

Countering Russian Intimidation and Aggression and Building a Better Security Environment

Remarks by

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Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me.

I am pleased to join Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs in briefing you on the various ways in which we are working at the Department, under the Secretary of State's leadership, to meet the challenges of competitive strategy that have been forced upon us by Russia's continuing efforts to be — as the Under Secretary has described — a determined and resourceful strategic rival of the United States.

In his remarks, the Under Secretary has summarized the broad sweep of our strategy to approach these challenges. In my own testimony, I will address these questions from the perspective of my current duties exercising delegated authorities of the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security across the so-called "T" family of bureaus at the Department. I will abbreviate my comments for oral delivery today, but I respectfully request that my full prepared remarks be entered into the record.

I. A Background of Hope

From the perspective of arms control and the ongoing challenges of managing our strategic relationship with Moscow, Mr. Chairman, it is worth remembering that we come to these tasks out of a long background not just of tensions and problems but also of some notable successes. The changes in the strategic environment that were occasioned by the waning and then end of the Cold War made possible an enormous lessening in nuclear tensions and in strategic arms reductions that have seen both countries' nuclear arsenals come down to small fractions of what they once were — in the U.S. case, a reduction of an extraordinary 88 percent or so.

It's important to remember this background, because it reminds one that it *is* possible to make progress in reducing nuclear tensions and the intensity of our strategic standoff with Moscow when the circumstances of the security environment are conducive to such movement. We hope to get back to that kind of environment, of course, and to contribute to this — as I will mention in a moment — we seek a new arms control relationship with Moscow to forestall the destabilizing global arms race that Russia's policies and posture today threaten to create.

II. *An Array of Russian Challenges*

For now, however, the security environment is indeed challenging, thanks in large part to Russia's destabilizing actions. Even leaving aside the broader aggression and [revisionism in Russian behavior under the Putin regime](#), the diversification and expansion of Russia's nuclear arsenal — and the increasing salience of such weapons in its strategy and doctrine — are troubling and destabilizing.

Russia is presently developing an extraordinary new bestiary of nuclear delivery systems for which there are no U.S. counterparts. These include not merely the new *Sarmat* intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), but also hypersonic delivery vehicles, a nuclear-powered underwater drone, and the madly reckless “flying Chernobyl” of the *Burevestnik* nuclear-powered cruise missile — a flying, nuclear reactor which recently experienced a flash meltdown that killed several Russian technicians and released radioactive contamination while the Russians were trying to recover it after having left it sitting on the bottom of the White Sea for a year, a mere 30 kilometers from the city of Severodvinsk.

Russia also has a large arsenal of *non*-strategic nuclear weapons: up to 2,000 of them, a vastly larger stockpile than we have. This Russian arsenal was already a source of concern in Washington when the New START agreement was before the Senate in 2010 — so much so that the Senate at the time made clear that addressing Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons needed to be a high priority for any future arms control agreement — but the problem is getting worse. Russia is projected to expand its number of non-strategic weapons considerably over the next decade.

Mr. Chairman, most observers will be familiar with the Russian 9M729 ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM), which we call the SSC-8. Production and deployment of that system placed Russia in material breach of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Russian unwillingness to return to full compliance led the United States to suspend, and eventually withdraw, from the INF Treaty. Yet the SSC-8 is only one of a broad range of new Russian ground-, sea-, and air-based nuclear or dual-capable delivery systems. These systems have more accuracy, longer ranges, and lower nuclear yields than before, and they are coming on line in support of a Russian nuclear doctrine and strategy that emphasizes — and periodically demonstrates, in large-scale exercises — both coercive and military uses of nuclear weaponry.

We assess that Russia does still remain in compliance with its New START obligations, but its behavior in connection with most other arms control agreements — and not merely the ill-fated INF Treaty — has been nothing short of appalling. As indicated in the Under Secretary's statement, Russia remains in chronic noncompliance with its conventional arms control obligations in the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, and it is only selectively fulfilling its commitments under the Vienna Document.

And then there is the problem of chemical weapons, where Russia condones and seeks to ensure impunity for continued violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) by its

Syrian client state. Further alarming is that Russia has violated the CWC itself — most dramatically, by *developing* and *using* a “*novichok*” nerve agent on the territory of a NATO ally, the United Kingdom, in 2018. This violation underscores that Russia failed to completely declare and destroy its complete chemical weapons program in contravention of the CWC. As the Under Secretary noted, Russia also implements the Open Skies Treaty only selectively; this causes concern because such selectivity risks undermining the Treaty’s confidence-building benefits, which are rooted in the demonstrable openness of being willing to allow overflights *anywhere* (and not merely over what one does not care to conceal). Furthermore, Russia’s decision to leave the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), ultimately taking China with it, was also a blow to international efforts to make continued progress on disarmament.

Moscow is also up to no good in new and emerging domains of actual or potential future conflict. In cyberspace, even while using malicious cyber behavior to meddle with democratic processes and intimidate leaderships abroad, Russia is working with China to co-opt and subvert discourse on international stability between states in cyberspace by turning it into a tool to help authoritarian governments exert so-called “sovereign” control over the information their populations are permitted to see and express.

Russia has also been developing capabilities that have turned space into a warfighting domain. It openly brags of having a ground-based laser system designed to “fight satellites in orbit,” for instance, and it is developing a ground-launched anti-satellite (ASAT) missile and conducting sophisticated on-orbit activities in support of its counterspace capabilities. And it has been doing this while advocating hollow and hypocritical arms control proposals for the “prevention of placement of weapons in outer space.”

Mr. Chairman, this is obviously a miserable record. And that is even before taking into account persistent questions that remain about Russia’s compliance with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) in light of the fact that Russia shows no sign of ever having rid itself of the secret and illegal biological weapons program that President Yeltsin actually admitted Russia possessed — and which President Putin has gone back to denying.

Nor have I yet mentioned Russia’s troubling diplomatic campaigns to undermine institutions of transparency and accountability in controlling weapons of mass destruction at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the United Nations. All of this would add up to a very grim picture even if Russia *were not* continuing its aggression and territorial seizures against Ukraine and Georgia, undertaking expeditionary warfare on behalf of the murderous regime in Damascus, and working to subvert democratic processes in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere.

III. *A Robust American Response*

As the Under Secretary outlined, however, we are certainly not taking all of this sitting down. From the perspective of the State Department’s “T” bureaus alone, we are working to address these challenges on multiple fronts.

Since 2014, in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine and Georgia, the United States has dramatically increased security assistance across the region, which signifies our steadfast commitment to collective defense under the North Atlantic Treaty and our continued support to European Allies and partners to counter Russian aggression and malign influence.

For example, as the Under Secretary highlighted, State and DoD have provided over \$1.6 billion in security assistance to Ukraine alone, in addition to significant assistance to key allies who are menaced by Russia's aggressive behavior. State, in particular, is using Foreign Military Financing (FMF) – through such programs as the Countering Russian Influence Fund (CRIF), the Black Sea Maritime Domain Awareness Program, and the European Recapitalization Incentive Program (ERIP) – to build defensive military capabilities, enhance territorial national defense to include border and maritime security, increase cyber security defenses, improve NATO-interoperability, and reduce partners' dependency on Russian-legacy equipment.

As the diplomatic interface between the U.S. defense sector and such recipients, the Political-Military Affairs (PM) Bureau has been instrumental in helping preserve the security and political autonomy of multiple U.S. allies, partners, and friends, and ensures State and Department of Defense funding and programs are closely coordinated to further our diplomatic and military objectives. Further from 2015-2018, the State Department authorized a total of \$1.75 billion in nationally-funded Foreign Military Sales and \$603 million in Direct Commercial Sales to Eastern Europe.

Nor is that all. The Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN) continues to provide several million dollars in capacity-building programming to support Ukraine, helping its export control system prevent smuggling of nuclear materials originating in Russia and helping its Maritime Border Guards rebuild themselves in order to be able to police the new maritime border they face as a result of Russia's invasion and attempted occupation of Crimea.

ISN has also been very active all around the world for the last two years in diplomatic outreach leveraging the threat of sanctions under Section 231 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA). CAATSA is a potent tool that Congress has given us, and we have been using it to cut back the revenue streams the Kremlin derives from overseas arms sales and to undermine the malign strategic relationships and geopolitical dependencies that Moscow builds through its arms trade. Even though we have only invoked Section 231 sanctions once — against China last year for taking delivery of Sukhoi fighter aircraft and S-400 missiles from Russia — we have so far managed to shut down billions in Russian arms sales that would likely otherwise have taken place. In conjunction with our PM colleagues, who seek to help U.S. friends and partners find alternatives to Russian equipment, we will be vigorously continuing this CAATSA diplomacy in 2020.

We have also been imposing costs on Russia for some of its more egregious behavior — specifically, through sanctions on Russia under the Chemical and Biological Warfare (CBW) Act of 1991 in response to Russia's *novichok* attack in Britain. And we have continued to impose sanctions against Russian entities that supply weapons to programs of concern under the Iran,

North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act (INKSNA), as we announced most recently in May 2019.

Meanwhile, the State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Cyber Issues (S/CCI) has been working to blunt Russian efforts to weaponize discourse on state behavior in cyberspace. As our answer to such disingenuous and dangerous Russian (and Chinese) efforts, we are working with likeminded foreign partners to promote norms and standards of responsible behavior that we hope will become "best practices" for all nations in cyberspace, and to build international cooperation to hold states such as Russia accountable when they transgress those norms.

For its part, the Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance (AVC) Bureau continues efforts to bring Russia back into compliance with its arms control agreements and norms, and works to draw attention to Russia's destabilizing pursuit of exotic nuclear weapons and new domains of warfare. One example of this is the ongoing engagements with foreign counterparts to advance effective and non-legally binding transparency and confidence building measures and guidelines that promote responsible behavior in outer space.

I would like to stress, Mr. Chairman, that these State Department efforts are being approached increasingly systematically, as we coordinate them into an integrated strategy for pushing back against Russian mischief. The U.S. National Security Strategy makes clear that it is our duty to take great power competition seriously after many years of post-Cold War neglect, and we are doing so. At the ISN Bureau, for instance, we have been working to posture ourselves better in this regard, including by leveraging nonproliferation-derived tools and skills — such as in using export controls, sanctions, and interdiction to keep dangerous technologies out of dangerous hands — into the competitive strategy arena. Indeed, we are working to replicate this intensity of focus across the whole "T"-family space in support of broader State Department and U.S. Government efforts.

In that respect, Mr. Chairman, though they are not State Department lines of effort in themselves, I would be remiss if I did not at least mention some of the ways in which other parts of the Government are responding to the Russian challenge as well. This Administration is firmly committed to keeping the United States' own nuclear modernization on track — including through replacing legacy delivery systems in order to prevent block obsolescence of our nuclear "Triad," developing a new sea-launched cruise missile to replace the one scrapped by the Obama Administration, developing a lower-yield ballistic missile warhead to help us meet the threat of Russia's extensive and growing array of analogous devices, deploying the modernized version of our B61 nuclear gravity bomb and ensuring that our allies maintain dual-capable aircraft in order to keep NATO nuclear deterrence relevant in the years ahead, and building the kind of responsive nuclear production infrastructure we need to support defense and deterrence on an ongoing basis.

Similarly, in the wake of the INF treaty's demise as a result of Russian violations, the United States is now growing the seeds planted by the Administration's INF Response Strategy in 2017. As you will recall, Mr. Chairman, that strategy started the process of exploring, in a treaty-compliant manner, potential U.S. development of INF-class delivery systems as a way to

give Moscow a concrete incentive to change course and abandon its illegal SSC-8 program. As it turned out, of course, Moscow refused to come back into compliance, thus killing the INF Treaty. Nevertheless, we are increasingly well prepared to meet U.S. defense needs in the post-INF era. At present, the Department of Defense has begun research, development, and testing of conventionally-armed ground-launched INF-range systems to provide us and potentially our allies with more options when confronted with the dangerous proliferation of dual-use Russian (and Chinese) missiles worldwide.

IV. *Building A New, Improved Security Environment*

It is this kind of resolution and focus in the face of national security threats, Mr. Chairman, that can be our ticket to getting through this troubling phase of geopolitical competition. If we can stay on course — maintaining our solid deterrence strategy, completing our own nuclear and military modernization, continuing to reassure our allies not just of our capacity but of our enduring *willingness* to stand with them against intimidation and aggression, and keeping all these various responsive initiatives on track, while seeking good faith negotiation to advance shared interests wherever possible — I believe we can stabilize the situation.

Here is where it is again important to recall our Cold War history. Even during some of the most dangerous days of that perilous rivalry, it was usually possible to communicate and even negotiate with the USSR. It was still possible to find, and to pursue, shared interests — not only in preserving strategic security and using arms control and confidence-building diplomacy to help keep that bilateral arms race from precipitating into chaos, but also in signal accomplishments such as negotiating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty together.

Such engagement, Mr. Chairman, we can yet do. There remain signs of life for constructive dialogue with Moscow, upon which I believe we can build. Russia works with us constructively, for instance, in co-chairing the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), and Russian diplomats have been willing to participate in the pathbreaking new initiative on Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND). This Administration has already had two engagements with Russia in our Strategic Security Dialogue — the first in Helsinki in 2017, in which I had the honor of participating when serving on the National Security Council Staff, and the second last summer with the Deputy Secretary and the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security— and we hope to re-engage on this soon, as we build out our vision of a future for arms control.

We made clear in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review that we seek arms control where it contributes to the security of the United States and our allies, and when it is verifiable and other parties comply with their obligations. In fact, the President has made his personal commitment to effective arms control very clear — and, in particular, to limiting the dangerous Russian and Chinese nuclear ambitions. He has publicly called for us to engage both Moscow and Beijing in a new project of *trilateral* arms control to help effectively manage strategic competition and build towards a better, safer, and more prosperous future together.

As the Secretary of State has made clear, we have convened teams of experts to explore the way forward, including the question of possibly extending New START, which would otherwise expire in early 2021 but could be extended for up to five years by agreement with Russia. We are hard at work on these issues, and hope to have more to say about this soon. Let me say, Mr. Chairman, that I am personally excited about the prospect of building out our new arms control initiative. I look forward to keeping this Committee informed of these developments, and to working with you and your colleagues closely.

V. *Conclusion*

Clearly, Mr. Chairman, we face formidable challenges in the current security environment — many of them specifically the result of Russian behavior. I would submit, however, that there are also grounds for hope. Even as we work resolutely to counter Russian intimidation and aggression everywhere it raises its head, I can assure you that we at the State Department are keenly focused upon turning such hope into reality, while continuing to protect the national security interests of the American people.

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