
Moiz Khan

Introduction

In February 2019, both the US and Russia announced that they would withdraw from the 1987 Treaty between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. Both had accused each other of repeatedly violating the agreement.\(^1\) Commonly known as the INF Treaty, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty was signed between former US President Ronald Reagan and his Soviet counterpart General-Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev on December 8, 1987, eliminating an entire class of destabilising nuclear weapons that were deployed in Europe. It banned ground-launched nuclear and conventional ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 to 5,500 kilometres.\(^2\) The Treaty also prohibited State parties from producing, flight-testing and possessing these missiles. The culmination of the Treaty resulted in the destruction of 2,692 missiles with the US eliminating 846, and Moscow destroying 1,846 by the treaty’s implementation deadline of June 1, 1991.\(^3\) However, after the successful implementation and preservation of the Treaty until recently, its future is now bleak and it is on the verge of collapse owing to disagreements over treaty violations between the US and Russia.

Following years of contention over INF compliance issues, President Trump announced on October 20, 2018, that the US had adhered to and honoured the INF Treaty, but repeated alleged Russian violations were the reason

39
for the US finally terminating the Treaty.\textsuperscript{4} He also made clear that the Treaty would only be acceptable to the US if both Russia and China, halt developing intermediate-range ballistic missiles, and that failure to do so would prompt the US to terminate the agreement and start developing ballistic missiles banned under the Treaty.\textsuperscript{5}

Interestingly the US has cited Chinese military build-up, in addition to Russian violations, as a reason to scrap the agreement. The move brings into question the viability of the INF Treaty as China is not a party to the INF and is therefore not bound by it; as such China continues to build up its intermediate-range forces.\textsuperscript{6}

In response to the aforementioned concerns, the US finally announced suspension of its compliance with the INF Treaty on February 1, 2019,\textsuperscript{7} following the expiration of a 60-day US ultimatum to Russia to comply with the Treaty.\textsuperscript{8} US Secretary of State, Michael R. Pompeo announced that the US would provide Russia with a formal withdrawal notice in six months, pursuant to Article 15 of the Treaty,\textsuperscript{9} which entitles parties their right to withdraw from the Treaty after giving a notice of six months.\textsuperscript{10}

In response to the US’ withdrawal from the INF Treaty, Russian President Vladimir Putin also announced on February 2, 2019, suspension of Russian compliance with the Treaty, while rejecting US allegations of violating the Treaty.\textsuperscript{11} Endorsing the President’s statement, Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov said that Russia had proposed numerous transparency measures which the US had rejected over the last couple of years and unscrupulously shifted responsibility of Treaty violations on Russia.\textsuperscript{12}
The allegations that the US and Russia have levelled against each other are not new. The US has been accusing Russia of violating the Treaty since 2014. The 2014 Compliance Report by the US Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Non-proliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments, alleged that Russia was violating the Treaty by producing and testing ground-launched cruise missile, known as SSC-8, which the Russian military calls the 9M729, with a range that is not compliant with the Treaty. The US continued to level such allegations through subsequent US State Department reports published in 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively. However, Russia rejected these allegations.

Russia continues to reject the allegations and in turn accuses the US of violating the agreement. Russia maintains that the US missile defence interceptor platforms or the Mark 41 Vertical Launch System (VLS), deployed in Eastern Europe (VLS) is in violation of the INF Treaty. The Russian contention stems from the fact that the VLF is a multi-missile, multi-mission launcher, which when used on ground could be used to launch intermediate-range cruise missiles as well (making it a Ground-Launched Cruise Missile). Russia also alleges that the US uses banned missiles in its missile interception tests, and some of the drones it uses are banned cruise missiles. However, the US rejects these allegations.

Both the US and Russia have threatened the viability and the existence of the Treaty by failing to comply with the Treaty, and ultimately suspending it. Not only have both countries expressed their intention of developing banned missiles under the INF Treaty, they have also indicated
their willingness to expand the development of missiles of various other ranges and capabilities.\textsuperscript{19}

Like the US, Russia also considers the INF a constraint to its ability to counter the growing Chinese missile forces in the Asia Pacific.\textsuperscript{20} Without the constraints imposed by the INF, the US and Russia are likely to push for large-scale development and deployment of ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles. It is feared this move would prompt the Chinese to improve their own nuclear arsenal inventory both qualitatively and quantitatively.\textsuperscript{21} The ripple effect would then serve as a catalyst to push India, Pakistan, and North Korea to follow suit. Apart from altering the balance of power, the unbridled arms race at the superpower level would also have serious implications for the already fragile nuclear non-proliferation regime.\textsuperscript{22}

This paper seeks to assess the implications of the abrogation of the INF Treaty on the future of the global arms control architecture as a whole. It also seeks to understand the impact of the abrogation on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), on the prospect of the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, and also the fate of Iran’s July 2015 nuclear agreement, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). However, the study will not discuss international security and strategic stability or instability resulting from the abrogation of the INF Treaty. The paper utilises both primary and secondary sources of data. Data has been collected from official documents, speeches, press releases, books and research papers.

**Historical Background**

Given the large nuclear weapons stockpiles of the US and the former USSR, and the increasing risk of nuclear
use between the two countries, both the adversaries started bilateral negotiations over nuclear arms control measures nearly four decades ago. Beginning in 1969, the US and USSR held discussions over Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-I), aimed at limiting missile defence interceptors and strategic offensive arms. A breakthrough in talks led to the successful culmination of two important documents - the Anti-ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and an Interim Agreement in May 1972. The ABM Treaty limited the number of missile defence interceptors while the Interim Agreement put a cap on the numbers of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) of both the US and the USSR. However, this first mutually agreed document did not cover strategic bombers and numbers of warheads. This deficiency allowed both the countries to develop and deploy multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) over their ICBMs and SLBMs. Though the Interim Agreement was valid for a five-year term, the US and the USSR agreed in 1977 to observe the Treaty until the completion of the next phase of talks over strategic arms.

Under the mandate of article VII of the SALT-I Treaty, which called upon the State parties to continue active negotiations based on principles of the Interim Agreement, the US and USSR began negotiations on further limitations of offensive strategic arms in November 1972. Over several years of negotiations, the two countries signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT-II) on June 18, 1979. The purpose of the Treaty was to convert the Interim Agreement into a comprehensive treaty to provide broader limits on offensive strategic arms. The agreed framework of the Treaty obligated the US and Russia to not only cap strategic offensive arms quantitatively and qualitatively,
but also to exercise restraint in the development of new types of strategic offensive arms.\textsuperscript{31} Though it was decided that the SALT-II would stay operational until 1985, the Treaty did not enter into force. The main concern for the delay on behalf of the US was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its continued development of strategic arms. Later, the SALT-II was superseded by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-I) in 1991.\textsuperscript{32}

Proposed in the early 1980s by former US President Ronald Reagan, the START-I was signed on July 31, 1991 between US President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.\textsuperscript{33} This was the first treaty between the countries aimed at the reduction in the numbers rather than limiting the size of their nuclear arsenal. START-I obligated both the US and the USSR to reduce their strategic nuclear warheads to 6000 each, and deployed nuclear delivery vehicles to 1,600.\textsuperscript{34} However, the implementation of START-I was delayed due to the collapse of the USSR. It took several more years in denuclearising the former units of the USSR including Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus, by returning nuclear weapons to Russia. Following the three countries’ accession to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and START-I, the Treaty entered into force in December 1994, obligated reductions were completed in December 2001, and the Treaty expired in December 2009.\textsuperscript{35}

Whilst START-I was being implemented, the US and the USSR held negotiations on a follow-up agreement in the 1990s called, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty-II (START-II). The follow up agreement was required to further reduce deployed strategic nuclear weapons. Although it was signed in 1993, the START-II failed to enter into force because the US Senate did not approve
several amendments to the earlier ABM Treaty, whose approval was conditional to the operationalisation of the START-II. If the Treaty had entered into force, both the US and Russia would have reduced their deployed strategic arsenals to between 3,000 and 3,500 warheads. Though the obligations of the START-II never materialised, the Treaty was superseded by the new Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT or Moscow Treaty). The SORT was signed between US President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin in May 2002, obligating both states to reduce their strategic arsenals to 1,700-2,200 warheads each by December 31, 2012. The Treaty entered into force on June 1, 2003, and its warhead limit took effect and expired on the same day—December 31, 2012. This Treaty was replaced by the New START in February 2011. The US and Russia signed the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, also known as the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) on April 8, 2010 in Prague, and the Treaty entered into force on February 5, 2011. The New START also obligates both the countries to limit their deployed strategic nuclear warheads. The Treaty required both parties to meet the Treaty’s central limits on strategic arms by February 5, 2018. Under the New START, both the US and Russia are obligated to limit their deployed strategic nuclear warheads and bombs to 1,550, deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and heavy bombers assigned to nuclear missions to 700. The deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and bombers equipped for nuclear armaments are limited to 800. The entry into force of the New START has superseded the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), and replaced the 1991 START I treaty, which expired in December 2009.
Negotiations over the INF Treaty

Whilst the culmination of successful treaties including the SALT-I, the START-I and SORT, helped stabilise the strategic nuclear force balance between the US and Russia, the two countries failed to curb their bilateral competition in fielding intermediate, medium and short-range ballistic missiles which had been exponentially increasing during the 1980s.

In 1976, the USSR began to replace its liquid-fuelled SS-4 and SS-5 (named as per USSR designation R-12 and R-14)\textsuperscript{31} medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM)s with new improved solid fuelled, road-mobile and MIRV capable SS-20 IRBM (named as per USSR designation R-10),\textsuperscript{42} which the USSR designated as a MRBM.\textsuperscript{43} With a strike range of 5000 kilometres, the missile was capable of carrying three warheads. Coupled with improved air defence systems, the SS-20 missile provided the USSR with an advantage that enhanced its deterrence not only in the European theatre but also globally against the US, its NATO and Asian allies, and adversely affected NATO’s strategy of using strategic bombers against the Warsaw Pact countries.

Increasing security concerns of NATO and the perceived gap in its ability to respond to an attack by the USSR led to the initiation of the “Double or Dual Track” decision in 1979.\textsuperscript{44} The Double Track decision called for a push for negotiations between the US and the USSR on agreeing to set limits on theatre or intermediate-range nuclear missiles and deployment of US Pershing-II MRBM\textdoublespaceMs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) in five NATO countries; Pershing-II MRBM\textdoublespaceMs in Germany and GLCMs in the UK, Italy, Belgium and Netherlands.\textsuperscript{45}
The negotiations over the INF Treaty formally started in Geneva in November 1981. The US announced its zero-zero proposal; postulating that the US would not deploy its Pershing-II MRBMs in response to the complete dismantling of the USSR’s SS-4, SS-5 and SS-20 MRBMs. In February 1982, the US presented its draft of the INF Treaty based on the zero-zero proposal. However, the USSR rejected the draft and proposed that each should maintain an equal number of MRBMs and nuclear capable bombers, capping their number at 600 each. This proposal was rejected by the US owing to security concerns.

Following the zero-zero proposal, the US Ambassador Paul Nitze met his Soviet counterpart Ambassador Yuli Kvitsinsky, in mid-1982. During the meeting, Nitze proposed, what became known as the “walk in the woods,” that on grounds of equal deployments of the MRBMs, each side should have 75 missile launchers, and the US would deploy only GLCMs not Pershing-II missiles. As the “walk in the woods” plan could not garner support in the US, NATO countries and the USSR, it was not discussed in formal negotiations. During 1983, several other proposals were discussed but negotiations faltered as the USSR walked out from negotiations when Pershing-II were deployed in Western Germany. The next round of negotiations began in 1985 between delegations headed by US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Following their discussions on the zero-zero proposal, and limited deployment of the MRBMs, the intense negotiations continued until the two countries agreed to eliminate all intermediate and short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) globally. Ultimately, Reagan and Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty on December 8, 1987.
The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty (INF)

Though the Treaty originally applied to the US and the USSR, the Treaty’s membership expanded following the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 to involve successor states including Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine in Treaty implementation as these countries had inspectable facilities. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan had less active roles because they had only one inspectable INF facility.\(^{51}\)

**Treaty Obligations**

The INF Treaty comprises a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Protocol on Elimination and Protocol on Inspection and Verification.\(^{52}\) Under Articles I, IV, and V of the Treaty, the US and USSR committed to eliminate their IRBMs, launchers, and all other support equipment within three years of the Treaty coming into force, and also committed to eliminate their shorter-range missiles and launchers and all other support equipment within 18 months after the Treaty enters into force. The Article II of the Treaty defined intermediate-range as “a range capability in excess of 1000 kilometres but not in excess of 5500 kilometres,” and short-range as “a range capability equal to or in excess of 500 kilometres but not in excess of 1000 kilometres.” State parties to the Treaty were also banned from production and flight testing of IRBMs and SRBMs, and the production of any stages or launchers of such missiles.

The INF Treaty entered into force on June 1, 1988, following its ratification by the US and the USSR.\(^{53}\) Thus, under the elimination protocol, the US and the USSR eliminated 846 and 1,846 missiles respectively.
Collectively 2,692 intermediate-range missiles were destroyed as a result of the accord by the end of its elimination period of three years. The US dismantled its Pershing II and the BGM-109G IRBMs and Pershing IA SRBMs, while the USSR dismantled its SS-20, the SS-4 and the SS-5 IRBMs and SS-12 and the SS-23 SRBMs. Besides the active State parties to the Treaty, all other European countries had already dismantled their INF range missiles after the end of the Cold War.

**Inspection and Verification**

The INF Treaty also has detailed negotiated inspection and verification measures. Regarding data exchange, measures included numerous types of notifications and inspections of INF sites to verify compliance with the Treaty. The Treaty also contains arrangements to settle disputes or questions on compliance issues, called the Special Verification Commission (SVC). Moreover, States party to the Treaty were not only entitled to make amendments to it, but could also withdraw from the Treaty following six months’ notice, in case of an event deemed to be compromising national security.

**Current Status of the Treaty**

The successful culmination of the INF Treaty not only helped ease political tensions between the two rival blocks of the Cold-War era, but also facilitated the strategic arms reduction process by creating an environment of trust by providing new mechanisms of inspections and verifications. The INF Treaty implementation led the US and Russia to take bold steps such as slashing deployed strategic nuclear warheads with the help of START-1 and SORT Treaties. Implementation of these bilateral treaties also generated a ray of hope in the wider world regarding the
willingness of the US and Russia to move forward to honour Article VI of the NPT, outlining nuclear disarmament commitments.\textsuperscript{60} The Treaty has also been praised on the account that the US and Russia observed compliance and restraint in an environment where other nuclear armed countries were pursuing the development and deployment of IRBM and SRBM systems and US withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002.\textsuperscript{61}

Even as the INF Treaty was helping rebuild trust between the two countries, regional geopolitical tensions and competition between the US and Russia were aggravating and undermining the levels of confidence between them.\textsuperscript{62} Both the US and Russia also started expressing their reservations about the INF Treaty. For example, during his remarks at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, Russian President Vladimir Putin questioned future adherence to the Treaty. Putin expressed concerns over the development of IRBMs by countries including North Korea, China, India, Pakistan and Israel, saying that the US and Russia would need to reconsider their self-imposed ban on IRBMs given the prevailing situation.\textsuperscript{63} In October 2007, at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Russia proposed that the Treaty’s membership should be expanded to include all other countries that were developing IRBMs. Though the US supported the move, China, India and Pakistan did not favour it\textsuperscript{64} owing to their own regional tensions. Apart from questioning the limited scope of the INF Treaty, Russia had also been threatening to withdraw from the Treaty over the last two decades.\textsuperscript{65}

The US also expressed similar concerns. In 2011, former US President, George W. Bush’s Administration’s arms control officials hinted that increased production of missiles banned under the INF Treaty by other countries
not party to the INF Treaty, would prompt the US to reconsider its compliance to the Treaty.\(^6^6\)

During the Obama Administration, the US concerns regarding testing and developing of a banned new cruise missile by Russia intensified further. In 2014 the US finally declared that Russia violated the INF Treaty; a move that heightened tensions between the two states. The US accused Russia of developing an INF non-compliant weapon and subsequently identified the weapon as the SSC-8 missile system - the system is known in Russia as 9M729. According to the US State Department, the US repeatedly levelled these accusations against Russia in its 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 compliance reports. The US revealed both the names of the missile in 2017.\(^6^7\) The US also claimed that Russia had deployed the missile in 2017.\(^6^8\) Russia however, has been rejecting all allegations since 2014, and maintains that the 9M729 has a range lower than the INF cap.\(^6^9\)

In response to US allegations, Russia has levelled accusations that the US has violated the INF. Russia claims that the US’ missile defence interceptor missiles deployed in Europe and Asia share similar characteristics to the SRBMs and IRBMs. Russia also claims the US’ BMD related tests aimed at improving capabilities of interceptors had also violated the INF Treaty, because such tests are similar to that of INF non-compliant missile tests. Russia also alleges that the US’ unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) violate the Treaty since these UAVs act on similar pattern of GLCMs.\(^7^0\)

Russia also claims that the most serious violation of the INF Treaty by the US is its deployment in Romania and Poland of the Mark-41 (Mk-41 VLS) system, capable of launching Tomahawk intermediate-range, land-attack
cruise missiles. The US however, has rejected these allegations and denied violating the INF Treaty.

Both the US and Russia have discussed their mutual reservations over the alleged violations of the INF Treaty during their Special Verification Commission (SVC); which was established by the INF Treaty to address compliance concerns. The two countries failed to resolve their disputes on alleged INF violations during the 2016 and 2017 SVC meetings. Consequently, the US announced suspension of its compliance with the Treaty on February 1, 2019, followed by Russia’s announcement on February 2, 2019.

Under the INF Treaty, withdrawal of the US and Russia would take effect six months after issuing formal notices. As such, both countries are currently poised to exit in August 2019, if they fail to resolve their dispute. The consequent abrogation of the INF Treaty would not only create security implications for Europe but also hugely affect global strategic stability. Development and deployment of INF non-compliant weapons, based on modern technology, in Europe and Asia would create a security dilemma similar to the Cuban missile crisis. While threatening to deploy hypersonic nuclear missiles on ships or submarines near US territorial waters, President Putin has warned that Russia was ready for a Cuban missile-style crisis if the US wanted one.

Consequently, production and deployment of new INF banned hypersonic ballistic and cruise missiles would affect strategic stability. The strategic imbalance would have implications for the arms control architecture, and possibly reverse all the gains that have been achieved through the global arms control architecture and the non-proliferation regime.
Implications for Arms Control

Besides wider political tensions between the US and Russia on numerous geopolitical issues, the dispute over the INF Treaty compliance is making the future of arms control more grim. Both the US and Russia failed to achieve any substantial success in resolving their disputes over compliance issues during the 2016 and 2017 SVC meetings. Seemingly, there was little commitment on either side to resolve the issues. No further efforts were made to hold a SVC meeting in 2018, or address disputes through any other arrangement. Instead of taking measures to dispel mistrust, the two countries’ aggressive posturing is evident in their announced development and consequent testing of INF non-compliant missiles.\textsuperscript{76} This scenario further erodes the prospect and possibility of resolving the dispute, and would likely lead to the Treaty’s collapse.

The INF Treaty’s failure would have immediate and long terms implications for the global arms control architecture. The immediate impact of the INF abrogation would affect the New START. On February 5, 2018, both the US and Russia announced that they had met their respective obligations of reducing their deployed strategic nuclear forces under the Treaty. The US had completed its reductions in August 2017. As of September 2017, the US had 1393 deployed strategic warheads, 660 deployed strategic delivery systems, and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers of ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers.\textsuperscript{77} According to a statement released by the Russian Foreign Ministry on February 5, 2018, Russia fulfilled the reduction by holding 1,444 deployed strategic warheads, 527 deployed strategic delivery systems, and 779 deployed and non-deployed launchers of ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers.\textsuperscript{78}
However, the New START is scheduled to expire in 2021, unless it is replaced before this date by a new agreement, or the existing agreement is extended for an additional five years to 2026 with the mutual consent of both parties. Both the US and Russian announcements of meeting the New START obligations coincided with the release of the 2018 US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) in February 2018. The new policy calls for development of new nuclear weapons and has not taken a position on renewing or extending the New START either. In the policy document, the US has identified Russia as a strategic competitor, and one of the main threats to the US, while linking progress on arms control and disarmament to Russian compliance to existing agreements.

In this context, the abrogation of the INF Treaty, which the two countries blame on each others’ non-compliant behaviour, would likely affect the New START. In the event the INF Treaty collapses, and both the US and Russia fail to extend or replace the New START with another such treaty, it would mark the first time since 1972 that there would be no limits on US or Russian nuclear forces. The suspension of these two treaties may very easily propel both Russia and the US into an arms race where they compete to develop new types of nuclear capable IRBMs and other delivery systems.

Moreover the pre-existing geopolitical tensions would also intensify owing to their mutual failure to honour and sustain their arms control agreements. Also, the US’ identification of China as a strategic competitor as well as the perceived threat emanating from both Iran and North Korea to the US and its allies, further aggravates disagreements between the two countries. Instead of taking initiatives to strengthen bilateral arms cooperation, the US and Russian allegations and counter

allegations have reached a critical juncture. The collapse of both the INF and the New START would close the prospect of nuclear reduction opportunities. In the context of the INF, both the US and Russia can still exhibit restraint and give diplomacy a chance to resolve issues. However, suspending or abrogating established treaties would greatly reduce global confidence in diplomacy, and the arms control architecture, thus, pushing countries towards power politics and armament.

Furthermore, the INF Treaty’s demise would also raise questions over the prospect of US-North Korea denuclearisation engagements and the future of Iran’s July 2015 Nuclear Agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed with major world powers. Following numerous missile and nuclear tests during the last decade, North Korea recently began to engage diplomatically with the US and international powers to reduce tensions in the Korean Peninsula in 2017. In an historic summit in 2018, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump met in Singapore where Kim agreed to work toward the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The two leaders also held a second summit in Vietnam in January 2019 to continue talks. However, both sides failed to agree on the definition of the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. According to North Korea, the phenomenon does not mean unilateral denuclearisation of the country, implying that it may have numerous other conditions, while the US is insistent on the unilateral denuclearisation of Pyongyang and has not yet explained the wider meaning of denuclearisation. Following the June 12, 2018, Singapore Summit, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stressed that Kim fully agreed to what he called a “complete denuclearisation” of North Korea. However,
the Singapore declaration did not make such a statement. 85 In December 2018, the North Korean official news agency, Korean Central News Agency, made a comment to clarify confusion over the meaning of denuclearisation. The report said, “When we refer to the ‘denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula,’ it means the removal of all sources of nuclear threat not only from the North and the South but also from all neighbouring areas targeting the Peninsula.” 86 The statement implies that the phenomenon of denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula does not mean unilateral denuclearisation of Pyongyang.

Continued disagreement between the US and North Korea over the issue suggests that the bilateral efforts may end soon without any substantial gains. Though President Trump seems eager for a third summit between the US and North Korea, Pyongyang has resumed weapon testing and drills. 87 Given the grim fate of the INF and the New START, North Korea may not trust the US’ promises and motives on any settlement regarding denuclearisation, when the US itself is faltering on the very principles it is pushing on other nations, including North Korea. Thomas M Countryman, a former Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation, noted during an interview that the Trump Administration’s plan to withdraw from the INF Treaty, and other agreements, could shake confidence in any US commitments. 88 He stressed that Pyongyang would not trust any agreement with the present administration when the US itself was abandoning bilateral agreements. 89 North Korea seriously perceives its nuclear arsenal as a necessity for its survival as the US, Russia and China continue expanding their own arsenals. The abrogation of the INF would therefore be a huge blow to the denuclearisation efforts of the Korean Peninsula.
Similarly, the failure of the INF may also reduce Iranian confidence over such international instruments. After a decade-long stand-off between Iran and the West over the former’s nuclear programme, Iran and the major world powers signed the JCPOA in July 2015. The agreement’s implementation, aimed at limiting the Iranian nuclear programme’s capabilities in return for relief from sanctions, in 2016 was welcomed across the world as a diplomatic victory. The JCPOA averted not only tensions but also a possible military strike by the US against Iran. However, the current Trump Administration has been highly critical of JCPOA and has questioned Iranian promises of not developing nuclear weapons. The Trump administration withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018, and reinstated sanctions in November 2018. Consequently, under strict economic pressure, Iran announced on May 8, 2019, that it was partially suspending its compliance with the JCPOA, while not fully withdrawing from the agreement.

The Trump Administration’s reservations were focused on alleged shortcomings in the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) inspection provisions, the so-called sunset clause, and the agreement’s subsequent failure to address Iran’s development of ballistic missiles. However, numerous IAEA reports have noted that Iran was fully implementing the JCPOA, and the Agency has full access to all Iranian sites and locations for inspections. Additionally, Iran’s missile programme is not subject to the JCPOA, instead it is being regulated under UN Security Council Resolution 2231, endorsing the JCPOA. The resolution calls upon Iran to not test missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. The US considers Iranian missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, and therefore developing and testing such missiles is a violation of UNSC Resolution 2231. In
order to cap Iran’s capacity of expanding its missile programme, the US has also imposed multiple rounds of additional missile related sanctions on the country. Iran rejects the accusation and maintains that its missiles are not designed to carry nuclear weapons, as the country has no such weapons in its arsenal.

Apart from sanctions, the US also maintains missile defence interceptors to provide a defensive shield to its European allies against Iranian missiles. Iran considers these anti-missile systems destabilising, and focuses on developing and deploying missiles primarily to offset its military inferiority. Against this backdrop, subsequent development and deployment of the US IRBMs in European countries directed against Iran after the demise of the INF would become even more complicated. The collapse of the INF Treaty would diminish any hopes of addressing Iran’s ballistic missile programme under any sort of agreement. An increase in both the US’ offensive and defensive weapons capabilities in Europe would also force Iran to test and develop more missiles to enhance its defence. However, Iran’s increased pursuit of missile capabilities would likely invite additional sanctions from the US, as the country remains opposed to Iran’s programme. Therefore, continued missile related sanctions on the country would pressurise Iran to reconsider the merits of remaining in the JCPOA. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has threatened that Iran would revoke the JCPOA completely in the face of sanctions outside the agreement; implying Iran would not tolerate sanctions on its missile programme.

In addition to the short-term implications of the abrogation the INF Treaty, there may also be long-term implications related to the fate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the proposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Signed in 1996,
the CTBT bans any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion everywhere and by anyone.\textsuperscript{100} 183 State parties have signed and another 164 states ratified the Treaty. However, the Treaty has not yet entered into force. It will enter into force after the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification by all 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty. All states in Annex 2 of the Treaty have ratified it except 8 countries including North Korea, India, Pakistan, China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the US, owing to their security concerns.\textsuperscript{101} In its 2018 NPR, the US has noted that it would not sign the CTBT under the current international security landscape.\textsuperscript{102} The position implies that opposition to the ratification of the CTBT is even stronger presently than it was in 1999 when the US Senate refused to ratify the Treaty.\textsuperscript{103} US officials still oppose the Treaty, as they believe that US needs to have an avenue open for future nuclear testing because nuclear weapons require improvements, and they also believe that CTBT verification procedures are outdated and could be exploited by Russia and other countries.\textsuperscript{104} The US decision to withdraw from the INF Treaty also stems from the verification procedure of the banned missiles. The US has repeatedly referred to Russian failure to verifiably address the violations of the Treaty as a prime reason for its withdrawal. In this context, US officials oppose ratifying the CTBT owing to reoccurring verification problems.\textsuperscript{105} Thus, the collapse of the INF Treaty may harm the CTBT as well.\textsuperscript{106}

Similarly, the FMCT is a proposed international agreement that would prohibit the production of the two main components of nuclear weapons: highly-enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium. The instrument is under discussion at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), and no significant decision has yet been taken on it.\textsuperscript{107} The latest session of the CD concluded in Geneva in March
2019. Aidan Liddle, the UK’s permanent representative to the CD, indicated that no consensus was reached, momentum was slow, and there were no plans for developing bodies to address core issues under discussion including, nuclear disarmament, fissile material, outer space, and negative security assurances. The continued stalemate at the CD, and the demise of both the INF and the New START, would further slow down the process of negotiations and efforts over the FMCT. Historically, work over arms control agreements has been stalled with US opposition to ratifying the CTBT in 1996, and the country’s 2002 withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. The INF Treaty’s demise would be another wrong step, which may curtail progress over arms control. Expressing such concerns, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres noted in his address to the CD in February 2019, that “key components of the international arms control architecture are collapsing.” While urging the US and Russia to engage in a dialogue to preserve the INF Treaty, Guterres stressed that the world could not afford the demise of the Treaty. It is becoming increasingly clear that new multilateral arms control agreements cannot be enacted even as existing bilateral treaties are being scrapped.

Finally, the collapse of the INF Treaty and the New START would imply that both the US and Russia would start deploying missiles in Europe and Asia. An increased number of missiles around China would result in the country trying to take counter measures by developing more warheads and delivery systems. The Chinese response in turn would prompt India to react, and expand its own arsenal which in turn would likely result in Pakistan readjusting its own nuclear strategy. Both India and Pakistan may engage in a race to re-establish missile stability. However, this re-matching
process entails resources; of which the fissile material remains crucial. Fissile material is essential for increasing the number of warheads. Ultimately, in a race towards parity, states may not agree to cap fissile material under the FMCT, and, therefore, negotiations over the treaty may remain stalled for a long time.

Conclusion

The signing of the INF Treaty was a milestone not only in the history of arms control but also in the history of nuclear weapons. The Treaty, based on the principle of reduction, not limitation, led to the elimination of an entire class of nuclear weapons. Therefore, the Treaty’s operationalisation was the beginning of the end of a nuclear arms race. However, the suspension of compliance with the INF Treaty by the US and Russia may lead to the demise of the Treaty in August 2019. The abrogation of the Treaty would eventually affect the overall arms control efforts and instruments, and, would thus initiate another age of arms race and strategic instability.

References


5. Ibid.


12. Ibid.


14. Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


26. Ibid.
27. Kimball and Reif, Fact Sheets and Briefs: “US-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Agreements.”
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid, 3.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.


42. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
46. Ibid, 9.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid, 11.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
57. “Treaty Between The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”
58. Ibid.
Ibid, 2.
Ibid, 3.
Ibid.
Ibid.
“Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov’s comment on anti-Russia Attacks.”
Ibid.
“Treaty Between The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”


Mills, Prospects for US-Russia Nuclear Arms Control, 5.


Arshad Mohammed and Matt Spetalnick, “Exclusive: US Pursues Direct Diplomacy With North Korea Despite


89. Ibid.


93. The Sunset Clause sets expiry dates for certain limits on Iran's Nuclear Programme, for example, limits on centrifuges, enrichment, reprocessing of spent fuel and uranium ore production. However, number of restrictions in the JCPOA do not have any sunset including Iran being a state party to the NPT, provision to sign Additional Protocol, not to conduct research that could help in developing nuclear weapons, restrictions on its heavy water reactor at Arak to prevent it from producing a significant amount of weapons usable plutonium over the course of its lifetime;


98. Bruno Tertrais, “The Death Of The INF Treaty Or The End Of The Post-Cold War Era,” The Foundation for Strategic Research, February 4, 2019,


Ibid.


111. Ibid.

112. Zhao, “Why China is Worried.”