

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

HONORABLE DAVID J. TRACHTENBERG
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR POLICY

ON
THE STATE OF ARMS CONTROL WITH RUSSIA

BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MAY 15, 2019

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION UNTIL RELEASED BY
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the current state of arms control with Russia.

Today, the United States faces an extraordinarily complex and dangerous global security environment, in which the central challenge to our prosperity and security is the reemergence of long-term strategic competition with China and Russia, which seek to overturn the long-standing rules-based international order and change territorial borders.

For decades, the United States led the world in efforts to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons. Successive treaties enabled reductions in accountable strategic U.S. nuclear warheads, first to 6,000, and ultimately to 1,550. Thousands of short-range nuclear weapons not covered by any treaty were almost entirely eliminated from the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Overall, the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile has drawn down by more than 85 percent from its Cold War high. The United States is committed to its long-held arms control, non-proliferation, and nuclear security objectives, particularly our commitment to the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Unfortunately, Russia and China have chosen a different path and have increased the role of nuclear weapons in their strategies and actively increased the size and sophistication of their nuclear forces.

For this reason, a robust and modern U.S. nuclear deterrent helps ensure the United States competes from a position of strength and can deter nuclear attack and large-scale conventional warfare between nuclear-armed states.

The Nuclear Threat

The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reflects DoD's strategic priority to maintain a safe, secure, survivable and effective nuclear deterrent. The NPR also declares the United States' commitment to arms control efforts that advance U.S., allied, and partner security; are verifiable and enforceable; and include partners that comply responsibly with their obligations.

The current security environment makes arms control extremely challenging in the near term. Any future arms control arrangement must be pursued in the context of the broader security environment, which has changed significantly in the past decade.

Russia

For example, over the past decade, Russia has been upgrading the capacity of its nuclear forces.

Russia continues to prioritize high levels of defense spending to upgrade its nuclear forces and pursue advanced weapons specifically designed to counter U.S. military capabilities. Russia's nuclear modernization program covers every leg of its strategic triad and includes advanced modern road-mobile and silo-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), new submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and long-range strategic bombers. According to Russia's

TASS News Agency, Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu announced on February 21, 2017, that 90 percent of the country's strategic nuclear forces will be armed with modern weaponry by 2020.

In March 2018, only a month after the United States and Russia reached the limits on strategic systems established under the New START Treaty, President Vladimir Putin announced – with great fanfare – that Russia is developing even more new nuclear weapons capabilities, which include: 1) an intercontinental-range, nuclear armed hypersonic glide vehicle; 2) a maneuverable, nuclear-armed air-launched ballistic missile; 3) a long-range, nuclear-powered cruise missile; 4) a nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed underwater unmanned vehicle; and 5) a new heavy intercontinental range ballistic missile, called the SARMAT. President Putin, during this same speech, also announced that Russia developed new laser weapons systems “that have been supplied to the troops since last year.”

This past February (2019), President Putin declared that Russia had successfully tested nuclear-propulsion engines that would allow the nuclear-tipped cruise missiles and underwater drones to travel for unlimited distances and evade traditional defenses.

On top of all of this, Russia is modernizing and expanding an active stockpile of approximately 2,000 nonstrategic nuclear weapons—often referred to as tactical nuclear weapons—that can be deployed on ships, bombers, tactical aircraft, and with ground forces. None of these are limited by any arms control treaty. In contrast, the United States forward deploys to Europe a small number of just one type of nonstrategic nuclear weapon—the B61 nuclear gravity bomb—which is delivered by dual-capable tactical aircraft. Both the B61 and its delivery aircraft are being modernized, but not increased in number.

Russia's military doctrine emphasizes the coercive nature and military value of nuclear weapons. During its military operation against Crimea, President Putin was getting ready to raise the alert level of Russian nuclear forces, effectively issuing veiled nuclear threats to ensure the West did not intervene. Russia has repeatedly brandished its nuclear sword towards our NATO Allies in recent years. In July 2017, Russian President Putin signed a new naval doctrine that stated, “under conditions of escalation of a military conflict, demonstration of readiness and determination to use force, including the use of nonstrategic nuclear weapons, is an effective deterrent factor.” And, more recently, in his annual state-of-the-nation address on February 20, 2019, Putin said that if Washington deployed intermediate-range missiles in Europe, Moscow would target the countries hosting the U.S. weapons.

China

Russia is not the United States' only strategic competitor pursuing nuclear increases. China continues its expansive military modernization and is focused on establishing regional dominance and expanding its ability to coerce U.S. allies and partners.

China is developing a new generation of mobile missiles, with warheads consisting of multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) and penetration aids. In particular, China has developed a new road-mobile strategic ICBM and its most advanced ballistic missile submarine armed with new submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM).

China has also announced development of a new nuclear-capable strategic bomber, indicating China's intent to develop a nuclear triad, and has deployed a nuclear-capable precision guided DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of attacking land and naval targets. China also tested a hypersonic glide vehicle in 2014.

China's nuclear forces include a mix of strategic-range systems capable of striking the U.S. homeland as well as theater-range forces capable of threatening allies, U.S. bases, and forces in the region. As China's capabilities both diversify and improve, there is risk China may perceive that these weapons provide it with coercive options in a crisis or conflict. China's modernization is troubling, and the lack of transparency combined with growing Chinese assertiveness in the region is one of the most serious risks to regional stability in the Indo-Pacific.

China is modernizing and rapidly expanding its already considerable nuclear forces, with little to no transparency regarding the scope and scale of its nuclear modernization program, and has rebuffed multiple U.S. attempts to engage in a meaningful bilateral dialogue on nuclear posture and risk reduction issues.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty Developments

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was once a cornerstone of security in Europe. By removing an entire class of weapons from the arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union, and subsequently Russia and other Soviet successor states, Europe and much of the world enjoyed increased security. But the INF Treaty no longer provided that security when Russia intentionally and blatantly produced, flight-tested, and fielded a missile system subject to the Treaty in direct violation of its legal obligation not to do so. When Russia produced the SSC-8 cruise missile and, after getting caught, fielded it and refused to destroy it, Russia removed a pillar of security for the United States and for our allies. At that point, as a practical matter, the INF Treaty bound our hands while Russia decided it could freely develop what the treaty prohibited.

On February 2, 2019, as a consequence of Russia's material breach of the INF Treaty, after exhausting every reasonable diplomatic, economic, and military effort to persuade Russia to comply with its treaty obligations, and consistent with the Sense of Congress expressed in the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, the United States suspended its obligations under the Treaty. We also gave notice of our withdrawal from it. As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg asserted, "Russia is in material breach of the INF Treaty and must use the next six months to return to full and verifiable compliance or bear sole

responsibility for its demise.” Allies fully support the U.S. decision to suspend its obligations under INF and withdraw from the Treaty.

To be clear, what prompted the U.S. suspension was not a minor violation or an interpretive difference, but Russia’s production, flight-testing, and fielding of multiple battalions of a ground-launched cruise missile system specifically banned by the INF Treaty. For those concerned that our suspension will cause Russia to develop these systems further, I can only say Russia’s legal obligations under the INF Treaty proved no practical barrier to its pursuit and fielding of a banned system in the first place. To assert that Russia is reacting to our suspension is to ignore the reality of Russia’s conduct under the INF Treaty.

As the President stated in February 2019, the United States is moving forward with developing ground-launched, INF-range missile capabilities. This is a direct consequence of Russia’s violation of the INF Treaty. Now that our Treaty obligations are suspended, the United States is developing systems that are conventional in nature, and this work is designed to be reversible should Russia return to compliance by verifiably destroying its INF Treaty-violating missiles, launchers, and associated support equipment. What sort of system we ultimately develop will be driven by our assessment of military requirements and in consultation with Congress and with our allies and partners.

The New START Treaty

As stated in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the United States is committed to arms control efforts that advance U.S., allied, and partner security; are verifiable and enforceable; and include partners that comply responsibly with their obligations. As both the 2018 NPR and the 2018 NATO Brussels Summit Communique noted, we must take account of the prevailing international security environment. In the arms control context, this means Russia and, increasingly, China.

While we assess Russia to be in compliance with the central limits of New START, the history of Russia’s arms control behavior is sobering. In addition to its violation of the INF Treaty, Russia has violated the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Open Skies Treaty, the Budapest Memorandum, and the Helsinki Accords. In addition, Russia is selectively implementing the Vienna Document and acted inconsistently with the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives.

Moreover, Russia is modernizing its growing and increasingly capable arsenal of shorter-range, nonstrategic nuclear weapons, which are also not covered by New START. Members of this Committee will remember that Russia’s nonstrategic arsenal was of great concern when the New START Treaty was ratified, and it remains a concern today.

That said, the Department supports pursuing a prudent arms control agenda, which could include extending the New START Treaty, provided the outcomes improve the security of the United

States and our allies and partners, and effectively help manage strategic competition among states.

Future Arms Control Efforts

Arms control can contribute to U.S. security by helping to manage strategic competition among states, and we are committed to meaningful arms control that decreases the chances of misperception and miscalculation that can lead to conflict. Arms control agreements are not something we sign onto for the sake of arms control. We do so to increase our national security.

The President wants serious arms control that delivers real security to the American people and our allies. So the President has charged his national security team to think more broadly about arms control, both in terms of the countries and the weapons systems involved. This may include addressing Russia's newer strategic systems that are not captured by New START; seeking to redress the significant imbalance in non-strategic nuclear weapons currently in Russia's favor; and encouraging China to join in efforts to increase transparency and limit its nuclear weapons ambitions. The Department of Defense is supporting the National Security Council's efforts to provide the President with the best options.

Conclusion

As a reliable ally and partner, the United States must advocate for effective arms control agreements that make the world more secure and include the willing participation and compliance of all parties.

We appreciate the attention of this Committee and the rest of the Congress to these issues, and we will keep you informed of developments. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.