenhower Administration to win NATO’s commitment to a strategy based on nuclear weapons and then win the acquiescence of allied governments to deploy weapons systems in such large numbers on the European continent. The American and allied achievement is even more impressive because, as Frank Gavin has pointed out, the strategy and deployments that NATO adopted were a radical break with the past and entailed no small amount of risk. Moreover, U.S. policymakers had to overcome enormous obstacles to accomplish their ends. First, domestic legislation (the McMahon Act of 1946) made it enormously complicated for the U.S. government to share basic information about nuclear weapons with allies. Issues of classification made it extremely difficult to discuss nuclear strategy and deployments in public and as noted above discussing these issues in public was enormously sensitive. As Dulles forewarned the alliance in 1954, “it was somewhat unpleasant to discuss the use of atomic weapons” in particular because it “did not lend itself to useful public expression.”23 Inevitably, some citizens of NATO member states (with no small amount of encouragement from Moscow) organized and demonstrated against the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe.24

The United States managed to navigate all these difficulties, primarily by making capabilities available that allies found useful for purposes of deterring the USSR. American policymakers also consulted closely with allies, listening to their concerns and allaying them where they could. Americans pursued difficult and tortuous negotiations with allies to develop dual-key procedures and created mechanisms for intensive and ongoing consultations. For several years, the United States doggedly pursued proposals for nuclear sharing within the alliance before a consensus developed that the established consultative mechanisms were sufficient to give Europeans a voice in NATO nuclear policymaking:

NATO’s dependence on nuclear weapons resulted from “the belief that deterrence had to be based on a plausible defense concept. Forward defense was credible only if NATO compensated for its numerical inferiority in relation to the Soviets by including into its concept the technical superiority of US nuclear power. A commitment to massive retaliation in the case of war made it easier for the United States and for its European partners to compromise on burden sharing. At the same time, given US quantitative and qualitative nuclear superiority, massive retaliation—at least from a US perspective—made more strategic sense in the early 1950s than any other option.25

Despite all the uncertainties and the drawbacks of reliance on massive retaliation with bombers, artillery, and missiles, it managed to deter Soviet aggression in Europe during the Cold War.26

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS

The Eisenhower Administration could not have succeeded in winning the alliance’s agreement on massive retaliation as a strategy and the resulting deployment of ballistic missiles, artillery and aircraft as well as their nuclear warheads and munitions if the allies had not seen it in their interest to do so. Moreover, acquiescence by the allies wasn’t spontaneous, it required a clear strategy that filled capability gaps and an effort to sell allies on that notion that failure to remedy the shortfalls would undermine NATO’s strategy. In the end Dulles had to persuade the allies than an insurance policy of deterrence would be cheaper in the long run than the cost of war provoked by Russian perceptions of western weakness. The fact that the U.S. had made the investments in developing both the nuclear weapons and their means of delivery undoubtedly—creating ready-made options—facilitated host nation decisions to accept basing of U.S. systems on their sovereign territory. Patient, persistent, and flexible diplomacy in the service of alliance management allowed the U.S. to reach creative solutions to the problems and disagreement that inevitably arose along the way.

The basic lessons of the NATO nuclearization case were:

• The need for allied involvement in and agreement on the deployment decisions,

• The importance of fitting weapons deployments into a clearly articulated strategy and a persuasive explanation of the capability gaps that the deployments needed to fill for the strategy to be successful,

• The necessity of persuading allies that, in the long run, deterrence was cheaper than war, and

• The value of ready-made options—capabilities developed by the U.S. that were ready for deployment.

All of these takeaways would influence U.S. policymakers who, in short order, were confronted with the challenge of making extended deterrence a workable policy with U.S. bilateral treaty allies in the Far East.

CHAPTER 3

Deployment of Nuclear Weapons to East Asia and South Korea

Much as the United States found itself deploying nuclear weapons capabilities to Europe in the 1950s, a series of politico-military crises in East Asia prompted the United States to introduce similar cutting-edge military capabilities in the region. The deployment of nuclear-capable missiles and associated warheads to Taiwan and permanently stationed nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula offers some interesting parallels and cautionary notes as we consider the contemporary strategic circumstances in the Indo-Pacific region.

During the Korean War, the U.S. government considered using nuclear weapons on several occasions—and may have used nuclear threats to speed the armistice negotiations to an agreement—but never actually deployed nuclear weapons to the Republic of Korea. After the war, the United States sought to shore up its deterrent posture in the Far East, where the PRC continued to threaten the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the threat of North Korean aggression remained a concern despite the successful conclusion of the armistice agreement in 1953. Moreover, the French effort to preserve its colonial position in Vietnam had led to the Geneva Conference in 1954, which ended the seven years of warfare in Southeast Asia, divided the country at the 17th parallel, allowed a communist regime to take root in North Vietnam and called for unification between North and South based on free elections to be held two years later.27

Eisenhower and Dulles needed to thread a policy needle in East Asia in the aftermath of the Korean armistice and Indochina settlement. The two American leaders hoped to reinforce the U.S. deterrent posture in the region and to prevent any additional efforts at territorial aggrandizement by communist forces in the Far East without running the risk of the U.S. into another land war in Asia. They also did not want a crisis in the Far East to disrupt the process of bringing Germany into the Atlantic Alliance.

The Korean armistice was followed quickly by a series of disconcerting crises in Asia that policymakers feared would raise questions about U.S. credibility with its allies in both the Far East and Europe. In the first instance, this meant discouraging any effort by the PRC to seize Taiwan while—at the same time—not allowing Chiang Kai-Shek to draw the U.S. into a broader conflict. Throughout this period, there had been contention over the offshore Islands of Dachen, Quemoy, and Matsu, which were extremely close to the coast of mainland China but controlled by the Republic of China government. The islands had negligible strategic significance, but Chiang Kai-Shek valued them because they served as a jumping-off point for harassing operations against the mainland, and since the U.S. continued to value the Nationalist regime, the offshore islands, much as Berlin in Europe, took on a symbolic importance well beyond their intrinsic strategic value. Less than a year and a half after the Korean Armistice and just months after the Geneva Conference, the PRC began shelling the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu, igniting almost a decade of on and off again crises.28

As the early signs of an impending crisis emerged during the Geneva Conference, Secretary Dulles was filled with foreboding. He told his British counterpart, Anthony Eden, “we might be said to be living over a volcano.” At the outset of the crisis, there was a great deal of ambiguity about the degree to which the United States should commit itself to the defense of the offshore islands. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) advocated the potential use of nuclear weapons to defend them, but President Eisenhower was more reserved. Dulles wanted to maintain ambiguity about the defense of the islands. Still, fearful that Chinese territorial gains in East Asia would damage U.S. standing, he supported “a firm policy, including military action, without committing the United States to the long-term defense of the offshore islands.” The crisis waxed and waned into 1955. Dulles and Eisenhower worked patiently with the UN, Congress, and the Nationalist government to manage the crisis. To propitiate concerns from Chiang Kai-Shek, Dulles agreed to negotiate a mutual security Treaty along the lines of the one agreed to with the Republic of Korea. This agreement was something the Nationalist government had been seeking for some time. Dulles, according to historian Warren Cohen, “exploited Chiang’s desire for an alliance to obtain a modicum of control.” When the PRC escalated attacks on the offshore islands in response, Dulles and Eisenhower decided to make the U.S. commitment to defend the islands less ambiguous and, through careful consultation with the bipartisan congressional leadership, won legislative support via a Joint Resolution of the Congress that authorized the use of force to defend Taiwan and the Pescadores as well as areas under Taipei’s control. Quemoy and Matsu were not mentioned by name, but the legislative language provided the Administration with sufficient policy cover. As Warren Cohen has noted, during the crisis (and its sequel in 1958), the U.S. provided both the logistical support and threats of the use of force (potentially including nuclear weapons) that ultimately gave the PRC pause and led to a return to diplomacy.29

The prospect that the use of nuclear weapons would be necessary during the 1954-55 crisis was seen as a possibility at the outset and became an increasing concern for Eisenhower and Dulles as the crisis progressed. Dulles worried that war over the offshore islands would become a general war with the PRC that would ultimately require nuclear weapons use, which would be consistent with and a demonstration of the Administration’s “New Look” defense strategy and the doctrine of massive retaliation. Speculation during internal deliberations about the use of atomic weapons gave way, as the crisis played out, to implicit and some explicit threats to use nuclear weapons in public statements and the movement of nuclear weapons to Okinawa. In fact, at one point, Eisenhower urged Dulles to mention the possible use of nuclear weapons to resolve the crisis in one of his public reports to the nation on his diplomacy in the Far East. As Appu K. Soman has pointed out, however, these threats proved to be a “double-edged sword” since Dulles worried that both international and domestic public opinion would recoil at the prospect of using such weapons to defend the militarily insignificant offshore islands. The United States, however, now had a treaty commitment to defend Taiwan, and the fate of the islands loomed large in the psychology of Chiang Kai-Shek and the ROC leadership in Taipei.30

As the crisis settled down, United States Pacific Command pursued the deployment of nuclear-capable MATADOR cruise missiles (initially without their nuclear warheads). The MATADORs, according to the U.S. Embassy in Taipei, “would have substantial psychological value as deterrent to Communist invasion plans” and “would provide effective means counter-attack mainland airfields in event of Communist strikes on Taiwan.” The State Department believed that the deployment “would serve as a reminder other nations that the United States is determined to stand by its commitments to the Government of the Republic of China. This would hearten our Asian Allies in their resistance to Communist expansion and would aid in the achievement of our policy objectives in the region.” During the Taiwan Straits crisis in 1958, the presence of these missiles made the U.S. extended deterrent guarantee for Taiwan far more credible than it had been in the earlier 1954 crisis.31

The presence of the MATADORs was particularly useful since, in the wake of the Soviet Sputnik launch in 1957, President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles were especially loath to give the appearance of appeasing the PRC when and if a second crisis over the offshore Islands erupted. U.S. decision-makers hoped to signal their intent to defend Taiwan to “repel” any Chinese probe. As the New York Times reported, the deployment of the MATADORs was “adding to rather than creating a new ‘atomic punch’ for U.S. military forces in the Far East.” Because they were dual use, they provided an additional capability for U.S. forces to retaliate against PRC attacks. A joint U.S.-ROK-ROC exercise that included the MATADOR units sent an especially powerful signal. At the end of the day, the Eisenhower Administration’s effort at nuclear deterrence appears to have been successful, at least in part, because visible capabilities had been deployed to back up U.S. deterrent threats. The success, however, may have also triggered the PRC’s determination to develop its own nuclear weapons.32

Deployment of nuclear weapons to South Korea

After the Armistice, to remove any ambiguity about the U.S. defense commitment to South Korea, the two sides concluded a Mutual Security Treaty (that served as a model for the treaty with the Republic of China), and the United States deployed combat forces to serve as a “trip-wire” force while also providing training and equipment to South Korea’s military forces. The post-Armistice relationship between the Eisenhower Administration and the South Korean government in Seoul was extremely fraught. American officials were gravely concerned that South Korean President Syngman Rhee would attempt to reunify the Peninsula by force, thereby violating the Armistice agreement and dragging the United States into a renewed military conflict. American policymakers were also interested in reinforcing their ability to deter aggression by North Korea while at the same time reducing defense expenditures and security assistance costs for support of ROK forces in keeping with President Eisenhower’s “New Look” strategy. A few years after the conclusion of the Mutual Security Treaty, Pentagon officials concluded that this would require the “modernization” of U.S. military forces, including the introduction of nuclear weapons—the Honest John shortrange surface-to-surface and 280mm nuclear artillery.33

There were several controversial issues surrounding the larger question of deploying nuclear weapons. The Armistice terms negotiated at Panmunjom in 1953 precluded each side from introducing “new weapons” onto the Peninsula, and this provision of the Armistice, among others, was being monitored by the Neutral Nations Supervisory Committee (NNSC), which was composed of representatives from Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The NNSC was controversial from the outset, and there were suspicions both that some of the NNSC members were reporting information to the DPRK and that the USSR and PRC were reinforcing North Korea outside the view of the NNSC.

When the Department of Defense raised the issue of introducing nuclear weapons inside the U.S. Government (USG), it was viewed as an opportunity to reduce U.S. forces and the cost of ROK forces (which were drawing heavily on U.S. resources). The “modernized” weapons would offset the impact of the withdrawal and minimize the opposition of South Korean President Syngman Rhee to both the prospective U.S. withdrawals and ROK drawdown. The State Department objected that the modernization steps would violate the Armistice terms (according to State’s lawyers), arouse controversy not just among Communist and neutral nations but also U.S. allies, and that the United States lacked compelling evidence that the Soviets had introduced nuclear weapons into North Korea. Moreover, they warned that this step might provoke the USSR to provide the PRC with nuclear weapons.34

After a year plus of interagency debate, the U.S. government decided to abrogate the restrictive elements of the Armistice agreement on the grounds that the shifting military balance had created a dangerous situation on the Peninsula, but it held off on immediately deploying nuclear weapons. Secretary of State Dulles strongly resisted, arguing that the deployment of nuclear weapons would provide fodder for Communist propaganda, raise hackles elsewhere in Asia, and, at a minimum, if necessary, should be used as a bargaining chip with President Rhee to win his assent to drawing down ROK forces. The Pentagon argued the modernization of U.S. forces required nuclear weapons to prevent the DPRK from overrunning US and ROK forces in a renewed conflict (as they had done in 1950). President Eisenhower, after some initial hesitation and an unsuccessful effort to bargain with President Rhee, ultimately broke the interagency deadlock, and the first U.S. nuclear weapons were deployed in South Korea early in 1958. The arsenal of nuclear weapons on the Peninsula grew more diverse in type, including short-range missiles, artillery, demolition mines, and gravity bombs, and increased in number to a peak of around 950 warheads.35

The introduction of nuclear weapons in South Korea ultimately did not cause nearly as much regional upheaval as Secretary Dulles and others had feared—at least in the short term. In part, the United States avoided raising major concerns through the low-key manner in which the deployment was handled and more than 20 years of a “neither confirm nor deny” policy that maintained some ambiguity about the issue. It was only in 1975 that Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger implicitly acknowledged the presence of theatre nuclear weapons in South Korea. The deployment required strong U.S. Presidential leadership but was accomplished despite resistance from an allied leader, and given the absence of multilateral security institutions, the degree of difficulty was significantly lower than the 1979 dualtrack decision in Europe discussed below. The evidence suggest that despite the internal and diplomatic difficulties, the deployment of U.S nuclear weapons and the means of delivery contributed significantly to the success of U.S. extended deterrence in East Asia until they were withdrawn in 1991, by which time South Korea had become one of the most prosperous countries in the world with a much-strengthened capability for self-defense (albeit reinforced by continued U.S. military presence and C2 capabilities).

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS

These East Asia cases from the Cold War underscore that, as was the case in Europe, allied desires were crucial in facilitating deployments, but in the Far East, there was another factor at play. U.S. deployments were made to demonstrate commitment and to convince allies of U.S. determination to make extended deterrence work. These essential steps in in underpinning the bilateral U.S. security treaties also served the purpose of calming U.S. allies and helping the Washington policymakers control the impulses of South Korean and ROC leaders, who American decision-makers feared might drag the U.S. into a conflict. These deployments and treaties fit the pattern of U.S. security assurances serving as a restraint on U.S. allies in East Asia.36

The deployments also fit neatly into a clear U.S. strategy—the New Look—that Eisenhower and Dulles had already articulated to both the American public and allies around the world. It helped that the U.S. capabilities served, as they did in the European case, a clear deterrent purpose and unambiguous targets—the PRC and airfields and facilities from which it could launch attacks on Taiwan.

The availability of U.S. developed capabilities, including the short- and medium-range missiles deployed to both the ROC and ROK, was indispensable in highlighting the U.S. determination to maintain the peace and stability of East Asia in the early Cold War. Deployment required determined U.S leadership, careful alliance management, and constant diplomatic effort across the region. These efforts paid off as neither of the crises in the Taiwan Strait led to war. All of these factors would also play a crucial role in what is perhaps the most dramatic and visible U.S deployment of missile capabilities during the Cold War in the 1970s and 1980s—the 1979 Dual Track decision by NATO to deploy the Pershing IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) that led to the negotiation of the INF Treaty in the first place.

CHAPTER 4

The Euromissile Crisis and the INF Treaty

Strategic dilemmas about the coordination of a joint allied response to an adversary’s missile deployments were clearly on display during the so-called Euromissile Crisis.37 During the 1970s and 1980s, the United States and its NATO partners faced newly deployed Soviet SS-20 intermediate-range missiles and struggled to contain the threat from these weapons. Many of the concerns that influenced U.S. and allied decision-making during this period, including the credibility of U.S. defense guarantees and internal divisions within NATO, parallel issues that Washington faces in contemporary Asia and Europe. Today Chinese missile deployments are largely conventional, although its missiles are dual use. Russia has also deployed dual-use medium-range missiles that can range much of Europe, although many of these are presumed to carry nuclear warheads. Although contemporary circumstances are in many ways more complex than the experience of the late Cold War, a close examination of the Euromissile Crisis, the emergence of NATO’s “dual-track” policy, the deployment of Ground-Based Cruise Missiles and Pershing II Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM) in NATO host countries, and the successful negotiation of the INF Treaty can yield valuable insights into how the United States and its partners might think about navigating the challenges to the current anti-access challenges posed by China and Russia.

History of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

The origins of the Euromissile Crisis can be found in the consequences of the Soviet buildup of nuclear forces that began after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and continued apace in the late 1960s and 1970s. This buildup led to the arrival of U.S.-Soviet strategic nuclear parity after a five-year U.S. nuclear monopoly followed by a decade-plus of decided U.S. nuclear superiority. Soviet nuclear parity was accompanied in the 1970s by modernization of both the USSR’s strategic and non-strategic arsenals. In particular, the three-warhead Soviet SS-20 missile’s extended range, accuracy, and reload capacity were of concern to U.S. allies. From the Soviet point of view, these deployments overcame the challenges presented by U.S. forward bases in Europe and submarine patrols on the periphery of the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders appear to have believed that it would be possible to tilt the correlation of forces on the Eurasian landmass in their favor. This perception would have provided the Soviets with the theoretical ability to counter NATO’s options for nuclear employment at every level of conflict.

The Soviets were essentially trying to exploit nuclear parity and undermine NATO’s strategy of “flexible response,” which had been adopted after long and painful wrangling inside the Alliance during the 1960s. In effect, the USSR appeared to be developing the capability for escalation dominance in Europe which, in turn, raised questions about the effectiveness of NATO’s deterrent and the credibility of U.S. defense guarantees to its allies. Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, would later characterize Soviet decision-making as a “gross miscalculation” because it underestimated the potential NATO response.38

Initial concerns about the shifting European nuclear balance came from NATO partners rather than from Washington. American officials were, at first, more sanguine about the Soviet buildup because they believed that U.S. strategic systems could more than compensate for the new Soviet deployments, which they believed did not change the fundamental nuclear balance. This seriously underestimated the concerns of America’s European allies, particularly Germany.

The period leading up to the dual-track decision to deploy U.S. countervailing capabilities in Europe to offset the SS-20s demonstrates the degree to which the conventional and nuclear balances were inextricably linked as well as the impact that domestic politics—both in the United States and Europe—had on the deployment decision and the subsequent arms control negotiations and agreement.

Even before the SS-20 deployments, concerns were increasing in Europe about growing Soviet conventional capabilities that threatened to negate the promise and purpose of “flexible response” and call into question U.S. willingness to use its strategic nuclear forces to defend Europe given Soviet nuclear parity. As one element to counteract the Soviet conventional buildup and to provide limited nuclear options at the theater level, the Ford Administration authorized the development of Enhanced Radiation Warheads (ERW)—the so-called “neutron bomb.” These weapons were intended to provide a technological solution to deal with some of the concerns that policymakers had about using nuclear weapons in the center of Europe if deterrence failed. The ERW would essentially reduce the blast effects of nuclear weapons but increase the radiation effects to limit collateral damage. The potential military applications of this technology had been discussed in U.S. congressional hearings and NATO military channels for some time but had not been brought to the attention of European policymakers nor the broader American and European publics until, in 1977, they appeared in the first defense budget sent to Congress by the Carter Administration.39

When Washington Post journalist Walter Pincus reported that the Administration had requested funds for the ERW it created an immediate firestorm in the media. On both sides of the Atlantic, the ERW was lampooned by anti-nuclear activists as “the ultimate capitalist weapon,” since it killed people but left property intact (if highly irradiated).40 The Pincus story was picked up in the European press and led to controversy both in the U.S. Congress and with the European public. The storm provided a perfect backdrop to a major Soviet propaganda campaign against the deployment of the ERW. The issue was a major headache for German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, a former Defense Minister and serious student of nuclear strategy. Schmidt was far more concerned about the Soviet buildup of SS-20s and the creation of what he perceived to be a “gray zone” in the European nuclear balance than he was about the ERW. Carter, for his part, was ambivalent about the ERW, given his own campaign promises to seek reductions in the levels of nuclear armaments. As the year wore on, the U.S. and German governments tended to talk past one another on the issue. Carter hoped that European leaders would publicly call for deployment while European leaders hoped that U.S. leadership would provide a path forward on the issue. At the end of the day, after Schmidt and others had expended significant political capital on the ERW, President Carter decided to kill the project, despite the objections of his senior national security officials. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski described this decision as “the worst presidential decision of the first fourteen months.” The Washington Post’s Bonn correspondent considered the ERW the most politically bungled major weapons project in NATO history. As seen from Bonn, it had “sown more confusion and bewilderment among members of the Western alliance than anyone in this capital can remember.”41

The allied response to the SS-20 deployments played out amid this unfolding foreign policy debacle. For Schmidt, the European missile balance mattered most for purposes of deterrence. As Wallace Thies notes in a study of NATO’s remarkable persistence as a military alliance:

Soviet theater nuclear forces, Schmidt and others argued, were developing to the point at which they might be able to destroy in a first strike all of NATO’s means for retaliating against the Soviet Union that were then based in Europe. In view of the emerging parity in strategic nuclear forces between the United States and the Soviet Union, the American strategic nuclear deterrent might be paralyzed rather than invoked in the event of a Soviet attack.42

Schmidt, who had been trying to galvanize Carter and Washington about the issue with no success throughout 1977, outlined his concerns in a lecture in London on October 28 at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Although he focused on issues of nuclear force posture Schmidt’s main concerns were the political consequences of the Soviet SS-20 buildup. For Schmidt, the deployments were intended to intimidate Europeans, raise doubts about American reliability, and tempt them with the siren song of neutralism. Thies outlines the logic at work:

If the Soviets could foster in Europe the impression that they could destroy in a first strike all of NATO’s means of retaliating against the Soviet Union that were then based in Europe and that the United States would be deterred from using its strategic nuclear forces in response, then they would have gone a long way toward fostering a sense of vulnerability and isolation that, Schmidt and others feared, could ultimately ‘‘decouple’’ Western Europe from the United States, which was the prerequisite for Soviet dominance of all of Europe.43

Deployment of U.S. countervailing long-range theater nuclear forces in Europe would mean that the United States and USSR would become embroiled from the outset of a conflict and thus maintain the “coupling” of U.S. and European defenses.

As Schmidt saw things, in the face of the Soviet buildup, the West could build up its forces, or the West and the Soviet Union could agree to lower levels of theatre nuclear weapons. “I prefer the latter,” he declared. As Kristina Spohr notes, “in these remarks one can discern the germ of what would later become the chancellor’s ‘dual-track’ approach to achieving European security. These two strands, though still embryonic when he spoke in London, would become central to his future thinking.”44

Schmidt’s London speech finally seized Washington’s attention and led to a “tightrope walk for the alliance.” A transatlantic and intra-European debate emerged about NATO’s “credibility, direction, and purpose.” European observers had become concerned that the United States would yield to Soviet blandishments in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) talks that had re-launched in early 1977 and ban both ground and submarine-launched cruise missiles.

“The Carter Administration…pursued policies that exacerbated rather than alleviated European concerns and thereby increased the political pressure on the U.S. to move forward with the cruise missile program. The more the United States displayed its reluctance to pursue cruise missiles for NATO, the more its allies wanted them.”45

Paradoxically, one of the Carter Administration’s concerns was that cruise missiles could lead to the “de-coupling” of U.S. and European defense. Schmidt articulated a European view that argued to the contrary that nuclear parity at the strategic level required a European balance of capabilities that fell below the strategic level.46

Schmidt’s advocacy and the neutron bomb debacle ended U.S. reluctance on the cruise missile question. The so-called “gray area” issue that Schmidt had raised moved to center stage in transatlantic deliberations. The Carter Administration, recognizing the failure of alliance management, set out to repair the damage. In the first instance, senior USG officials realized that the lack of an agreed USG position had allowed the transatlantic dialogue to spin out of control. They realized the imperative of U.S. leadership as well on nuclear issues in the Alliance and Presidential engagement throughout the process.47

The interaction of Helmut Schmidt’s evolving thinking and Carter’s need to restore some of his lost credibility as an alliance leader led to a series of initiatives in both the security and arms control arenas that proved to be quite creative and, more importantly, successful in the long run. First, NATO moved to make a nuclear procurement decision collectively for the first time. In order to accomplish this, the Alliance created new institutional mechanisms: a High-Level Group (HLG) to consider the mix of systems and their deployment, and the Special Group (SG) that concentrated on the arms control dimensions of the decision. The allies concluded that the long-range theater nuclear forces they were considering should not be seen as disposable bargaining chips in an arms control negotiation but as necessary steps to remedy deficiencies in NATO’s deterrent posture. They realized, in other words, that “NATO needs to decide on a force posture before moving to arms control.”48

Allied deliberations were extremely complex, and the detailed story has been told well elsewhere by Kristina Spohr and Jeffrey Herf, among others. But several key points stand out. First, the allies considered a range of options to meet the Alliance’s need for capabilities to offset Soviet deployments. Second, out of the process emerged a commitment to an integrated strategy of deploying the Pershing II and the BGM-109G GLCM, as well as arms control positions that had buy-in from allied governments. Third, the leadership from a variety of European officials (not solely Helmut Schmidt) was crucial to the ultimate success of the process that led to the dual-track decision. In toto, this meant that when Moscow launched another information operation to drive wedges in the Alliance and derail the deployments, it had a harder row to hoe than had been the case with the ERW.49

The Alliance reached its decision at a Ministerial meeting in December 1979, just as the East-West relations entered a period of persistent crisis in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. With the Carter Administration entering a political season in which the President was challenged domestically both by opposition within the Democratic Party and from a Republican opponent, as well as internationally by the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran, the issue of Euromissiles went onto the back burner. It would be left to the Reagan Administration to implement the dual-track decision that NATO had reached before it entered office.

As with all policies inherited from an earlier Administration, the Reagan Administration approached the dual-track decision with more than a little initial skepticism. Senior officials were concerned that the NATO decision “might increase pressure for arms control to take the place of modernization.” Since Reagan had campaigned on a platform of nuclear modernization to keep pace with the Soviet Union, this decision presented a difficult strategic and political problem for the Administration, which was famously divided over how to approach arms control negotiations with the Soviets. After several months of internal debate, Reagan adopted the so-called “zero option” that called for no INF on either side. Critics, both in the United States and Europe, immediately declared that this proposal was not “negotiable” with the Soviets, not least by Secretary of State Al Haig, who had opposed it during the Administration’s internal deliberations.50

The USSR had already deployed hundreds of missiles and would be expected to withdraw them under the Reagan proposal, while the United States did not have any analogous capability to withdraw. The Reagan Administration, however, stuck to its negotiating position in the face of intensive Soviet propaganda and vigorous campaigns by anti-nuclear activists. Along the way, Reagan received crucial support from UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, French President Francois Mitterrand, and Schmidt’s successor as German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl. With no agreement in sight after two years of talks, the U.S. began to deploy its INF systems to host countries in Europe.51

For nearly eight years, U.S. and Soviet missiles remained deployed on their respective sides of the European continent. Diplomatic negotiations, however, resumed in 1985 after Reagan’s overwhelming re-election, especially once Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev expressed interest in establishing a new agreement to limit intermediate-range missiles. The negotiations ultimately expanded to encompass the entirety of both sides’ intermediate-range missile arsenal rather than just those based in Europe. As President Reagan noted, the U.S. would not agree to “shifting the threat from Europe to Asia.”52

The negotiations ultimately led to the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 1987 and its ratification in the spring of 1988. The treaty was an enormous milestone in superpower relations. As Kristina Spohr, one of the best historians of this episode, has noted, it marked “the first time the superpowers had ever agreed to reduce their nuclear arsenals,” and that it was clearly a “significant step in defusing the Cold War.”53 Both countries promptly disarmed and removed a wide range of intermediate- and mediumrange missiles in their arsenals. They also remained in compliance with the agreement until accusations of Russian violations surfaced in 2014. The ground-breaking character of the treaty undoubtedly is one reason that arms control advocates were so dogged in arguing that the U.S. should not leave it despite Russian violations.54

CHAPTER 5

Lessons for a Contemporary Missile Strategy

The current strategic circumstances that confront the United States are complicated, but the U.S. experience with intermediate-range missile deployments in Europe and allied reactions during the Cold War can still offer some important lessons for how Washington can approach a post-INF Treaty posture in both Europe and Asia in the current era of strategic competition. Geographic factors, political conditions, and U.S. security structures across both theaters may differ considerably, but concerns over collective burden-sharing and allied fear of abandonment or entrapment can extend across both regions. Because, in the current context, we are talking about conventional rather than nuclear weapons, the lessons from the Cold War cases of deploying controversial capabilities could be misleading. The current environment, for all its difficulties, does not seem to be one of a hair-trigger nuclear confrontation that loomed in the background of the early cold war in Asia or the later cold war in Europe. Moreover, some of what we discuss in this report goes beyond deploying U.S. capabilities and involves encouraging allies to develop their own complementary systems. Nonetheless, whether we are talking about deployment or indigenous development by allies, there seem to be some lessons from the earlier experiences that commend themselves for consideration by U.S. policymakers as they consider how to develop U.S. and allied force postures in a post-INF Treaty environment.

Lesson #1: The Need for Allied Buy-In and Leadership

The lessons of the nuclearization of NATO, deployments to the Republics of Korea and China in the 1950s, and the INF deployments in the 1970s highlight that getting buy-in from allies is essential. Allied acceptance that deployment of missile capabilities is in their interest—not just U.S. national interest—is key. Consultations with allies via either bilateral or multilateral channels will be needed to work through the issues and to help allies appreciate the issues at stake.

Leadership by allied leaders is also necessary. In today’s environment, advocates for missile deployments who can play the role that Helmut Schmidt played in the INF case would undoubtedly be helpful in pushing for alignment with the United States on a common missile strategy. Such advocates should be well-versed in strategic affairs to effectively inform and educate public and political stakeholders about the issue at hand. A figure like the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe might have been able to play such a role and Australian Prime Minister John Howard, for example, might still come to play such a role. But allied leaders calling for new missile capabilities may not be strictly necessary since growing Chinese and Russian missile capabilities, and especially the brutal use that Russia has made of such systems in Ukraine, may galvanize U.S and allied convergence on a missile strategy much as the SS-20 deployments did in the Cold War. Since the capabilities under discussion today are conventional, they should be less controversial than the nuclear deployments discussed in the cases above.

Lesson #2: Deployments Must Fit into a Broader Strategy with a Clear Role for Allies

The nuclearization of NATO was consistent with the Eisenhower Administration’s strategy of “massive retaliation” and neatly plugged the capability gap that was emerging due to the failure of European allies to meet the conventional force generation goals that the Alliance had set in 1952. It also provided allies with a clear role in hosting nuclear capabilities that could offset the Soviet advantage in conventional forces. The deployment of nuclear-capable MATADOR missiles to East Asia in the 1950s was consistent with the “New Look” and was even seen as a test of the policy’s ability to effect extended deterrence for Treaty allies in the Far East. Prior to the deployment of the Pershing II, some Allied leaders, notably Helmut Schmidt, feared that the absence of U.S. intermediate-range capabilities and the lack of a flexible response to the Soviet SS-20 would leave Western Europe vulnerable to political pressure from Moscow. Moreover, some European allies feared that the United States might give up critical military capabilities (cruise missiles) that might be used to plug capability gaps during the SALT II negotiations with the USSR. The SS-20 challenged the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence and Washington’s defense commitments in Europe, giving the Soviets an opportunity to fracture the NATO alliance. The deployment was built on the back of a coherent strategy of deploying arms but maintaining the option for arms control and diplomacy with allies playing a key role in hosting the deployments.

Lesson #3: If You Build It, They Will Come

As was the case in the Cold War, today Washington is working to build up a solid array of intermediate-range platforms that might be used to counter Russian and Chinese deployed capabilities. Until U.S. forces can harness a reliable portfolio of strike options, adversaries’ missiles continue to outrange those of the United States and hold U.S. and allied interests in Europe and Asia at risk. U.S. surface action and carrier strike groups in the Indo-Pacific may be unable to traverse the region or operate within or near the First Island Chain freely under the threat posed by People’s Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) missiles and U.S. air bases are also at risk. Russian missiles in Kaliningrad can target NATO ground and naval forces moving to reinforce the Baltics and interdict logistics flows, hindering U.S. and allied efforts to provide frontline security for NATO’s eastern flank.

The initial reaction to Secretary Esper’s statements after the abrogation of the INF Treaty was lukewarm at best, but it may not be the last word on the subject. Unlike the late Cold War, the United States has appeared at present to be more concerned about the missile balances in Asia and Europe than its allies. But Chinese behavior post-COVID and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine could change the equation. The United States should not wait for a modern-day Helmut Schmidt to arise in Europe or Asia, but instead prepare to cultivate leaders among its allies and to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves, as the Biden Administration has done with the AUKUS submarine deal. The record of Cold War deployments demonstrates that having extant capabilities is crucial since it facilitates Allied decision-making when politico-military circumstances change and enable effective U.S. defense diplomacy.55

Lesson #4: Missile Deployments Offer a Strong Sign of US Commitment

If the United States cannot project credible combat power forward in these two regions, U.S. allies may fear that Washington will abandon them if it finds its own strategic positions in these areas to be untenable. This fear of abandonment may constrain alliance cohesion in times of competition or crisis and give Russia and China the strategic edge they need to assert their interests and coerce U.S. allies. Going further, if U.S. allies deem Washington unwilling to provide protection against adversary long-range precision fires, they may be tempted to procure their own capabilities in an uncoordinated manner.

Such a scenario could undermine the unity of force inherent within alliances and undermine U.S. escalation control, removing a major obstacle to Russian and Chinese advances in contested areas. The Cold War experience highlights the need for strong leadership among U.S. allies in both Europe and Asia to avoid these potentially dire outcomes. The record in Europe and Asia is clear that deployment of missiles was a strong signal of U.S. commitment to NATO, the Republic of Korea, and the Republic of China and exercised an important deterrent purpose in times of crisis.

Lesson #5: Institutional Mechanisms and Coordination Matter

During the Euromissile Crisis, the United States and its NATO partners created new consultative mechanisms and coordinated closely to manage a shared approach to the dilemma of Soviet IRBMs, resulting in the dual-track decision. The decision cemented U.S.-NATO resolve during the crisis, and President Reagan’s decision to condition the beginning of negotiations with an updated NATO threat assessment and requirements study ensured that the Allies would confront the Soviet threat in synchronization with one another. Communication and coordination were key elements in this phase and restored confidence in the U.S. security commitment to Western Europe, assuaging fears of U.S. abandonment of the region.

In the present day, this same level of coordination will be critical between the United States and its partners in both theaters as they plan for a post-INF posture. Constant intra-alliance dialogue and consultations should reassure allies of U.S. commitment to their defense in the face of Russian and Chinese long-range precision fires, outline expectations of defense roles and missions between partners, and present a united bloc against adversarial aggression. NATO’s integrated military command and consultation mechanisms make this challenge a bit easier to navigate in Europe than in Asia where the U.S. hub-and-spoke system of bilateral alliances will potentially create difficulties in reaching a concerted Asian approach. For the moment, the U.S. will need to continue to operate through bilateral channels but over time, new mechanisms like the Quad or AUKUS may provide additional multilateral options.

Lesson #6: Alliance Management is Like Gardening: It Requires Persistence and Creativity

As the late Secretary of State George Shultz argued, alliance management is like gardening and “it is one of the most underrated aspects of diplomacy.”56 As one of the principals in both the INF deployments and subsequent Treaty negotiations, he recognized that persistence is key to negotiations with both allies and adversaries. Overcoming the political roadblocks to deployments always required the determined attention of the principal officers of the U.S. government—particularly the President, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was indefatigable in establishing “massive retaliation” as NATO strategy as well as in managing the Taiwan Straits crises and implementing the “New Look” in East Asia. Secretary Shultz was similarly deeply engaged on INF.

Persistence, however, is not the only diplomatic virtue. Creativity in resolving political, military, and technical obstacles in order to arrange a solution amenable to both the U.S. and prospective host nations was crucial in all of the cases we have examined.

The U.S. deployment of the Pershing II in Western Europe triggered significant domestic controversy among the European public, and the anti-nuclear sentiment provided fertile ground for the Soviet Union to engage in a major information operation. Critics on the Left, like Egon Bahr in Germany and others, argued that these weapons would only destabilize the region and heighten the risk of war with the Soviet Union. Soviet leaders, who may have believed some of the rhetoric, did everything they could to fan the flames of public concern that the world was edging closer to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe.57

A similar dynamic could exist in both Europe and Asia in the present day. While U.S. allies in either theater may support the deployment of intermediate-range missiles for security purposes, they may hesitate to fully embrace these weapons for political reasons. Local populations may oppose such weapons based on rationales that are like those that fueled opposition to the Pershing II deployment in the 1980s. Although we are currently talking about conventional missiles rather than missiles that carry nuclear warheads, the distinction is not likely to appreciably ease the political and diplomatic task for the United States. First, even conventional missiles meant to strike PRC or Russian territory will make the basing countries targets for Chinese and Russian missile forces. Second, because some of these systems are likely to be dual-use, Beijing and Moscow will have every incentive to elide the difference and wage informational campaigns claiming the U.S. is feeding the nuclear arms race.

Moreover, the rise of social media has arguably increased the ability of our authoritarian rivals to wage information and political warfare against deployments of new missile capabilities beyond what took place in the Cold War, even if those capabilities are less controversial than the nuclear deployments of years past. The Chinese media campaign against the terminal high-altitude air defense (THAAD) deployments in South Korea offers a case in point.58 Although the implementation of the dual-track decision and the subsequent INF Treaty eventually led to the removal and dismantlement of Pershing IIs in Europe, there is no guarantee that the United States and its competitors in the present day will necessarily enter a comprehensive agreement to limit intermediate-range missiles anytime soon (although the Euromissile Crisis does suggest that firmly moving ahead with deployments may actually facilitate rather than frustrate arms control). If Washington and its partners seek to maintain a robust post-INF missile posture in the absence of a comprehensive arms control agreement, they will have to find ways to address and manage public opposition to these assets to sustain long-term competition. There is a critical need for Washington to clearly convey its intentions and rationale for the deployment of these weapons, inform allied publics about the role these assets play, and prepare partners to meet potential responses from Russia and China.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Revisiting the history of Cold War missile deployments to host nations is more than a walk down memory lane. It provides a set of valuable lessons—if not cookie-cutter solutions—to the contemporary politico-military problems presented by the current missile imbalances in both the European and Indo-Pacific regions. Experience suggests that the United States needs to take the lead in developing capabilities both to meet its own potential needs on the battlefield and as part of its conventional and nuclear deterrent but also because it provides the larger framework for thinking about strategy for itself and its allies. Even if political conditions don’t seem propitious for deployment of missile capabilities to prospective host nations today exogenous events like Chinese shelling of the off-shore islands, the Soviet Union’s deployment of SS-20 missiles or Russia’s invasion of Ukraine can dramatically shift threat perceptions and, combined with clear and persuasive leadership can change the equation in unanticipated ways.

Capabilities, however, must fit into an overall strategy that allies accept and see as serving their own as well as U.S. purposes. The Eisenhower Administration made excellent use of the strategic framework it articulated to win allied support for “massive retaliation” and “the New Look” in Europe and East Asia. A common U.S.-European strategy on the “Dual-Track” decision facilitated the successful deployment of Pershing II and GLCMs in the early 1980s. Persuading allies that, from a strategic point of view, deterrence was cheaper than war and that offsetting capabilities could promote real arms control proved to be a winning hand for U.S. policymakers.

Allied leadership has also been important. Winston Churchill and Konrad Adenauer played important roles in winning European acceptance of “massive retaliation,” and Helmut Schmidt was a decisive figure in the INF decision (although he had left office by the time of the actual deployments). Having allied leaders who understand the strategic issues and can explain them to their respective publics can be crucial in winning acquiescence in the deployment of controversial military capabilities on a nation’s territory. This lesson is especially true when adversaries are making serious efforts (via overt or covert means) to whip up public antipathy to acceptance by sovereign governments of foreign capabilities on its soil. But it can also be crucial if governments agree to a functional division of labor—developing their own capabilities to fit into a larger common strategy—rather than hosting U.S. capabilities. In today’s environment, this latter leadership role may become even more important.

The deployment of ground-based missiles has been used historically to show American commitment to its allies, to signal resolve in crises, and achieve U.S. policy goals. These deployments undergirded U.S. success in the cold war with the Soviet Union and in repeated crises over the Taiwan Straits with the PRC.

Dealing with issues like the missile imbalances in Europe and the Indo-Pacific will require the kind of persistent, adept diplomacy that the United States proved successful at during the Cold War. It may require the kind of institutional innovation in communication and coordination that marked the successful diplomacy that led to the Dual-Track decision in 1979 or the strong presidential leadership that was required in cutting through the bureaucracy to deploy missiles and nuclear weapons to the Republic of Korea in the 1950s. U.S. policymakers working with their allied counterparts will need to educate allied publics to the dangers of the current missile imbalances and the capability gaps that they create. They will need to build support for developing countervailing capabilities to right the balance and develop creative solutions to the numerous political, military, and technical difficulties that may emerge to obstruct deployments or effective functional divisions of labor among allies. There will be many challenges, but the historical record suggests that U.S. leaders who articulate clear strategies, dispose of extant military capabilities, and know how to work persistently with international partners can develop a strong allied deterrent posture to serve the needs of long-term strategic competition.

## Assurance

#### ZERO link uniqueness – IRMs won’t actually be nuclear – cross-apply Burt – BUT link’s backwards: allies are reassured by the attempt to negotiate

--version of Burt on other DAs = \_\_\_

Burt 21 [Richard Burt, President at Global Zero, lead negotiator of START, former Ambassador to Germany; and Jon Wolfsthal, Senior Advisor at Global Zero, former Senior Director for Arms Control at the National Security Council, helped support negotiation and approval of New START; “Why Joe Biden Needs to Go Big on Nuclear Arms Control,” The National Interest, 6-1-2021, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-joe-biden-needs-go-big-nuclear-arms-control-186642]

Perhaps the most challenging related issue is Moscow’s new intermediate-range, ground-based missiles, including the 9M729 missile that Moscow deployed in violation of the now-defunct 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Shorter-range, nuclear-armed missiles presented a danger to stability in the Cold War and the same is true today. With short flight times, these systems force leaders to make snap nuclear decisions that could cost millions of lives when time to gather information and make decisions can prevent disaster. The best outcome would be a renewed ban on all INF weapons, nuclear-armed and conventional, but Moscow’s violations of past deals may make that impossible. Instead, the United States and Russia (and possibly China) should consider a ban on nuclear-armed INF missiles alone, a step that can be verified. America has no plans to develop nuclear-armed INF systems. Russia’s stocks of nuclear 9M729s are thought to be quite small. China has a large arsenal of INF range missiles, but few are deployed with nuclear weapons. While Russia’s offer to not deploy INF missiles in and around Europe is worth pursuing, accepting such a plan could put U.S. allies in Asia at greater risk, just as similar proposals in the 1980s would have done. If an outright ban on nuclear INF missiles is not possible, strict numerical limits and ensuring any such systems are not co-located with conventional missiles would be preferable and more predictable than one where all such systems are unconstrained.

These deals are viable, but only if the United States, Russia, and China are prepared to discuss the development of other capabilities including missile defenses. Despite developing new weapons designed to circumvent U.S. defenses, Moscow and Beijing remain worried that U.S. missile defenses (regional and national) may undermine their ability second-strike deterrent capabilities. The requirement to defend the United States from threats emanating for smaller nuclear powers, such as North Korea, is to some extent driving the offensive buildup of Russia and China. Likewise, Moscow and Beijing are getting better at regional and even strategic defenses. One possible way to control this instability would be to increase the transparency that all three states apply to their growing missile defense capabilities. Annual declarations about the number of tests conducted and sharing ten-year program plans on a rolling basis would at least provide some way to anticipate where such programs are headed.

None of these approaches will be easy, but the time to fix these problems with smaller steps has passed. Determining whether trade-offs in some areas of military capability are worth both the stability they may create, the costs savings they may produce, and the benefits to alliance management that come with effectively negotiated agreements is a complicated task that mixes military and strategic considerations and, of course, domestic politics. Getting America’s national security agencies and officials to think more broadly about security and risks will be only one of the challenges in pursuing such a deal. Even if a sound deal can be negotiated, gaining Senate approval for anything in a period of hyper-partisanship is no certain feat. None of these realities, however, should deter President Biden’s team from making the effort. Not only is it the smart thing to do, but the very act of trying will help reassure nervous allies, strengthen America’s ability to address global nuclear nonproliferation, and demonstrate that the United States can still do big things.

#### They do NOT want nuclear missiles – ONLY conventional – making verification key – BUT consultation’s normal means and shields – PLUS spills-over to recalibrate extended deterrence in ways that only strengthen assurance

Cummings 19 [Alan Cummings, Anthony Falzarano, Michael Gaines, and Jacob Sebastian, Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, “Workshop Summary: The Demise of the INF Treaty and Indo-Pacific Security,” Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, July 2019, https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/INFWorkshopSummary\_Final.pdf]

3. The potential benefits to the United States and its allies in deploying intermediate-range missile systems are numerous. Such deployment would strengthen deterrence by significantly undermining China’s confidence in its A2/AD strategy and posture. It would shift the regional military competition in an advantageous way by compelling China to direct resources to missile defense. It would also undermine the coercive value of missile-backed threats by various states in the region. It would send a clear message of resolve to both allies and adversaries and affirm the U.S. commitment to remain engaged in the region. These results would strengthen the assurance of U.S. allies. Put in a broader context, the demise of the treaty brings with it the opportunity to positively shift the debate in Asia about whether the region is going through “a great unwinding” (as America retreats, China rises, and the regional security order is re-made) or “a great awakening” (as America re-makes its grand strategy and strengthens its alliances to deal more effectively with the emerging challenge from China).

4. If the demise of the INF treaty is an opportunity for the United States, it is also a test. It is a test of the U.S. national willingness and capacity to move out rapidly and decisively. It is a test of the national willingness to remain militarily engaged in the region despite rising costs and risks. It is a test of the U.S. willingness to share burdens and risks with allies in new ways. It is a test of national and allied capacity to develop the needed strategic thought for a new era marked by new challenges.

5. Rapid and decisive movement will not come easily. There are many barriers. Some will seek more time for negotiations. Others will worry about the risks of new forms of military competition. Money is scarce. Some technologies are unproven. Public opinion is unformed. Allies aren’t ready to sign up to an un-defined pathway. There are many competing priorities for resources and leadership attention. Steady focus at the top level is essential.

6. In determining a pathway forward for capability development and deployment, the United States and its allies need to do more than “mind the gap.” That is, they should do more than simply match the ranges and capabilities of the regional missiles of regional actors. Instead, the United States and its allies should field systems that support operational concepts for fighting in a contested environment that reinforce deterrence by stripping away adversary confidence in their ability to bear the costs and risks of war with America.

7. The United States and its allies must also do more than let technology development drive the acquisition decision. Numerous planning factors should guide the design of the future posture.

• What basing options will be available? In allied countries? In US territories? Only deployable in time of crisis and war?

• What types? All cruise? All ballistic? Some or all hypersonic? A mix over time?

• How large a force? Scaled for which targets, scenarios, and operational concepts?

• With what range? For coastal strike or interior strike?

• How quickly? To support the “fight tomorrow?” To support “dominate in 2028?” Both?

• Mobile or fixed?

8. New strike assets will supplement an existing and evolving portfolio of U.S. strike assets in the region, including sea-based and air-delivered systems. U.S. planners should think of a portfolio management approach. They should account for the fact that U.S. allies deploy and are developing strike assets of their own and thus may be able to contribute significantly to the portfolio. And the strike portfolio is but one part of a larger suite of capabilities that can be re-balanced as intermediate-range ground-based strike is introduced, including defensive and non-kinetic capabilities.

9. U.S. allies are both eager and wary. They are eager to be part of this project, to reap its stabilizing benefits, and to cooperate in system development and the associated Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR). They are eager also to share the risk that goes with an intensified competition for strike, as they see [perceive] risk sharing as essential to the effectiveness of the deterrence posture and thus an appropriate form of burden sharing. But, to varying degrees, they are wary of being asked to precipitously deploy weapons that might generate public opposition. And they are wary of signing up to a major new U.S. project only to have the United States change course before crossing the finish line.

10. The U.S. affirmation that its R&D efforts are focused only on conventional and not nuclear systems does not entirely close the nuclear discussion in the Indo-Pacific. Discussions in Japan and South Korea on how to proceed post-INF are inextricably tied to discussions on emerging challenges to the credibility of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence in an era marked by China’s increasing military assertiveness and North Korean nuclearization. Deterrence experts in both countries are heavily invested in the U.S. promise to maintain a globally deployable force of dual-capable fighter-bombers and the associated nuclear bombs, as they count on such deployment in the event of a regional nuclear crisis. Those experts also see [perceive] the United States as reluctant to provide nuclear guarantees in Asia that are as robust as those in Europe. None argue for U.S. deployment of nuclear-tipped intermediate-range missiles. There is broad acceptance that the weaknesses of deterrence of China are at the conventional level of war. But these allies seek a coherent, integrated approach to the management of escalation risks in the face of nuclear coercion and potential nuclear attack. And they seek partnership with their senior ally in undertaking the needed strategic thought.

11. China, North Korea, and Russia can all be expected to actively resist any U.S. post-INF pathway in the Indo-Pacific. They will use information campaigns to magnify public division and opposition, in part by threatening terrible consequences. They will underscore the risks of arms races, while saying nothing about the fact that they’ve long been engaged in their own one-sided races to advantage. China is likely to derive particular motivation from visions of its strategy failing to drive the U.S. military over the horizon and a weakening of its coercive potential. The net result of these words and deeds will again be to strengthen political cooperation among the United States, its allies, and other Indo-Pacific partners to counter regional belligerents.

## Conventional Shift

#### ZERO link uniqueness – IRMs won’t actually be nuclear – and Biden wouldn’t use nukes for damage limitation – Cross-Apply Burt

Burt 21 [Richard Burt, President at Global Zero, lead negotiator of START, former Ambassador to Germany; and Jon Wolfsthal, Senior Advisor at Global Zero, former Senior Director for Arms Control at the National Security Council, helped support negotiation and approval of New START; “Why Joe Biden Needs to Go Big on Nuclear Arms Control,” The National Interest, 6-1-2021, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-joe-biden-needs-go-big-nuclear-arms-control-186642]

Perhaps the most challenging related issue is Moscow’s new intermediate-range, ground-based missiles, including the 9M729 missile that Moscow deployed in violation of the now-defunct 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Shorter-range, nuclear-armed missiles presented a danger to stability in the Cold War and the same is true today. With short flight times, these systems force leaders to make snap nuclear decisions that could cost millions of lives when time to gather information and make decisions can prevent disaster. The best outcome would be a renewed ban on all INF weapons, nuclear-armed and conventional, but Moscow’s violations of past deals may make that impossible. Instead, the United States and Russia (and possibly China) should consider a ban on nuclear-armed INF missiles alone, a step that can be verified. America has no plans to develop nuclear-armed INF systems. Russia’s stocks of nuclear 9M729s are thought to be quite small. China has a large arsenal of INF range missiles, but few are deployed with nuclear weapons. While Russia’s offer to not deploy INF missiles in and around Europe is worth pursuing, accepting such a plan could put U.S. allies in Asia at greater risk, just as similar proposals in the 1980s would have done. If an outright ban on nuclear INF missiles is not possible, strict numerical limits and ensuring any such systems are not co-located with conventional missiles would be preferable and more predictable than one where all such systems are unconstrained.

#### Plan’s key to forward deployments that are actually capable of damage limitation

Hornung 22 [Jeffrey W. Hornung, senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, former associate professor for the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, PhD political science, George Washington University, MA international relations, Japan studies, Johns Hopkins University-School of Advanced International Studies, BA political science, international affairs, Marquette University, “Ground-Based Intermediate-Range Missiles in the Indo-Pacific: Assessing the Positions of U.S. Allies,” RAND Corporation Research Report, RR-A393-3, 2022, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\_reports/RRA300/RRA393-3/RAND\_RRA393-3.pdf]

Comments on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty or Hosting U.S. GBIRMs

Despite Japan being a close U.S. ally, there are reasons to believe Japan would oppose hosting U.S. GBIRMs. From the start, Japanese officials were vocal in their opposition to the U.S. INF Treaty withdrawal, with the foreign minister calling it “extremely regrettable” and the chief cabinet secretary and foreign press secretary calling it “undesirable.”126 Even then–Prime Minister Abe, while saying he understood U.S. thinking, noted that the treaty’s termination was “not a situation that is desirable.”127

Despite these negative comments, Japan relies heavily on the U.S. nuclear umbrella and U.S. deterrence capabilities. After the United States withdrew from the treaty, then–Defense Minister Kōno spoke about the idea of hosting U.S. GBIRMs, saying, “The US doesn’t have non-nuclear missiles that can be deployed yet. Maybe they’re in the phase of development.”128 This suggested that Japan might host U.S. GBIRMs should nonnuclear missiles be developed. Kōno admitted, however, that his government and that of the United States had not yet talked about the idea.129 Should his comment indicate reluctance to host U.S. GBIRMs, the reluctance likely would stem from two possibilities: political awareness that introducing new U.S. presence into Japan would be difficult or a misunderstanding that U.S. GBIRMs are only nuclear-armed. For the latter point, commentators have pointed out that Washington has not indicated whether specific facilities and systems overseas are to be explicitly nonnuclear.130 This could pose a problem for Japan given its history with nuclear weapons and its Three Non-Nuclear Principles.131 Even if the United States refrained from deploying nuclear capabilities, if the Japanese public believed that such capabilities were nuclear capable or left open the door to such capabilities, it would be politically difficult to obtain local consent to host these capabilities, particularly if China (or Russia) engaged in information operation campaigns to push this idea.

Evidence that supports the notion that local realities and fears of “not in my backyard” might complicate the Japanese government’s efforts to introduce U.S. GBIRMs is found in recent efforts by Tokyo to deploy the Aegis Ashore BMD system. In 2017, Tokyo began looking to secure two sites to deploy a Japanese-owned and -operated system in two prefectures. While negotiations with local communities in western Yamaguchi were relatively drama-free (although opposition existed), those with northern Akita were not. Instead, because of issues stemming from the proximity of the proposed site to the community and defense ministry representatives showing the prefectural government flawed survey data over the planned deployment site, the government faced stiff opposition.132 Because of the strong opposition by the local community, in early May 2020, the government gave up on the Akita candidate site and moved to select a different site.133 One month later, Japan’s Minister of Defense announced suspension of both sites, citing cost and technological concerns, but reports indicated that local opposition may also have been a factor.134 Japan’s National Security Council approved the decision two weeks later.135

Given the closeness of the alliance and Japan’s reliance on U.S. deterrent capabilities and dependency on U.S. security commitments, it is impossible to completely rule out Japan’s refusal of a U.S. request to host GBIRMs, particularly as Chinese provocations continue. Yet the Aegis Ashore episode is instructive for thinking about how Japan might react because it showed how Tokyo was susceptible to domestic pressure. If a Japanese-owned and -operated defensive missile system provoked domestic resistance, then attempts to permanently host a U.S.-owned and -operated offensive system would likely face greater resistance.136 Given Japan’s strong norms of defense and possible opposition to increasing the number of permanently deployed U.S. forces in Japan, introducing U.S. GBIRMs that are clearly offensive in nature is likely to face stronger public opposition than that seen in the Aegis Ashore experience.

Even if Japan could overcome local opposition and agreed to host U.S. GBIRMs, the U.S. ability to use them would be dependent on Japanese politics. In a 1960 exchange of notes between Japanese Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke and U.S. Secretary of State Christian Herter about the implementation of Article VI of the security treaty (i.e., security of the Far East137), the United States agreed to engage in “prior consultation” with Japan to employ its forces from its Japanese bases for combat operations not directly related to the defense of Japan.138 Should the United States seek to launch U.S. GBIRMs deployed in Japan against a state with which Japan is not at war, the United States would have to engage in prior consultation with Japan before launching its missiles. The prior consultation process is undefined, but the goal is to obtain Japanese buy-in.139 Although the United States could unilaterally launch these missiles without conducting prior consultation or by overriding Japanese opposition to their use, such an action could endanger the survival of the alliance, particularly if that action resulted in attacks on Japanese soil and deaths of Japanese civilians despite Japanese leadership not wanting to get involved in the conflict. Taken together, while Japan remains the regional ally that appears most likely to host U.S. GBIRMs, that possibility remains low, heavily caveated by the challenge of accepting any increase in U.S. presence and deploying weapons that are explicitly offensive in nature.

CHAPTER THREE

Alternatives to Permanent U.S. GBIRM Basing on Allies’ Land

Given that the likelihood of these allies—with the possible exception of Japan—agreeing to host such capabilities (once developed) is extremely low, the United States should look to other possible options. In this chapter, four of the most likely options are examined.

Co-Development or Foreign Military Sales: Allies Maintain Operational Control

One option would be for the United States to either (1) co-develop the capabilities with U.S. allies or (2) develop them on its own and sell the missiles to U.S. allies and then allow the allies to deploy and operate them. This would avoid contentious negotiations over hosting U.S. personnel and their missile systems. It would also be beneficial given that it would strengthen allies’ capabilities. Any co-development or Foreign Military Sales (FMS) of GBIRMs, however, would involve negotiations between the parties and consideration of how the proposed systems would fit within export controls, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime.

A first step to determining an ally’s potential willingness to accept this option requires insight into current missile capabilities (as of late 2019). The Philippines, for example, does not maintain any long-range missile capability.1 Although Manila is set to procure two batteries of the medium-range ramjet supersonic BrahMos cruise missile for coastal defense missions from an Indian-Russian joint venture,2 the missile’s 290-km range will still be limited in its ability to hold Chinese assets at risk far from the Philippines.3 Manila has also shown itself to be extremely risk averse when it comes to China. As one observer noted, “unless Manila’s bilateral relations with China significantly deteriorate, American missiles won’t be welcome, as Duterte no doubt noted South Korea’s scars from the Chinese tourist boycott and economic backlash” after the THAAD controversy.4 Therefore, agreeing to develop strike capabilities with the United States would likely be a similar step that future Philippine leaders would want to avoid.

The ROK is another possibility given that it maintains a robust arsenal of cruise and ballistic missiles.5 For example, the ROK possesses one ballistic missile with an 800-km range (Hyunmoo-2C) and several intermediate-range cruise missiles. Some of these systems are operational, such as the Hyunmoo-3B (1,000 km) and -3C (1,500 km) land-launched cruise missiles, while others are still reportedly in development, such as an improved Hyunmoo variant called the Hyunmoo-4, which will likely be supersonic and have a longer range.6 Although this arsenal suggests that the ROK might be open to co-developing or purchasing U.S. GBIRMs, the intention of the ROK’s missiles is to hold key targets all across North Korea at risk. Given how Seoul reacted to Chinese pressure against hosting THAAD, co-developing or purchasing missiles that exceed the ranges of its existing arsenal, which is meant to hold North Korea at risk, could be seen as having a separate objective, specifically striking China.7 Seoul is unlikely to want to be put in a position, again, of appearing to unnecessarily provoke China. For that reason, the ROK is likely not a viable candidate for this option.

Australia appears to be a promising option. Since 2009, Australia and the United States have been cooperating on the Hypersonic International Flight Research Experimentation program, one of the largest collaborative research programs between the allies that seeks to explore the fundamental science of hypersonics and the potential for next-generation aeronautical systems.8 This resulted in several tests of a hypersonic missile and an agreement in December 2020 to develop and test an air-launched hypersonic cruise missile.9 In February 2020, the United States approved Australia’s request to purchase up to 200 AGM-158C long-range anti-ship missiles and related equipment for its F-18 Super Hornet fighters, Canberra’s first purchase of such missiles.10 The ranges for these are believed to be in excess of 500 nautical miles.11 And, in June 2020, Canberra announced that it will look to develop long-range missiles with ranges of potentially thousands of kilometers for both aircraft and ships and will invest in the development, testing, and evaluation of high-speed, long-range weapons.12

Although all of this suggests that Australia could be a viable candidate for co-development or FMS, as briefly touched upon in the previous chapter, its distance from China would be a prohibitive factor. Because any GBIRM system would be ground-launched, it would have to be placed in northern Australia. Basing such a system at RAAF Base Tindal, however, would reach only a small portion of southern China at a maximum range of 5,500 km.13 This limited reach is problematic because it is unclear what Chinese target sets these systems could cover.14 Although they could arguably reach some targets, the limited reach would mean a smaller percentage of critical targets on the Chinese mainland. This means that, although there might be co-development options with Australia, the operational utility of those missiles would be limited because they could reach—at most—only portions of southern China, leaving extensive areas of central and northern China in sanctuary.

Like Australia, Japan stands as a possible option given its history of bilateral work on joint research, co-development, and co-production of BMD systems. In the 1990s, Japan’s decision to procure the BMD-capable Aegis system from the United States marked the first time a missile defense capability produced by the U.S. Missile Defense Agency was sold to an ally.15 The allies also agreed to allow Japan licensed production of PAC-3 interceptor missiles.16 In addition, the allies jointly developed the SM-3 Block IIA interceptors for Aegis-equipped destroyers, and, once these were developed, the United States allowed Japan to buy them via FMS: up to four in January 2018 and up to 73 in August 2019, for a total sale of almost $3.5 billion.17

Japan is also closer to China than Australia, thereby removing the main obstacle facing GBIRMs in Australia. Yet, although Japan’s proximity and history of co-development suggests a possible way forward for the United States to deploy GBIRMs in Japan under Japanese command and control, Japan’s efforts are restricted to defensive systems. Traditionally, Japan refrains from procuring offensive weapons (generally defined as any weapons that can be used to directly attack an opponent on its shores). Instead, guided by a policy of exclusive defense orientation (専守防衛), Japan has limited the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) capabilities to the “minimum necessary level” for self-defense; anything that exceeds this would be considered “war potential” prohibited by Article 9 of Japan’s constitution. Historically, intercontinental ballistic missiles, intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), long-range bombers, and aircraft carriers were identified by government officials as exceeding the minimum necessary level.18 It is unclear exactly when IRBMs dropped off the list of prohibited capabilities, but their inclusion in this list does not appear to have survived the end of the Cold War. One of the last examples appears to be in 1993, when then–Director General of the Defense Agency (today called the Minister of Defense and the Ministry of Defense, respectively) Nakanishi Keisuke said that Japan does not possess any of the four prohibited capabilities because of Japan’s exclusive defense orientation.19

Because of Japan’s exclusive defensive focus, however, it is reasonable to assume that, even if Japan agreed to this alternative, it could limit the range of GBIRMs to prevent them from being capable of performing deep strikes. Or it could confine GBIRM usage to specific situations, such as only against an enemy missile site in a counterstrike situation or when an attack on Japan is imminent. The theoretical legal basis for this thinking is rooted in a 1956 statement under the Hatoyama Ichirō administration that said that Japan is not obligated to “sit and wait to die” if an attack on Japan is imminent; rather, it is allowed to strike enemy bases preparing to strike Japan using the minimum level of force necessary if no other means is available to avoid or prevent the attack.20 This thinking is still evident in missile discussions today; proponents of strike capability focus on using missiles in a defensive capacity.21

What might be theoretically constitutional, however, currently might not be politically feasible. Japan’s development of standoff missile capabilities demonstrates the continued strength of its exclusive defense orientation. This was evident in the message by then–Defense Minister Onodera Itsunori, who, in his announcement of Japan’s procurement of standoff capabilities, reiterated that they did not contravene Japan’s exclusive defense orientation because they would be used solely for island defense, emphasizing that Japan had no plans to obtain missiles to attack enemy bases.22 After the suspension of the Aegis Ashore system in June 2020, however, this “enemy base attack” capability became a main issue of debate in a broader discussion about Japan’s deterrent capabilities.23 As of this writing, the debate continues, with it looking likely that Japan will introduce some type of enemy base attack capability in the near future. The conclusion that should be drawn from this, however, is that although co-developing GBIRMs with Japan is an option, and having Japan independently deploy and operate them is possible, Japan may limit their range or usage to adhere to its exclusive defense orientation, thereby setting limits on the feasibility of this alternative for Japan despite its geographical proximity to China.

#### AND minimizes the target set – attempting damage limitation with other assets ensures disproportionate escalation – by the U.S. due to unacceptable losses – AND by China due to inadvertent strategic entanglement per the case

Levine 18 [Nathan Levine, U.S.-China fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute, associate of Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, “Why America Leaving the INF Treaty is China's New Nightmare,” The National Interest, 10-22-2018, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/why-america-leaving-inf-treaty-chinas-new-nightmare-34087]

China has never been a signatory of the INF Treaty, which bans the development or deployment of both nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges of 500 to 5,500 kilometers. This has allowed China to build up a vast arsenal of conventional anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) weapons, such as the DF-21 “carrier killer” anti-ship ballistic missile (range of 1,500 kilometers). All of these weapons are of a class that the United States is legally prevented from deploying.

This has led to America becoming significantly “out sticked” in the ongoing “range war" between military systems designed to safely control the increasingly unfriendly seas and skies of the Western Pacific. In the event of a high-end conflict, U.S. naval surface combatants would find themselves at a disadvantage, having to rely on older sea-launched standoff systems, like the Tomahawk land-attack missile, and vulnerable carrier-based airpower, to strike at deadly A2/AD weapons that can hide within the Chinese interior.

This is a problem, because as Christopher Johnson, formerly the CIA’s senior China analyst, recently told The Economist “In any air war we do great in the first couple of days,” but “then we have to move everything back to Japan, and we can’t generate sufficient sorties from that point for deep strike on the mainland.” And without being able to strike anti-ship systems in the mainland, American carriers operating off the Chinese coast would be placed in unacceptable danger.

U.S. withdrawal from INF, however, could help reverse this dynamic and lead to a nightmare scenario for China.

New American conventional systems, probably beginning with a ground-launched version of the Tomahawk but perhaps eventually expanding to include ballistic missiles similar to the DF-21 and DF-26, could be stationed in unsinkable, out-of-the-way locales like northern Japan, Guam, the southern Philippines, or even northern Australia.

These weapons would have the potential to act as the cornerstone of an alternative U.S. military strategy for the Western Pacific increasingly advocated by defense experts in Washington. This new strategy would use America’s own A2/AD systems to lock down the waters within the “first island chain” and transform China’s near seas into what scholars like Michael Swaine and others have described as a “no man’s land” in the event of war. Such a strategy, labeled by Andrew Krepinevich as “Archipelagic Defense,” would be capable of deterring and containing Chinese military aggression without having to place U.S. surface vessels at significant risk. Moreover, such a strategy has the potential to be significantly cheaper (in both money and lives) than relying on incredibly expensive carrier battle groups to maintain sea control.

Chinese strategists have long been deeply concerned about the potential for such a scenario, in which the defenses of America and its regional allies would prevent the Chinese navy from “breaking through the thistles” of the first island chain’s unfavorable geography, leaving China unable to project maritime power beyond its near seas.

Meanwhile, many arms-control analysts have warned with dismay that U.S. withdrawal from the INF Treaty could provoke a new “missile race,” while Russian politician Aleksey Pushkov has declared that such an exit would be a “powerful blow inflicted on the world’s entire system of strategic stability.” However, at least in the U.S.-China context, the result could be more strategic stability rather than less, for two reasons.

First, if America followed the Archipelagic Defense strategy outlined above, then it would have less need to move any “too big to fail” assets within range of Chinese weapons during a crisis. The loss of those assets would be such a traumatic disaster for America (with up to six thousand lives lost with a single aircraft carrier, for example) that any U.S. leader would feel immense pressure to immediately and dramatically escalate the scale of the conflict. Instead, cheap, unmanned long-range strike weapons could serve in their place, reducing the chance of crisis escalation.

Second, with fewer American surface ships required to operate close to China, the tactical necessity for U.S. commanders to strike Chinese missile systems within mainland China as a defensive measure would be reduced. This is significant because, as Caitlin Talmadge explains in the most recent issue of Foreign Affairs, China’s nuclear weapons are intermingled with its conventional missile forces, and it would be nearly impossible for the United States to strike at China’s conventional ballistic missiles without inadvertently destroying elements of China’s strategic nuclear deterrent. And, as she writes, when “faced with such a threat, Chinese leaders could decide to use their nuclear weapons while they were still able to,” increasing the chances of a conflict going nuclear.

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## Advantage CP

#### Every other attempt has failed for the same reasons – plan as catalyst is key

Alberque et al 21 [William Alberque, Director of Strategy, Technology and Arms Control at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, former director of NATO’s Arms Control, Disarmament, and WMD Non-Proliferation Centre; and Timothy **Wright**, research analyst and program administrator for defense and military analysis at the IISS; “Revitalizing the Missile Technology Control Regime,” Arms Control Today, December 2021, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-12/features/revitalizing-missile-technology-control-regime]

Advocates for incremental reform of the MTCR argue that the work needs to focus on achievable, “low-hanging fruit,” which is often described but somehow never harvested. Incremental approaches should likely be informed by Track 1.5 meetings, a UN Security Council Resolution 1540 comprehensive review, and possibly a convention of a high-level UN group of governmental experts with a clear mandate to identify specific proposals, backed by substantial political will to use upcoming MTCR plenaries to agree to changes. Although the previous UN expert group in 2008 was unable to agree to substantial changes, the current global environment of accelerating missile proliferation may provide a new impetus for future agreement.

Given the institutional weaknesses of the MTCR, establishing a permanent secretariat to support and improve national expert training, implementation of the regime, and information sharing should be a priority. It could help overcome the distrust of nonmember states who sometimes view the point of contact as a biased actor. Other aims should be opening internal processes and decision-making to greater scrutiny and increasing MTCR engagement with other global and regional initiatives, such as the Missile Dialogue Initiative and the Warsaw Process Missile Proliferation Working Group.18

Such changes would initially require coordination and agreement in small groups followed by sequencing and leadership of outreach to members and nonmembers alike to build support for any changes. Progress would require sustained engagement within and among governments to bring together the correct mix of diplomats and experts on arms control, export control, missile and UAV technology, security policy, and intelligence. Even so, such an incremental process would take years and would have a low likelihood of success based on the failure of all recent efforts toward systemic reform. That calculation is only likely to change if there is some catalytic event that is so broadly destructive or destabilizing that the major powers begin spending the political capital necessary to make significant changes.

#### Insufficient commitment otherwise

Alberque et al 21 [William Alberque, Director of Strategy, Technology and Arms Control at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, former director of NATO’s Arms Control, Disarmament, and WMD Non-Proliferation Centre; and Timothy **Wright**, research analyst and program administrator for defense and military analysis at the IISS; “Revitalizing the Missile Technology Control Regime,” Arms Control Today, December 2021, https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-12/features/revitalizing-missile-technology-control-regime]

The MTCR has successfully facilitated cooperation by like-minded states to limit the proliferation of missiles and associated technologies, and it has bought time by delaying and increasing the cost of these practices. Despite increases in membership and the broad application of the regime’s guidelines, the number of states that ignore the guidelines while possessing or producing systems capable of accurately delivering large payloads over long distances continues to increase. The regime has also allowed members to trade freely among themselves and to seek special exemptions or allowances for trade with states as needed, such as South Korea. These practices have allowed for exploitation, thereby weakening the efficacy of the regime and its relevance.

Meanwhile, many more countries have proven that they can overcome the technological hurdles that previously limited missile proliferation, including the ability to manufacture solid fuel propellants, miniaturized turbofan engines, complex rocket motors, precision guidance systems, and special-property materials for reentry vehicles.23 Most damningly, these capabilities are now within the grasp of nonstate actors, ranging from commercial firms such as Space X to insurgent groups such as Ansarullah.

Despite its successes, the MTCR has failed to substantially resolve the concerns that it was created to address. Further proliferation of missile technology, as demonstrated by Iran, North Korea, and nonstate actors such as Ansarullah and Hezbollah, is only a matter of time despite the likelihood of the UN Security Council adopting additional resolutions tailored specifically to prevent this from happening.

Reform of the MTCR’s scope and functions is the only viable path forward, and an incremental approach could deliver tremendous benefits. Achieving this will require long-term focus and significant political, intellectual, and financial commitments. Although a more radical approach is unlikely to be agreed among members and adherent states, if such radical ideas are pushed within an unofficial Track 1.5 format, they could shock the system toward incremental reform.

Recent decisions on waivers by the MTCR and unilateral reinterpretations of the regime’s scope are likely the beginning of a broader shift by member states away from the presumption of denial that is at the core of the MTCR. Even if no reform action is taken, it is likely that the UN Security Council will still look to the MTCR for guidance on national export controls, but this will occur as an increasing number of technologically advanced states outside the regime ignore or take advantage of MTCR limitations on member states by selling restricted items to interested buyers.24 Advanced missile and space launch technology will spread in the meantime as the world continues down a dangerous path. The world therefore must decide not only if it wants reforms that strengthen the MTCR, but whether it is really committed to making that reform happen.

## Convential Shift DA

#### INF have no deterrent value – existing countermeasures are already postured against Russian INF because of prior violations and NATO’s overwhelming conventional superiority is what matters – because we wouldn’t use nukes for denial counter-strikes on their INF anyway – PLUS strategic and tactical nukes cap any residual link – that’s Kuhn – AND…

Dienstbier 19 [Philipp Dienstbier, Policy Advisor for Transatlantic Relations in the Department International and Security Affairs at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, double MSc International Political Economy and MA International Security, London School of Economics and Political Science and Sciences Po Paris, “The Beginning of the End?” 9-16-2019, https://www.kas.de/en/web/auslandsinformationen/artikel/detail/-/content/the-beginning-of-the-end] \*[language modifications]

However, these recent developments cannot really be compared with the Cold War arms race. They no longer involve the introduction of a completely new type of weapon that, depending on one’s perspective, either opens or closes a gap in the nuclear capability spectrum. Unlike the situation in the late 1970s, both sides now have many different types of nuclear and conventional intermediate-range missile types. Numerous sea-launched mid-range systems﻿ exist, such as the Russian SS-N-30 and the American Tomahawk. According to experts, these conventional ﻿guided missiles can be equipped with nuclear warheads, are extremely accurate﻿, and have a long range. On top of this, air-launched nuclear cruise missiles such as the Russian Kh-102 Kodiak (­NATO designation AS-23B) and the American ­AGM-86 can be deployed rapidly from bombers like the Russian Tu-95 Bear and the US B-52 Stratofortress in each country’s own airspace.

This broad spectrum of military capabilities means there is already a multi-layered deterrent potential in place. This will become more complex with the introduction of the Russian ­SSC-8 and other US and Russian systems, but will not change fundamentally as long as there is no mass deployment of new missiles. So the nuclear balance will not be shaken to the same extent as it was in the late 1970s, nor will a qualitatively different threat be created that was not already in existence. In addition, many of the arms projects that have been announced will require years of development and testing before they are ready to be deployed and can actually have an impact on the security situation.

#### His deployments ARE conventional – verifying that merely legitimates them so they’re less escalatory – that’s Hiim, Hersman, and Edelman – AND…

McLeary 18 [Paul McLeary, Breaking Defense, “The Rest Of The Story: Trump, DoD & Hill Readied INF Pullout For Years,” 10-22-2018, https://breakingdefense.com/2018/10/the-rest-of-the-story-trump-dod-hill-readied-inf-pullout-for-years/]

Despite those tensions, there is a sense in Washington that the Trump administration scored an own goal in its handling of the announcement. It apparently didn’t alert allies about the final decision.

“The overwhelming view of people, not only in the United States and Russia but around the world, will be that it was the United States that killed this treaty,” said Richard Burt, former U.S. chief negotiator of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, on a conference call with reporters. “The handling of this decision is just simply god awful.”

Thomas Countryman, former assistant secretary of State for international security and nonproliferation, told me the failure to even attempt to pull China and Russia into a larger deal was, “absolutely a missed opportunity” and has only handed Moscow “the double-victory it sought: keeping a new system that adds to its military strength, while being able to shame/blame the US for accelerating an arms race.”

As far as China is concerned, “It would be stabilizing for global security if a global INF treaty could be achieved. But US withdrawal will simply make even harder what would have been, in any case, an extremely difficult negotiation with China and others.”

#### BUT, racing itself also solves

Sokolski 21 [Henry D. Sokolski, Executive Director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center and teaches graduate nuclear policy at the University of Utah and the Institute of World Politics, Senior Fellow for Nuclear Security Studies at the University of California at San Diego, former Deputy for Nonproliferation Policy at DoD, former consultant to the National Intelligence Council, former member of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Senior Advisory Group, MA political science, University of Chicago, “Missile Wars: What Awaits,” Chapter 6, *Space and Missile Wars: What Awaits*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski, Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, 2021, ISBN 978-1-7371113-0-6, p.187-193]

Once both the United States and China have larger numbers of long and shorter range precise strike systems and much more robust active and passive missile and air defenses, the possibility of major missile exchanges would be far less attractive to both sides than today. China, during this period, would likely have achieved nuclear parity with the United States and Russia. This would likely make the early use of nuclear weapons more remote.476

#### Vague assertions of link uniqueness severely underestimate China’s head start – has thousands of INF missiles

Cuomo 18 [Scott A. Cuomo, Marine infantry officer and operational planner currently participating in the Commandant of the Marine Corps Strategist Program at Georgetown University, “It’s Time to Make a New Deal: Solving the INF Treaty’s Strategic Liabilities to Achieve U.S. Security Goals in Asia,” Texas National Security Review, 2(1), November 2018, pp.104-128, DOI 10.26153/tsw/866]

Possible Objections

Before considering likely objections from critics, it is important to emphasize — again — that the strategic approach proposed in this article assumes China will continue to refuse, at least initially, any effort to globalize the INF Treaty and that Russia will not resume compliance.155 Since the 2007 and 2008 offers to China to join the INF Treaty, Beijing has expanded the PLARF’s land-based missile capabilities.156 Further, this article assumes that China will not unilaterally decide to eliminate its thousands of ground-launched missile capabilities. These baseline assumptions are important when considering possible objections.

Some will argue that modifying the INF Treaty as described in the fourth pathway or withdrawing from it altogether would lead to an arms race in Asia. But China has already decided to pursue this option and was not satisfied with a missile advantage in the tens or even hundreds. Beijing has obtained an estimated 2,000 missiles — the clear majority of which falls within the parameters banned by the INF Treaty. If China continues to refuse to globalize the treaty or to unilaterally and voluntarily eliminate its 2,000 missiles, then the United States has no choice but to pursue withdrawal from the treaty.

#### AND, Biden’s commitment to catch up makes the link inevitable

Minami 20 [Tsuyoshi Minami, Postdoctoral Fellow at the College of Humanities and Communications, Shanghai Normal University, “Do China’s new missiles change the game?” East Asia Forum, 2-29-2020, https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/02/29/do-chinas-new-missiles-change-the-game/]

The United States does not possess any ground-launched missiles with 500–5500-kilometre ranges due to INF Treaty limitations. But after it withdrew from the treaty in August 2019, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said the United States would deploy ground-launched intermediate-range missiles in Asia ‘sooner rather than later’.

China’s missile developments may be changing military strategy in Asia.

For decades, China’s military planners have understood the strategic importance of long-range missiles and invested heavily in their development. The recent military parade unveiled the DF-41, a new multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle-capable (MIRV-capable), road-mobile, solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with an operational range of 12,000–15,000 kilometres. China calls the DF-41 the cornerstone of its strategic nuclear capability. Additionally, China tested a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) JL-3 last December. China already deploys DF-5B MIRV-capable ICBMs and JL-2 SLBMs. Together with the DF-41, these nuclear-capable missiles compose China’s strategic deterrent capability.

Even with China’s deployment of a new missile it is difficult to overcome the overwhelming superiority of US nuclear armament. The United States deploys about 400 ICBMs to China’s 70, mutually deterring the nuclear threat.

But China’s GLCMs raise the stakes of a possible arms race between the United States and China in the Asia Pacific. During the 70th anniversary parade, China also unveiled the DF-17 and DF-100 GLCMs. The DF-17 is China’s first hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) and the DF-100 is a supersonic weapon with a range of 1500 kilometres. Russia has also just entered their new ‘Avangard’ HGV into service.

Hypersonic weapon development is underway the world over. Compared with subsonic weapons, such as the Tomahawk missile, a hypersonic weapon has a reduced total flight time, increasing offensive capability. The proliferation of hypersonic weapons has the potential to destabilise and upset regional stability. US General John Hyten has said that there is no defence ‘that could deny the employment of such a weapon’.

China already deploys DF-21D medium-range ballistic missiles and DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missiles. These two missiles were unveiled during a military parade in 2015. It is estimated that both are capable of attacking naval targets, including aircraft carriers. The DF-26 has a maximum range of 4000 kilometres and is known as the ‘Guam Killer’.

These ballistic missiles and GLCMs play a key role in China’s anti access/area denial strategy, in which China aims to build ‘sanctuary’ within the first or second island chains. This sanctuary has two purposes: to protect China’s nuclear submarines and to restrict the actions of US warships. While China doesn’t have a great number of anti-ship ballistic missiles it does possess enough to deter hostilities within the island chains.

Joseph Nye points out that fixed bases on Okinawa are also increasingly vulnerable because of China’s advanced ballistic missiles. These advanced weapons change US calculations in the potential use of force.

China has increased its missile capability by more than the United States in recent years, with the latter having little to show in effective proportionate countermeasure. China’s ballistic missiles and GLCMs are deployed from within China and protected. The current US missile defence system cannot intercept all missiles perfectly and cannot deny a ground-launched exercise from China.

After the United States withdrew from the INF Treaty it immediately tested a GLCM and a ground-launched ballistic missile. Additionally, the US Army is expecting the arrival of a long-range hypersonic weapon (LRHW) in 2023. The LRHW is a ground-launched hypersonic glide vehicle like the DF-17.

China has been critical of these developments, with Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang advising the United States to ‘abandon outdated notions of Cold War thinking and zero-sum games and exercise restraint in developing arms’.

Secretary Esper argues in favour of placing GLCMs in Asia. If the United States were to deploy a new type of missile in Asia, three candidate sites would be found in the US island of Guam and the US allies of Japan and South Korea. The two allies would undoubtedly feel knock-on effects from the new US plans. In the past, China has directly warned Japan and South Korea not to accept the deployment of US intermediate-range missiles. China imposing sanctions on South Korea in response to the 2017 Terminal High Altitude Area Defense deployment suggests that new US missiles would result in similar circumstances for both Japan and South Korea. South Korea has already said it does not have plans for these missiles on their soil, spelling trouble for any US effort in persuasion.

The United States is likely to maintain its nuclear superiority despite China’s improving capability. But China’s intermediate-range missiles do reach US assets in East Asia. These missiles are beginning to change the game — a longstanding power imbalance between the United States and China in Asia is now becoming one in which China’s second-strike capabilities offer Beijing much more security than it once had. The United States restarting its GLCM development is ample evidence of an unfolding balancing phenomenon.

The United States and China already are engaged in a trade war, and perhaps even a tech-war. Add to that a missile race and it’s clear the US–China struggle for power in Asia is escalating.