Between a rock and a hard place: Europe in a post-INF world

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ABSTRACT
The end of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has the potential to plunge Europe and NATO into deep crisis. Russia’s continued violation coupled with the Donald J. Trump administration’s desire to balance against Moscow and Beijing could force a new missile debate on Europeans. Even though Washington is trying to assuage its allies, the specter of another round of INF missile deployments to Europe is not unrealistic. Meanwhile, NATO’s European members face a dilemma. Some want NATO to resolutely push back against Russia. Others want to avoid a new deployment debate, at almost all costs. The Kremlin will use these cleavages to weaken NATO. If not carefully handled, NATO’s response to the Russian missile buildup could lead to domestic turmoil in a number of European states and render the alliance ineffective for a prolonged period. Europeans need to act now and voice their preferences in the military and diplomatic domains. A number of different military options are available, below the level of deploying new INF missiles in Europe. However, Europeans need to consider trade-offs regarding crisis and arms-race stability. At the same time, it will be up to European capitals to conceptualize a new arms-control framework for the post-INF world, one that takes into account today’s geopolitical realities and the entanglement of modern conventional and nuclear forces. Given the Trump administration’s loathing of arms control, concepts of mutual restraint may well have to wait for the next US administration. In any case, that should not stop Europeans from taking on more responsibility for their own security.

KEYWORDS
Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty; nuclear; Russia; NATO; Europe; arms control; deterrence

The 1987 bilateral1 US-Russian treaty banning intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF)—a milestone in helping to end the Cold War—is dead. INF had been under pressure at least since 2014, when the Barack Obama administration went public with its accusation that Russia had violated the treaty by testing a new ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) in the forbidden ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. All subsequent efforts to
bring Russia back into compliance failed. On October 20, 2018, Donald Trump announced the United States’ intention to withdraw from the treaty. The demise of the INF Treaty will be most painfully felt in Europe. US allies will have to decide whether and how to support Washington’s next moves to counter Russia’s new intermediate-range capabilities and how to balance mounting political and military pressures from both Moscow and Washington with their own preferences. In that process, European NATO allies will face a number of difficult trade-offs: how to secure their defense against Russia; how to prevent a new missiles arms race on the continent; and how to maintain NATO unity. Allies’ divergent views on these issues could deeply divide the alliance in a post-INF world. To avoid that outcome, allies need to start weighing their options now.

Defending against Russian intermediate-range missiles

In July 2018, NATO heads of state and government reaffirmed their intention to “remain fully committed to the preservation of this landmark arms control treaty.” Therefore, Trump’s withdrawal announcement came somewhat as a surprise to most US allies. In the weeks following Trump’s announcement, US officials began to provide more details about the Russian violation. According to these public statements, Russia had tested a GLCM, the Novator 9M729 (NATO designation SSC-8, “Screwdriver”), from both fixed and mobile launchers, demonstrating flight ranges well beyond the INF compliance threshold. Even the German government, which had previously been hesitant to call out Russia publicly, shifted course. On November 20, 2018, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that “we know” that Russia has not been complying with the INF Treaty “for some time.” In December 2018, NATO allies announced they “strongly support the finding of the United States that Russia is in material breach of its obligations under the INF Treaty.” A last-ditch effort, suggested by Chancellor Merkel, to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis could only delay US withdrawal from the INF Treaty. Notification of withdrawal officially began on February 1, 2019, to be effective six months hence.

If nothing unexpected happens (such as Russia agreeing to eliminate the violating missile), INF will be history by the fall of 2019.

In a March 2017 Congressional hearing, General Paul Selva, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, informed Congress that “there are no military requirements we cannot currently satisfy due to our compliance with the INF Treaty. While there is a military

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requirement to prosecute targets at ranges covered by the INF Treaty, those fires do not have to be ground-based.” However, Selva also underscored that “the system itself presents a risk to most of our facilities in Europe. And we believe that the Russians have deliberately deployed it in order to pose a threat to NATO and to facilities within the NATO area of responsibility.” According to US Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, as of late 2018, Russia had fielded multiple battalions of 9M729 missiles. Anonymous Western intelligence sources suggest that at least two of those battalions are based in the European part of Russia. The Russian effort suggests that Moscow will, in the not-distant future, have a militarily significant ground-based intermediate-range capability—one that NATO cannot ignore.

The Russian violation and potential further 9M729 deployments in the years ahead should be seen in the political context of Moscow’s illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and ongoing discussions about its military doctrine. According to the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), Moscow “mistakenly assesses that the threat of nuclear escalation or actual first use of nuclear weapons would serve to ‘de-escalate’ a conflict on terms favorable to Russia.” This refers to the fear of extended-deterrence failure: a Russian attack on a militarily weak NATO member state in Eastern Europe, perhaps in the Baltics. In that scenario, Russia could resort to the early and limited use of non-strategic nuclear weapons to coerce NATO into accepting a military fait accompli—a concept also known as “escalate to de-escalate.” While this was initially regarded as a defensive concept, the NPR’s assessment reflects a fear that Moscow could turn this concept on its head and use it for offensive purposes. Without the capabilities for an immediate, measured nuclear response, NATO would have little choice but to accept defeat, according to Western analysts.

Seen from this angle, additional Russian INF weapons would give the Russian military further means to hold NATO targets, deep in Western Europe and critical for reinforcement in the event of a military crisis, at greater risk. Against the background of NATO already grappling with the worst-case scenario of not being able to defend the Baltic states in a conflict with Russia, INF missiles would further tip the already precarious

9 Ibid.
10 Office of the Director of National Intelligence.
15 Proponents of that logic refer to the readiness levels of NATO’s dual-capable aircraft in Europe, which are currently measured in weeks, and the assumption that allies’ aircraft might not be able to penetrate Russian airspace. According to NATO, its dual-capable aircraft “are available for nuclear roles at various levels of readiness—the highest level of readiness is measured in weeks.” NATO, “NATO’s Nuclear Deterrence Policy and Forces,” December 3, 2015, <www.nato.int/cps/en/natoq/topics_50068.html>. See also Alexander Lanoszka and Michael A. Hunzeker, “Confronting the Anti-access/Area Denial and Precision Strike Challenge in the Baltic Region,” RUSI Journal, Vol. 161, No. 5 (2016), pp. 12–18.
regional military balance in favor of Russia, most notably by threatening to disrupt NATO’s supply and reinforcement chains. Whether nuclear- or conventionally tipped, new Russian INF missiles could fit perfectly in line with an offensive interpretation of escalate to de-escalate.

Whether or not a majority of European allies see INF missiles in conjunction with escalate to de-escalate or even believe in the concept, the dynamics between NATO’s relative conventional inferiority in Eastern Europe and new INF-range Russian missiles will increase the pressure on European NATO allies to consider defensive and offensive military countermeasures. One area will be missile defense. Defending against low-flying, maneuverable cruise missiles is anything but trivial and cannot result in closing off entire geographical areas to Russian attack. Nevertheless, NATO could opt for point defense, e.g., using the US Patriot system equipped with PAC-3 interceptors to defend critical choke points and command centers in Western Europe, such as the Ramstein US Air Force Base or the Bremerhaven port in Germany. As a prerequisite, NATO would have to scrap its long-standing policy of publicly insisting that missile defense is “not directed against Russia.” No doubt, Moscow may view an interconnected system of point defenses against cruise missiles as an invitation to expand its INF arsenal even further. It would also add fuel to the debate about NATO burden sharing. Missile defense is anything but cheap, potentially of limited effectiveness, and European allies would feel considerable pressure from Washington to shoulder the financial lion’s share of their deployment. Perhaps most importantly, PAC-3 tests against cruise missiles have not been tremendously successful in the past.

Another area will be INF-compliant offensive systems. Since the INF Treaty does not cover sea- or air-based intermediate-range missiles, European leaders could consider asking the United States to increase its naval presence in European waters. Additional conventionally armed sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) could increase the pressure on Moscow. One problem is that the NPR recommended the pursuit of “a modern nuclear-armed SLCM.” In a crisis, Russia might find it impossible to distinguish between nuclear- and conventionally armed SLCMs, given US reliance on these conventional weapons in recent conflicts, and Moscow’s continued concern about this US capability. An alternative could be to increase the rotational deployment of US bombers equipped with conventional long-range precision-strike assets, such as JASSM-ER, to Western Europe. NATO planners, however, would have to consider the risk of inadvertent escalation, should Russia misread US bomber deployments to Europe in a crisis as

preparations for a preventive strike. Another risk is that, in the event of a crisis, deploying sea- and air-launched assets would take at least a couple of hours, if not days.

In sum, none of those measures is without risks and costs, and proponents of scrapping the INF Treaty in the United States could use them to argue for developing new intermediate-range ground-launched missiles. From a purely military perspective, new ground-launched INF missiles would not come with a discrimination problem for the Russians if they were single use, and their readiness levels would be below an hour if put on mobile launchers. But, from the political point of view, deploying new INF missiles would be a domestic nightmare scenario for a number of European allies and a massive burden for NATO.

Preventing a new missiles arms race

To increase pressure on Russia to return to compliance, Congress mandated the secretary of defense in late 2017 to begin research and development of a conventional GLCM within the INF range. This fits with the Trump administration’s integrated strategy to pressure Russia’s return to compliance while preparing for a world without an INF Treaty in force. In the words of an anonymous US official, the idea behind this proposal was “to send a message to the Russians that they will pay a military price” for violating INF by “posturing ourselves to live in a post-INF world… if that is the world the Russians want.” This embryonic research effort might well develop into a production-scale program in the next three to four years if it were to receive appropriate funding from Congress. Ironically, the US decision to pull out of the INF Treaty—a decision that many members of Congress opposed—could increase the pressure on Congress to fund exactly those weapons the treaty banned for more than thirty years. First, US lawmakers would have to ask themselves whether the United States should continue to adhere to a treaty it willingly abrogated while Russia is free to expand its INF arsenal. Funding a new INF-range GLCM could well be seen as correcting a strategic disadvantage vis-à-vis Russia. Second, pushing back against the Kremlin is perhaps one of the very few policy topics where lawmakers from both sides of the aisle can still find common ground. A new missile against Russia and in pursuit of strengthening US assurances to Europe’s eastern allies could garner enough bipartisan political support.

In any case, new INF missiles would confront Europe with a formidable political dilemma, for they would ultimately force a debate about their deployment. Back in the early 1980s, the fielding of nuclear-tipped US Pershing II and Gryphon cruise missiles sparked massive protests in NATO basing countries, and in the case of West Germany led to prolonged political turmoil and the fall of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the Social Democrats. Fears of nuclear Armageddon were running high and gave a boost to pacifist parties such as the Greens. While a look into the history books might be helpful.

in identifying certain parallels to NATO’s dual-track decision, today’s post-INF world is significantly different from the Cold War. One difference is that public attention to matters concerning NATO and Russia has significantly decreased. Though debates about nuclear systems usually draw public attention, the system currently undergoing research and development by the Department of Defense is not nuclear capable. However, the same European parties opposed to US deployments in the 1980s could well succeed in leading again the charge against new INF missiles, and exploit a growing discomfort among Europeans with America’s role in the world and carefree willingness to abrogate agreements that benefit Europe. After all, Washington’s withdrawal from the INF Treaty was not the first decision under Trump that cut against core European interests, such as Trump’s nixing the 2016 Paris Climate Accord and the Iran nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Fed up with American wrecking-ball diplomacy, certain European allies might consider radical countermeasures. While French President Emmanuel Macron is pushing ever harder for European “strategic autonomy” in the realm of defense and perhaps even in nuclear matters, some members of the ruling German Social Democrats—the junior partner in Merkel’s grand coalition—have already pondered a German request for the removal of some twenty US nuclear gravity bombs, which would result in Berlin opting out of NATO’s operational nuclear-sharing arrangement. Fueled by the growing transatlantic rift, strong public opposition to a new arms race on the continent could easily resurface in a number of countries, and not just in Germany.

In order to avoid the domestic political costs of a new missile arms race, those European NATO countries most likely opposed to a symmetrical US response with GLCMs—that is, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain—would probably push even more resolutely than they already have for an INF follow-on arms-control solution with Moscow. After all, it was an arms-control offer by NATO—built into the dual-track decision—that paved the way for the final elimination of INF systems. The problem is that any new arms-control approach, in order to have the slightest chance of becoming reality, would have to take into account the political multipolarity of the twenty-first century and the increasing entanglement of different military assets. Opponents of the INF Treaty in the United States have long argued that China’s growing arsenal of nuclear weapons is a threat to American interests. But in reality, China’s capabilities are limited and its military doctrine is focused on deterring aggression rather than initiating it. Moreover, China has shown no interest in acquiring advanced nuclear weapons.

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27 NATO’s dual-track decision came in response to Moscow’s missile buildup and included two components. The first component saw the deployment of US ground-based missiles to several allied states in Europe in order to put Soviet military installations at risk. The second component was an arms-control offer to Moscow to forgo US deployments should Moscow reverse its missile buildup. For a good overview, see Kristina Spohr Readman, “Conflict and Cooperation in Intra-alliance Nuclear Politics: Western Europe, the United States, and the Genesis of NATO’s Dual-Track Decision, 1977–1979,” Journal of Cold War Studies, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2011), pp. 39–89.


32 “Select Reactions to the INF Treaty Crisis.”
INF-range missiles threatens the United States’s ability to guarantee free and open passage in the international waters surrounding China. According to this logic, spearheaded by Donald Trump’s current national security advisor, John Bolton, US sea- and air-based strike assets are under increasing pressure from China, which was never constrained by the INF Treaty. Additional land-based missiles could help the United States regain the upper hand in the East Asian theater, the argument goes. When Trump announced his intention to withdraw from INF at the sidelines of a political rally in Nevada, he cited Russian noncompliance and China as reasons to pull out of the accord.

Since China’s capabilities have become a recurring narrative in US foreign and security policy, future arms-control concepts might aim to extend the bilateral US–Russian arms control dialogue to include China. But how realistic is that? First of all, and most importantly, both Russia and the United States—which together still possess 90 percent of all nuclear warheads worldwide—would have to be willing to offer significant incentives for China to engage in a three-way arms-control process. Given that China has considerably fewer strategic nuclear arms than the two erstwhile Cold War contenders, Moscow and Washington would probably have to be ready to further reduce their numbers of strategic nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles or to consider a system of equal limits with different sub-limits for a specific range and/or payload capabilities. Thinking further ahead, Beijing could demand an inclusion of its regional rival India, which would likely prompt New Delhi to demand the same for Pakistan. North and South Korea, too, have deployed missiles in the INF category, and Russia could potentially seek British and French reductions as well.

Beyond the geopolitical challenges, any INF follow-on framework would face the difficulty of defining the scope of military systems covered. The original treaty was already a hybrid, banning nuclear and conventional ground-launched systems alike. Including China would probably require broadening the scope and adding sea- and air-based systems, i.e., those systems where the United States still enjoys superiority vis-à-vis Beijing. Russia would also broach issues relating to missile defense and drones, two areas of frequent Russian complaints which are currently not covered by any arms-control framework. The same could be said about interconnected missiles, sensors, guidance, and other technologies relating to anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities. These systems are particularly relevant in regional theaters, such as Eastern Europe or the South China Sea. Here, the complete lack of a modern conventional arms-control framework would further complicate potential efforts to focus on classical INF weapons alone. Cyber weapons and outer-space assets could also be added to the mix, further extending the list of issues to cover in a new agreement.


35 Russia accused the United States of violating the INF Treaty by the use of drones, by testing its antimissile systems with forbidden missiles, and by building a missile-defense system in Eastern Europe, allegedly capable of also launching GLCMs for offensive purposes. See “Russian Compliance with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.”

36 “Confronting the Anti-access/Area Denial and Precision Strike Challenge in the Baltic Region.”
For some European states, addressing some or all of these issues through arms control might be desirable in order to avoid the costs of a new arms race. But it would also mean that they would have to be the ones providing the necessary intellectual input and political will to rethink arms control for the twenty-first century. As sketched out above, different options are conceivable, including, inter alia, a renovated bilateral INF framework covering additional military means. Including China at this time, however, seems a stretch, and Europeans should be careful to fall for such calls that could torpedo the arms-control process. Europeans would be well advised to start thinking about these issues, not least because the specter of a new deployment debate could open up political leeway for a simultaneous arms-control offer to Russia, akin to the dual-track decision.

**Maintaining NATO unity**

It is still too early to assess whether Europe will ultimately experience another arms race with INF missiles, but chances are that influential policy makers in Washington and Moscow will find certain positive aspects to a new missile standoff. The calculus in Moscow—probably correct—may be that a new deployment debate could lead to acrimonious disputes within NATO, rendering the alliance ineffective for a prolonged period. The prospect of splitting NATO could be tempting for Moscow, at least initially.

This consideration alone points to the need to maintain unity among allies. But as much as certain aspects of today’s INF crisis resemble some features of the Cold War Euromissiles debate, the political vectors have changed considerably. Today’s NATO members are much less unified in their assessment of the Russian threat. Dividing lines run between the north and the south as well as between the west and the east of the European continent. NATO’s southern members attach much greater significance to threats from the Middle East and Africa, in particular linked to state failure, migration, and Islamist terrorism. The Scandinavian and especially eastern members are almost solely focused on Russia, and united in their belief that only the United States and hence NATO can guarantee their continued sovereignty and independence. Most of NATO’s western members take somewhat of a middle ground in that regard, balancing a less alarmist stance toward Russia with calls for reassuring eastern allies and support for Europe’s south.

Even though NATO members “emphasized that the situation whereby the United States and other parties fully abide by the [INF] Treaty and Russia does not, is not sustainable,” there remain underlying differences regarding NATO’s response to the Russian violation. While UK Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said that his country stands “absolutely resolute with the United States in hammering home a clear message that Russia needs to respect the treaty obligation that it signed,” Poland’s President

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Andrzej Duda went as far as to announce that, in a post-INF world, Poland would be prepared to station US medium-range missiles on its soil.\textsuperscript{42} Reactions in Berlin and other Western European capitals were different, to say the least. German law makers, in particular, from across the political spectrum continue to call for a diplomatic solution to the INF crisis. Roderich Kiesewetter, a conservative and one of Merkel’s point men in the Foreign Relations Committee of the Bundestag, urged that a new deployment debate be avoided “at all cost.”\textsuperscript{43} Heiko Maas, Germany’s foreign minister from the Social Democrats, seconded this. “We don’t want Europe to become the scene of a debate on a nuclear arms buildup,” he emphasized.\textsuperscript{44} As mentioned before, some of his party colleagues, as well as politicians from the Greens, even pondered the taboo of Germany opting out of NATO’s operational nuclear-sharing mechanism in conjunction with Germany signing the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (or “ban treaty”).\textsuperscript{45} In contrast, Maas’s conservative cabinet colleague Ursula von der Leyen would not even rule out nuclear-tipped US missiles in Europe.\textsuperscript{46} The Spanish and Italian governments have expressed their explicit concern about the US decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty.\textsuperscript{47}

One should expect this cacophony of diverging views to grow as Moscow and Washington step up political and military pressure. In a first reaction to the US withdrawal announcement, Russia’s Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov noted that it is “not the territory of the United States, but the countries that deployed American complexes with medium and shorter-range missiles, [that] will be the targets of Russia’s response.”\textsuperscript{48} Moscow’s well-known tactics of divide and rule are already on full display.

Another significant difference from the Cold War is the United States’s neglect of diplomacy. While arriving at NATO’s dual-track decision in the late 1970s was anything but a smooth ride, it was also a diplomatic victory for Washington. It meant convincing the European allies to get behind America’s proposal to deploy medium-range, nuclear-tipped missiles to Europe—a plan that caused massive domestic resistance on the old continent. Today’s American leadership is less interested in mediating and more in dominating. “America first” is as much directed at NATO’s enemies as at the alliance. Traditional European allies with significant political clout and the ability to serve as potential bridge builders to Russia, such as Germany and France, have regularly been sidelined, ignored,

rejected, or publicly derided. Other US partners that share Washington’s hawkish views of Russia—such as Poland—enjoy considerably more political favor. When Warsaw tabled a proposal to pay for the permanent deployment of a US tank division to Poland without consulting other NATO members, Washington’s reaction was not to reprimand Poland for potentially undermining NATO unity, but to officially start assessing the proposal for a Polish-funded “Fort Trump.”

It was ultimately the transactional character of the Trump administration, focused on making allies pay for their security, that made it possible for Warsaw to act outside of the traditional NATO framework.

Further, Washington has no interest in arms control anymore. A diplomatic coup such as the dual-track is hardly conceivable these days. It is not just John Bolton who is pushing arms control to the sidelines. The NPR and other strategic documents of the Trump administration make it abundantly clear that the very concept of “America first” is irreconcilable with the broader idea that even superpowers can sometimes benefit from showing restraint. This puts Washington at odds with a number of important European allies that desire the further integration of arms control into US and NATO foreign and security strategy.

Should US leaders, at some point, decide to ask allies to field a new generation of GLCMs, Europe would be caught between a rock and a hard place. Although Europeans should be expected to support Washington—considering that Russia is the perpetrator and not the United States—Washington’s approval ratings are on a downward trajectory in a number of European capitals. While Europeans must consider the growing military impact of Russia’s new INF missiles arsenal, many European governments fear the likely negative domestic reactions to a deployment debate. To be sure, states like Poland or those in the Baltics have every right to ask for additional reassurances, but their willingness to deal with the Trump administration bilaterally risks NATO’s consensus rule. Traditional allies such as Germany want to see a substantial arms-control offer, but the willingness to engage with Russia is in short supply in Washington and Eastern Europe.

The way forward

In dealing with the political fallout of the end of INF, allies face a number of difficult trade-offs that may require prioritizing certain goals at the expense of others. Maintaining NATO unity should be the overarching goal. But it will be difficult to achieve. In particular, the potential tension between a defense- and an arms-control-centered approach could strain the alliance significantly. To prevent paralyzing NATO, European allies should look for the middle ground and start weighing different options.

The short-term goal should be for Europeans to prevent Moscow fielding more INF missiles. Continuous diplomatic dialogue with Moscow, including at the highest political levels, is one way to engage the Kremlin. Another option is to name and shame Moscow’s actions using prominent political fora such as the United Nations Security Council. At the

50 “We Need to Talk about Disarmament.”
start of 2019, Belgium and Germany, two countries directly affected by the Russian treaty violation, assumed nonpermanent seats in the Security Council for two years. With this opportunity, they should repeatedly shed light on Russia’s violation and call on Moscow to exercise restraint. However, preventing Moscow from upping the ante will likely not succeed without coercive means. Additional economic and financial sanctions from the European Union or a select number of European countries with strong economic ties to Russia could be one of those means. Also, political prestige projects such as the Nord Stream 2 pipeline connecting Russia and Germany through the Baltic Sea could be put into question.

Should all these measures fail, then, at some point, Moscow’s missile buildup will cross a certain threshold that will be regarded as posing a significant military threat. Now is the time to start internal deliberations as to where that threshold is and what military countermeasures are preferable. For domestic political reasons and to maintain NATO unity, these measures should at first be below the level of fielding new GLCMs. They should also contribute to crisis and arms-race stability. As outlined above, none of the measures discussed—point defenses, rotational bomber deployments, or additional sea-based assets—fulfill the requirements of both crisis and arms-race stability; missile-defense installations in particular would come with significant uncertainties and financial costs.

These considerations and potential pressure from Washington to opt for a new GLCM could, in the medium term, lead to a deployment debate, at which point European allies would have to decide whether or not to support American missiles in Europe and under what political conditions. Given the likely domestic political pressure to oppose US missiles in a number of countries, one should not exclude the possibility of a “coalition of the unwilling.” At the same time, countries such as Poland could try to bypass NATO, offering to field new GLCMs on a bilateral basis. This prospect—NATO split between allies opposed to and in favor of deployment—would be a nightmare scenario for the alliance and a feast for the Kremlin. Under all circumstances, Europeans should work hard to prevent such an outcome.

This is why European as well as US policy makers should start preparatory work on a meaningful and realistic arms-control offer to Moscow. A deployment track without the necessary cooperative track will deeply divide NATO. Governments in deployment-critical countries would not be able to sell their domestic audiences a missile-arms buildup without a clear prospect of easing tensions in the future. This is why American policy makers must change course and rediscover the old instruments of cooperative security. In order to arrive at a modern arms-control offer, Europeans should start consultations with US allies in East Asia, which could be affected by a future US missile buildup vis-à-vis China. In parallel, NATO allies need to work on the contours of an INF 2.0 framework that addresses current and future military capabilities outside of the classical INF scope on a bilateral US-Russian basis.

But arms control in a post-INF world should not only be seen in the context of a potential deployment debate. With the end of the INF, thirty years of successful US–Russian efforts to keep each other’s nuclear forces in check come to an end. Some scholars expect the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which limits the strategic

nuclear forces of the two countries with ranges beyond those of INF, to be next on the chopping block.\textsuperscript{54} The consequences for crisis stability between Washington and Russia could be even more severe, as could the negative ramifications for the global nonproliferation and disarmament regime, most notably the already crisis-ridden Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In order to prevent the complete downfall of nuclear arms control and nonproliferation and a further divide between nuclear haves and have-nots, Washington and its partners in Europe need to get serious once more about working to salvage the global nuclear order.

**Conclusion**

The US decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty puts Europe in a highly problematic position. Europe’s leaders would be well advised to consider the possibility of the United States developing new INF missiles in the years to come. Pressure to counter Russia’s and China’s growing INF-range capabilities will continue to mount. In the end, European allies could again be confronted with a new deployment debate. To maintain NATO unity, European leaders should now begin internal deliberations on how to handle such a contingency. In addition to political and economic pressure on the Kremlin, military countermeasures below the deployment of new INF missiles should also be weighed. In parallel, US allies should resolutely push for a new arms-control framework that takes into account twenty-first-century realities. If Europeans fail to craft a unified response to Moscow and to Washington, a new deployment debate and the specter of another arms race on the continent could seriously damage NATO. In turn, Washington must rediscover the instruments of diplomacy and restraint. Otherwise, the policies of “America first” could well lead to “America alone.”

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