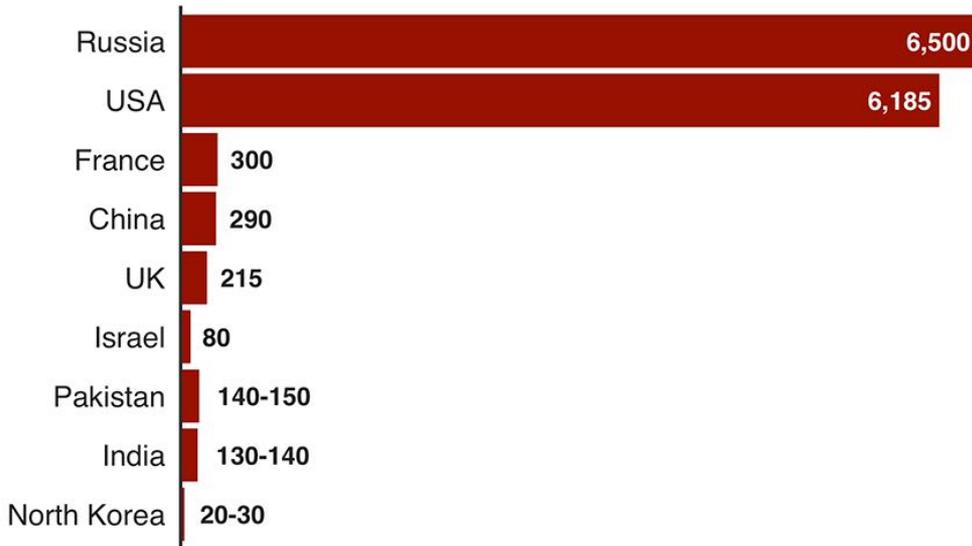


Estimated global nuclear warhead arsenals

Includes warheads in stockpile as well as retired, but still intact



Source: Federation of American Scientists, July 2019



Analysts fear that the collapse of the historic agreement could lead to a new arms race between the US, Russia and China.

"Now that the treaty is over, we will see the development and deployment of new weapons," Pavel Felgenhauer, a Russian military analyst, told AFP news agency. "Russia is already ready."

Nato chief calls on Russia to save INF nuclear missile treaty

Last month, Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told the BBC that the Russian missiles - which he said were in "clear violation of the treaty" - were nuclear-capable, mobile, very hard to detect, and could reach European cities within minutes.

"This is serious," he added. "The INF treaty has been a cornerstone in arms control for decades, and now we see the demise of the treaty."

The initial accusation in February sparked fears that we were on the cusp of a new nuclear arms race

He added that there had been "no signs whatsoever" that Russia would comply with the agreement - and that "we have to be prepared for a world without the INF treaty and with more Russian missiles".

Mr Stoltenberg also said that any decision by Nato about how exactly to respond would come after the deadline.

Nato has no plan to deploy land-based nuclear missiles of its own in Europe, he said, but conventional air and missile defence, new exercises and readiness of forces, and new arms control initiatives could all form part of the response.

What is the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty?



Image copyright

AFP

Image caption

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan signed the INF Treaty in 1987

Signed by the US and the USSR in 1987, the arms control deal banned all nuclear and non-nuclear missiles with short and medium ranges, except sea-launched weapons

The US had been concerned by the Soviet deployment of the SS-20 missile system in 1979 and responded by placing Pershing and cruise missiles in Europe - sparking widespread protests

By 1991, nearly 2,700 missiles had been destroyed

The two countries were allowed to inspect each other's installations



Analysis

By Jonathan Marcus

Defence correspondent

The demise of the INF treaty - the only disarmament agreement ever to eliminate a whole category of nuclear weapons - represents a significant setback for advocates of arms control.

That it comes at a time when the US is increasingly concerned by the threat from what it sees as a resurgent Russia is doubly unsettling. Neither Moscow nor Washington appears to value such treaties.

The most important agreement of the old Cold War years - the New Start treaty - that limits long-range nuclear weapons is set to expire in February 2021. Its survival is far from certain.

The paradox is that arms control appeared unimportant after the collapse of the Soviet Union when tensions were low.

Now that they are mounting again, disarmament agreements could have an important part to play in maintaining stability.

Instead arms control is in crisis, just when dangerous new weapons technologies (involving artificial intelligence and high-speed "hypersonic" missiles) are being developed.

Where did things go wrong?

In 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared the treaty no longer served Russia's interests.

That happened after US President George W Bush, in 2002, pulled the US out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which banned weapons designed to counter ballistic nuclear missiles.

In 2014, then **US President Barack Obama accused Russia of breaching the INF Treaty** after it allegedly tested a ground-launched cruise missile.



Russia strongly denies building missiles that violate the accord

He reportedly chose not to withdraw from the treaty under pressure from European leaders, who said such a move could restart an arms race. Then last year, **Nato supported the US accusations and formally accused Russia of breaking the treaty.** "Allies have concluded that Russia has developed and fielded a missile system, the 9M729, which violates the INF Treaty and poses significant risks to Euro-Atlantic security," a statement from Nato foreign ministers read. The statement said the member nations "strongly support" the US claim that Russia is in breach of the pact, and called on Moscow to "return urgently to full and verifiable compliance". Russia denied the accusation and President Putin said it was a pretext for the US to leave the pact.

Amid worsening ties between Washington and Moscow, Turkey last month received the first parts of a Russian S-400 missile defence system despite opposition from the US. The US has warned that Turkey cannot have both the S-400 anti-aircraft defence system and US F-35 fighter jets. Turkey and the US are Nato allies but Turkey has also been establishing closer links with Russia.

Banned range for ground-launched and cruise missiles under INF treaty



Donald Trump's most catastrophic decision

By **David A. Andelman**

Updated 1416 GMT (2216 HKT) July 27, 2019

"David A. Andelman, executive director of The Red Lines Project at the [Center for National Security](#) at Fordham University, is a contributor to CNN where his columns won the Deadline Club Award for Best Opinion Writing. Author of "[A Shattered Peace: Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today](#)," he was formerly a foreign correspondent for The New York Times and CBS News. Follow him on [Patreon](#) and Twitter [@DavidAndelman](#). The views expressed in this commentary are his own. View [more opinion](#) on CNN.

(CNN)It's hard to single out any one event as the most cataclysmic of Donald Trump's presidency, in terms of American and global security. There was his bolting from the Iran nuclear deal (and Iran's subsequent resumption of uranium enrichment). There was baiting Kim Jong Un, followed by engagement, which will likely result in a more advanced North Korean nuclear program. Then, of course, there's the end to American participation in climate-change mitigation, not to mention a trade war with China.

But if I were to identify one event that could well have the most catastrophic results over the long term, it is Trump's ill-considered decision to ditch the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Agreement with Russia. That action will come full on Friday, August 2, when the United States, having given its six-month notice, will be out of it entirely, and the treaty utterly void. The result? Likely another unparalleled arms race, a

growth in global insecurity, and a tacit license for more countries to seek nukes of their own.

At the moment it was negotiated in 1986, as explained in the book by historian and journalist Guillaume Serina that I translated from the French, "[An Impossible Dream: Reagan, Gorbachev and a World Without the Bomb](#)," the US was far better positioned for a major arms race than was the Soviet Union — a reality that both US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, but especially the latter, understood. That is certainly no longer the case.

Still, there are certain constants that are as true, and perilous, today as they were then. In the 1980s, nuclear-armed missiles of various ranges were proliferating with few checks on their numbers or lethality.

Intermediate range nuclear (INF) missiles were originally based in Europe, but with the proliferation of nuclear forces in Asia, were beginning to pose a series of global and regional challenges.

Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) were largely the domain of the United States and the Soviet Union. These were at the heart of the Cold War nuclear standoff and the often-tense peace guaranteed by the doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction (which held that if one side attacked, the other would respond, and both sides would be destroyed — a dynamic that deterred anyone from launching a first strike). And, of course, there was always the ultimate fear of a horrific error in judgment or technology.

So from the early 1970s into the 2000s, a succession of discussions was held between the two superpowers that led to treaties designed to put a cap on the numbers and lethality of these weapons that both sides recognized were the surest path to Armageddon. SALT I and SALT II

(Strategic Arms Limitation Talks), signed in 1972 and 1979, placed caps on the numbers of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

That still left, largely unrestrained, all intermediate range (INF) missiles, based in Europe and the Soviet Union. This was the goal of the summit held in Reykjavik, Iceland, between Reagan and Gorbachev in 1986, when the Soviet leader sprang on an astonished US president a proposal to eliminate all nuclear weapons held by both sides. The catch? Reagan would have to end his "Star Wars" missile-defense system. He refused. The meeting ended with no agreement. Still, it was a landmark moment — the closest the world has ever approached to an end to all nuclear arms.

But neither side was prepared to give up. The discussions that began in Reykjavik led to other, more modest but enduring nuclear pacts, along two tracks that have stood the test of time. The most immediate result of Reykjavik was the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, signed December 8, 1987, whose provisions eliminated all ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges from 500 to 5,500 kilometers. But its precedent-shattering provision was an intrusive system of on-site inspections, laying the groundwork for verification of new ICBM treaties — the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START I, which arrived seven years later, and New C, which exists today. These slashed the number of deployed nuclear warheads from 6,000 under START I to 1,550 today.

While neither has managed to prevent the slow and equally destabilizing arrival of new nuclear powers (China, India, Pakistan, Israel, eventually North Korea, and possibly someday Iran), both sets of treaties — Start and INF — have very much stood the test of time. Until now.

Last fall, Trump, who arrived with his tortured sense of East-West rivalry

and American supremacy, suddenly and arbitrarily announced his intention to pull out of the centerpiece of the nuclear-arms-control process launched in the 1980s: the INF Treaty. When Trump announced his decision to withdraw from the INF treaty after the six-month window that ends August 2, Russian President Vladimir Putin took the opportunity to bolt from the treaty, too. Each side charged the other with violations — and with some justification. The problem is that Trump may not have recognized that today's Russia is quite different from Gorbachev's.

In February, Putin outlined the shape of this new world in his annual state-of-the-nation address. Behind him flashed video and animations of next-generation ICBMs, nuclear-powered hypersonic cruise missiles, underwater drones and other devices Russia had developed and that it now felt free to deploy. "The capability of such weapons," he warned, "will be equivalent to the threats against Russia."

Indeed, with communism dead, the new proto-capitalist Russia, supported by high oil prices, is a more formidable enemy by far and, as Putin suggested, in a position to make good on threats once viewed as largely empty bluster from his Kremlin predecessors. The US is developing similar weapons, including hypersonic weapons able to travel nine times the speed of sound and largely impervious to any existing missile defense systems. American officials have conceded, however, that, while working diligently on such advances, the US is years away from testing and deployment, while Putin has at least claimed Russia will make its first deployments this year.

Despite all of Trump's braggadocio of "rebuilding our military like we never have before," the US seems suddenly to find itself in the deeply uncomfortable and unprecedented position of playing catchup in an

arms race where Russia could begin calling the shots.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/12/politics/pentagon-development-missile-treaty/index.html>

At the same time, it leaves America's closest allies questioning the value of counting on a nuclear security umbrella controlled by the US, which has suddenly become an unpredictable and irrational partner, and whose leadership appears to be in disturbing agreement with their most pernicious enemy — Russia. It is little wonder that European leaders are moving toward creation of a European defense force. Once lost, the lead in any arms contest is only regained with enormous difficulty and at colossal cost.

Eliminating constraints on nuclear weapons is in no way a path toward a safer, more tranquil world. It is a path toward an unchecked arms race that is likely to suggest to any number of other nuclear aspirants that they need to field deterrent nuclear arsenals of their own. And from there, nuclear weapons would need to take only one small step to reach the hands of terrorists who know no restraints and care nothing of consequences.

The US still spends much more than any other country on weapons, but for the sake of our own security, we cannot afford an arms race with today's Russia. Nor can the world afford the decades it takes to negotiate any replacements to these treaties so hastily scrapped in such ill-conceived fashion.

Nato chief calls on Russia to save INF missile treaty

3 hours ago



Image copyright

AFP/GETTY

Image caption

Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told the BBC time is running out to save the key missile treaty

Time is running out to save a key missile treaty with Russia, Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has told the BBC.

Mr Stoltenberg pledged a "measured, defensive" response if Russia did not come back into compliance with the deal by the 2 August deadline.

"We have to be prepared for a world... with more Russian missiles," he said.

The 1987 agreement signed by the US and USSR banned short and medium-range missiles.

President Trump announced the US would suspend its obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in February, accusing Russia of breaching its terms.

Russia denied the allegation but suspended its own obligations shortly afterwards and announced plans to develop new weapons systems.

Russia plans new missile systems

Is nuclear control set to self-destruct?

In a wide-ranging interview with the BBC, Mr Stoltenberg says the Russian missiles - which he says are in "clear violation of the treaty" - are nuclear capable, mobile, very hard to detect, and able to reach European cities within a few minutes.

"This is serious. The INF treaty has been a corner stone in arms control for decades and now we see the demise of the treaty," he said.

While the priority was to get Russia to come back into compliance with its terms, Mr Stoltenberg said there were "no signs whatsoever" the country will do so. "Therefore we have to be prepared for a world without the INF treaty and with more Russian missiles."



Image copyright
AFP

Image caption

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan signed the INF Treaty in 1987

While Nato has no plan to deploy nuclear land-based missiles of its own in Europe, Mr Stoltenberg said the alliance would respond in a "measured, defensive way" if Russia refused to come back into compliance by 2 August.

Conventional air and missile defence, new exercises and readiness of forces, and new arms control initiatives could all form part of that response, he said. Any final decision will come after the deadline.

Mr Stoltenberg also addressed Russia's delivery of its advanced S-400 missile defence system to Nato member Turkey last week.

The US says it will remove Turkey from its F-35 fighter jet programme in response. Ankara has recently moved closer to Moscow, raising tensions between Turkey and the US.

"It is a serious issue because it is a serious disagreement which involves two important allies," Mr Stoltenberg said. Nato supports efforts to resolve the disagreement, he added, while praising Turkey's key role in the organisation.



Media caption

A demonstration of the S-400 missile system

The secretary general also praised efforts among members to raise their defence budgets to a target of 2% of their budgets. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly called on other members to contribute more to the organisation in recent years.

"We have turned a corner - the picture is much better than it was just a few years ago, and I am quite optimistic that allies will continue to invest more," he said. Eight member states are expected to reach the target in 2019.

More recently, Mr Trump has also called on US allies to avoid using technology provided by Chinese tech firm Huawei, arguing the company is a security risk - something China denies.

Mr Stoltenberg said the alliance was drawing up new guidelines to tackle the issue, so members can have some "minimum agreed standards or guidelines for how to deal with these challenges".

Clock's ticking on one of world's most important

nuclear treaties. A dangerous arms race may be next

By [Eliza Mackintosh](#), CNN

Updated 0533 GMT (1333 HKT) July 20, 2019

(CNN) This week, senior American officials traveled to Switzerland to deliver President Donald Trump's ["vision for a new direction in nuclear arms control."](#)

That vision is to strike a wide-ranging deal that would limit the arsenals of not only the US and Russia, but also China for the first time.

At a meeting with their Russian counterparts in Geneva on Wednesday, the US delegation relayed their concerns over Moscow's development of "non-strategic nuclear weapons," [the State Department said](#). Another concern is the fact that China, which did not participate in the talks, has rejected negotiations out of hand.

But the [President's ambition for an all-encompassing deal](#) is clouded by his track record, and observers are increasingly worried that the unraveling of existing accords under the Trump administration could lead to a more unstable future for nuclear proliferation globally.

In May 2018, [Trump quit the Iran nuclear deal](#), sparking an ever-widening rift with Tehran and heightened tensions in the Middle East. In February, the [US suspended the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces](#)

[Treaty \(INF\)](#), a key pact with Russia that has been a centerpiece of European security since the Cold War, saying Moscow had violated its terms.

And as the talks were taking place in Geneva, the clock continued to run down on the last remaining major nuclear deal between the US and Russia, which control 90% of the world's nuclear warheads.

The [New Start treaty](#), signed by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev in 2010, restricts the US and Russia to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads across 700 delivery systems. While Russia has signaled an interest in renewing the pact, Trump has [previously described it as a "bad deal,"](#) and there is no sign that it will be extended beyond 2021, when it expires.

If the New Start deal is scrapped, experts fear a return to a world without limits on nuclear stockpiles. The US and Russia could quickly ramp up the number of warheads deployed on sea and on land. With their nuclear ambitions unchecked, it would be almost impossible to convince other nations, like China, to exercise restraint.

In the absence of transparency, experts said, worst-case scenario thinking could contribute to an even more hostile geopolitical landscape. With global powers on tenterhooks, the risk of a miscalculation -- and a knee-jerk deployment of a nuclear weapon -- would increase.

"This would be the first time since 1972 that the US and Russia, previously the Soviet Union, would not have limits on their arsenals. It would make an already difficult and dangerous relationship all the more difficult to manage, and could cause one or the other side to accelerate their nuclear stockpiles," Daryl Kimball, director of the Arms Control Association, told CNN.

"It would be a world that we have not seen in a long time."

'A poison pill'

In January, Trump announced his intention to seek a new nuclear treaty and offered a vision of what would come next if he couldn't strike a deal.

"Perhaps we can negotiate a different agreement, adding China and others, or perhaps we can't," [Trump said during an address to the nation](#). "In which case, we will outspend and out-innovate all others by far."

But by all accounts, 19 months is not enough time to negotiate a brand-new agreement -- even if China was on board, which it is not.

"We oppose any country's attempt to make an issue out of China on arms control and will not participate in any negotiation for a trilateral nuclear disarmament agreement," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said during a press briefing in May.

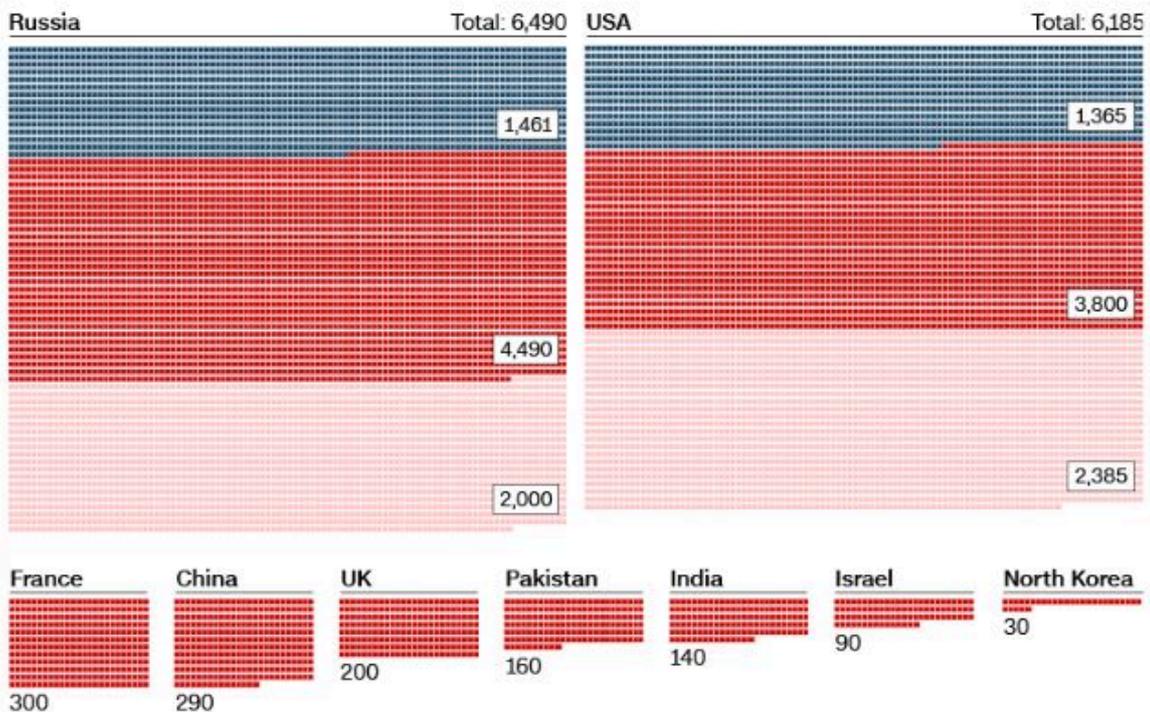
Estimated global nuclear warheads in 2019

More than 90% of the world's nuclear warheads belong to Russia and the US

Strategic deployed
Warheads on ballistic missiles and strategic bombers

Stockpiled
Warheads assigned for potential use on military delivery vehicles

Retired
Warheads awaiting dismantlement



"This proposal for a trilateral agreement is, in reality, a poison pill designed to provide a pretext to allow for the [New Start] treaty to expire," Kimball told CNN.

The presence in the administration of National Security Advisor John Bolton -- a longstanding hawk and critic of arms control agreements -- also has some observers concerned that the White House's true goal may be to [find an exit strategy](#) for a nuclear pact it sees as constraining and outdated.

President Vladimir Putin, who has suggested Russia would be open to renewing the New Start treaty, has warned that letting the pact lapse could risk an arms race.

"The Cold War was a bad thing ... but there were at least some rules that all participants in international communication more or less adhered to or

tried to follow. Now, it seems that there are no rules at all," [he told the Financial Times](#) last month.

The ditching of nuclear treaties by the Trump administration has already contributed to the weakening of norms, and casts other multilateral agreements, like the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) into doubt, experts said.



Russia releases video of new nuclear weapons 01:09

Under the NPT, one of the world's most important foundational nuclear treaties, nuclear-weapon states -- the US, Russia, China, France and the UK -- commit to ending the arms race and achieving nuclear disarmament, while non-nuclear-weapons states agree to forgo developing or seeking nuclear weapons.

But if the US and Russia abandon an agreement designed to reduce their nuclear stockpiles, it will become far more difficult to make non-nuclear states stick to their commitments, according to Tytti Erästö, a researcher for the SIPRI Nuclear Disarmament, Arms Control and Nonproliferation Programme.

"Without these treaties you can't even speak about violations or limits -- basically anything is allowed," Erästö told CNN.

"For new potential proliferators, the weakening of international norms and the legitimacy crisis within the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty may

remove some of the normative restraints to developing nuclear weapons. I don't think any country would go develop a nuclear weapon just because of this, but it may impact decisions in the future about whether or not to acquire them."

One eye on China

China is steadily building and modernizing its arsenal, according to Zhao Tong, a fellow at the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy in Beijing.

"It's a trend that makes the US increasingly worried," Zhao told CNN. Still, at an estimated 290 warheads, [according to the Arms Control Association](#), China's nuclear arsenal is only a fraction of the US and Russia. It is that lack of parity which makes the idea of a trilateral arms control treaty a non-starter for China.

Zhao warned that a collapse of the New Start treaty would pose significant implications for Chinese nuclear thinking.

"The Chinese embrace deep distrust against the US, and against Russia to some extent, even under current conditions," Zhao said. "So you imagine if there is no formal agreement, no verification letters, how Chinese experts would trust the unilaterally declared amounts. It is very easy for the Chinese expert community to develop exaggerated threat perceptions."

And that fear would ultimately drive further growth of the Chinese nuclear arsenal.

Arms control agreements supply parties with a basic sense of certainty about each other's capabilities. They help mitigate misunderstandings among big powers, build transparency measures through mutual verification and contribute to confidence building -- cultivating a habit of cooperation through open channels.

Without them, the effect is a much more uncertain world with fewer rules regulating the world's most dangerous weapon.

The possibility of the New Start treaty's demise offers a window into the atmosphere that could exist without any nuclear limits at all.

"If there is no arms control, opportunities of substantive exchange would be lost and the nuclear communities would stop talking," Zhao said.

"In that environment I'm afraid the appreciation and spirit of cooperative security would be lost."

Putin moves to leave weapons treaty as US accuses Russia of nuclear violations

By [Nicole Gaouette](#), CNN

Updated 1800 GMT (0200 HKT) May 30, 2019

Washington (CNN)The arms control framework curbing a US-Russian arms race came under further strain this week as Russian President Vladimir Putin took formal steps to withdraw from a landmark nuclear

missile treaty and the US charged that Moscow is violating a separate pact that bans all nuclear explosions.

Putin submitted a bill to parliament Thursday to withdraw Russia from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, following the [Trump administration's February announcement](#) that it would pull out of the pact because Russia has violated it since 2014, which Moscow denies. On Wednesday, the US military's top intelligence officer said the Trump administration believes Moscow is violating a treaty banning all nuclear explosions, a claim that arms control experts questioned and the international body that monitors the treaty could not confirm.

Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, director of the US Defense Intelligence Agency, told an audience at the Hudson Institute that the US believes Moscow is violating the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty's "zero yield" standard, which forbids tests strong enough to create a self-sustaining chain reaction that can lead to a nuclear explosion.

No evidence

He argued that the tests were helping Moscow develop new nuclear weapons capabilities.

"The United States believes that Russia is probably not adhering to the nuclear testing moratorium in a manner consistent with the zero-yield standard," Ashley said. "Our understanding of nuclear weapon development leads us to believe Russia's testing activities would help it improve its nuclear weapon capabilities."

Ashley presented no evidence for the statement and when pressed, wouldn't confirm that Russia is conducting these tests, saying only that Moscow could conduct them.

"It is our belief that they are set up in such a way that they are able to

operate beyond a way that would be necessary for a zero-yield," Ashley said, "and so the facilities they are operating have that capacity to operate in something other than zero-yield."

Ashley's claim raised eyebrows among arms control experts, who said the general offered nothing to back up his assertion that Russia is breaching the 1996 treaty and that the development of new nuclear capabilities would require tests too big for Moscow to hide.

These experts questioned the administration's intent, pointing both to national security adviser John Bolton's well-known dislike of arms control treaties, as well as the Trump administration's hostility to all manner of international agreements.



Putin threatens US after missile treaty withdrawal 02:31

And they flagged a [US report](#) released just a month earlier on compliance with arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament treaties that didn't mention the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty or Russian testing that violates it.

"This accusation comes with absolutely zero evidence to support it," said Alexandra Bell, senior policy director at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. She noted the lack of details Ashley offered.

"There was no mention of time or a specific incident or any clear

indication that we've consulted with our allies."

"The word 'testing' didn't even make it into the report" on compliance released last month, Bell noted. This year's version of the report was unusually short by previous years' standards and was criticized for potentially being politicized in its approach to Iran.

Bell said of Ashley's charges against Russia that "if we're ready to talk about it publicly, why didn't it make it into that compliance report?"

No unusual events

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, said that "Ashley and the administration appear to be stretching the facts beyond what the evidence they presented supports. It is absolutely no surprise that Russia and the US and China have the capability to conduct a nuclear test explosion. The question is: is Russia actually doing this?"

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, the independent body which watches for violations with over 300 monitoring stations around the world, said it had seen no unusual activity.

"The CTBTO's International Monitoring System (IMS) is operating as normal and has not detected any unusual event," the Vienna-based group said in a statement. "The CTBTO has full confidence in the ability of the IMS to detect nuclear test explosions according to the provisions of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty." The statement added that the "verification regime is already working and effective."

The Russian Embassy did not respond to requests for comment.

Stephen Young of the Union of Concerned Scientists, said "the assertion that Russia is undertaking activities that are violating the treaty can't be dismissed out of hand," but he added that he was concerned "this is the first step to get the US to withdraw from the treaty by accusing Russia of

violating it."

Nuclear modernization

Like other arms control analysts, he pointed to Bolton. "This administration, in particular John Bolton, does not like treaties of any kind," Young said, "so there is concern that this rather sudden announcement about Russian activities is merely a subtext of a goal of John Bolton's of getting the US out" of the treaty, which it has signed, but not ratified.

Ashley's claim comes as longstanding arms control agreements between US and Russia are under strain or unraveling and both sides are focused on modernizing their arsenals.

The US announced in February that it will leave the 1987 INF Treaty, a centerpiece of European security since the Cold War that bans ground-launched missiles with a range of between roughly 300 to 3,400 miles and 500 and 5,500 kilometers. The bill Putin submitted Thursday comes into force as soon as it passes the upper house of parliament and is officially published in a state newspaper.

Washington has also indicated that it wants Moscow to [renegotiate the landmark New START Treaty](#), which focused on reducing strategic nuclear stockpiles and expires in 2021, and include China -- a scenario that's unlikely to happen, experts say.

In the meantime, the US is one of eight nations known as the "hold-out states" that have to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty before it can enter into force. The others are China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan. Russia has both signed and ratified the agreement. Ratifying the treaty would allow Washington to demand the kind of short-notice inspections that could prove whether Russia was complying or not.

'Tests they could not hide'

The CTBTO noted in its statement that "the Treaty can only be fully implemented after its entry into force, when the prohibition becomes legally binding for all States Parties. This is also true of the final verification measure of the Treaty, the provisions for on-site inspections, which would allow for on-site visits at short notice if requested by any State Party."

Asked about Ashley's comments Wednesday, State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus said the agency was "certainly alarmed that they (Russia) continue to disregard their international obligations as it relates to arms control."

Ortagus referred to the Defense Intelligence Agency on Ashley's specific comments, but said that the State Department has repeatedly noted that Russia "routinely disregards its international security and arms obligations."

Even so, Young of the Union of Concerned Scientists said that "if Russia were seeking to develop any significant new nuclear capabilities, that would require tests that they could not hide. And Russia can't do tests this small that would lead to any significant change in the overall nuclear deterrent equation or negatively impact US security."

Bell agreed, saying that "even if Russia was messing around in this range [of tests] it wouldn't be militarily significant."

US begins work on new

missiles after pulling out of arms control treaty with Russia

By [Ryan Browne](#), CNN

Updated 2150 GMT (0550 HKT) March 12, 2019



(CNN) The Pentagon is taking steps to develop new missiles, following the Trump administration's decision to suspend the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, a 1987 arms-control agreement that the Trump administration has said it plans to exit due to Russian violations.

"We will commence fabrication activities on components to support developmental testing" of conventional, ground-launched missiles, Pentagon spokesperson Lt. Col. Michelle Baldanza told CNN in a statement.

She added that these activities "would have been inconsistent with our obligations under the Treaty" prior to the administration's move last month to suspend its treaty obligations though she stressed that the missile was non-nuclear.

"This research and development is designed to be reversible, should Russia return to full and verifiable compliance before we withdraw from the Treaty in August 2019," she added.

While the Pentagon began researching concepts for the missile back in 2017 in response to Russian missile activities, that research was considered compliant with the treaty.

Earlier this month the Kremlin issued a statement saying that Russian President Vladimir Putin had signed a decree suspending implementation of the INF Treaty.

The US has long accused Russia of violating the treaty through the development and deployment of the SSC-8/9M729 ground-launched cruise missile, an allegation supported by the NATO allies and denied by Russia.

Russia is "overhauling its nuclear forces—including those that threaten European territory, such as the dual-capable, Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF)-violating SSC-8/9M729 ground-launched cruise missile," Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, the head of US European Command, said in a statement provided to Congress earlier this month.

"Russia seeks advantage over the US and its European allies through its

non-compliance with long-standing arms control treaties. Its violations of the INF Treaty allowed Moscow to develop capabilities that the United States continued to forego," he added.

Trump admin aiming for major nuclear deal with Russia and China

By [Kylie Atwood](#) and [Nicole Gaouette](#), CNN

Updated 1124 GMT (1924 HKT) April 26, 2019

Washington (CNN) President Donald Trump has his eyes on a new foreign policy prize: a grand nuclear deal with Russia and China, that he sees as a potential signature foreign policy achievement. However, some arms control experts are concerned the effort could backfire.

The President, who has a penchant for big deals, has hinted publicly a deal is on his agenda, adding a threat if it doesn't come to pass.

"Perhaps we can negotiate a different agreement, adding China and others, or perhaps we can't," Trump said, mentioning his decision to pursue a treaty during his January address to the nation. "In which case, we will outspend and out-innovate all others by far."

The White House is conducting intense interagency talks to develop options for the President to pursue such a deal, building off another nuclear pact, the New START Treaty, which expires in 2021, multiple White House officials told CNN.

"The President has made clear that he thinks that arms control should include Russia and China and should include all the weapons, all the warheads, all the missiles," said a senior White House official. "We have an ambition to give the President options as quickly as possible to give him as much space on the calendar as possible."

"This is something that no administration has tried," the senior official said. "But I would argue no administration has tried what [Trump] tried with North Korea for example."

Worries about triggering an arms race

But the scale of those ambitions, Trump's past criticism of New START as a "bad deal" and the role of national security adviser John Bolton -- a longstanding critic of arms control agreements -- have some observers concerned that the administration's true goal might be find a way to exit a second nuclear pact it sees as constraining and outdated.

"The only reason you bring up China is if you have no intention of extending the New START Treaty," said Alexandra Bell, senior policy director at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

Bell and other arms control experts worry that before too long, the world's two largest nuclear powers might shed limits on their nuclear arsenals for the first time in decades.

Administration officials say their aim is to revamp a dusty pact for a new age and increase global security.

"If we can get the deal right, if we can make sure that it fits 2021 and beyond, President Trump has made very clear that if we can get a good solid arms control agreement we ought to get one," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told Congress this month. He added that "we need to make sure we've got all of the parties that are relevant as a component of this as well," Pompeo said. "Other countries besides Russia and China."

The Trump administration has not set out a timeline for negotiations or even raised the prospect with China and Russia. Pompeo told lawmakers the US was in the "very beginning of conversations about renewing" the treaty.

New START "covers only a small sub-set of weapons that Russia was comfortable covering," said the official.

'We should eliminate as many of them as possible'

"What the President wants to look at is, we should bring all of those weapons under control," the official said. "We should eliminate as many of them as possible, we should look to eliminate classes of weapons."

With less than two years left in his first term, Trump would be under the gun to accomplish something that many view as impossible.

Administration officials say that's not a reason not to try, and one pointed out that it took the Obama administration less than two years to negotiate New START.

It's a comparison that arms control experts say doesn't hold water. New START was built on decades of negotiations for the original START Treaty, while a pact that includes a new country could require starting from scratch.

Both US and Russian officials have signaled that renewal could be drawn-out and difficult. Trump administration officials question whether Moscow's development of new nuclear weapons is the kind of step a "responsible stakeholder" would take.

Russian officials question US compliance with New START.

"The extension of the New START is not a simple technicality that could be resolved in a couple of weeks," Russian ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov said at an arms control conference this month. "Serious issues must be settled."

The 2010 New START treaty limits both nations to deploying 1,550 nuclear warheads over 700 delivery systems, including intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and bombers. It also allows for 18 on-site inspections every year that allow each side to keep a close eye on the others' capabilities.

The treaty is set to expire in 2021, but could be extended for up to five years if both sides agree.

The White House, however, doesn't see the need to rush into talks on extending New START before going after the bigger deal, which would look to include non-strategic weapons and get rid of certain classes of weapons.

"We don't have to have a discussion right now about an extension," the official said. Instead, "we need to have a discussion about, with everything that Russia and China are developing what does threat reduction to the US look like, and what should a proposal look like to bring them both to the table to try to negotiate a better deal."

Nuclear experts are wary that getting too close to the renewal deadline will put the treaty in jeopardy. Lynn Rusten, a Vice President at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, says a "prudent way forward" would be

renewing New START and then drawing in the Chinese, and potentially other nuclear-capable countries like the UK and France.

"An overly ambitious approach will be unnecessarily risky," says Rusten.

"You can have the belt and suspenders, and start to lay the groundwork for a more ambitious agreement. But I don't think getting rid of the belt and suspenders enhances chances of getting the more ambitious agreement."

Rusten worries that the closer the deadline gets, the more both sides will try to leverage their position. That posturing, she warns, could lead to a crash and burn.

Bell says that if New START expires, the US will lose access to vital information about the Russian nuclear system. "We give that up, we lose that intelligence that gives us a real time view into their strategic arsenal ... then we have to make choices about what we do with our own nuclear weapons based on guessing."

Bell and others question say the administration's idea to include China in the treaty raises questions and, in some ways, strains credulity.

Concerns about China's willingness to engage

First, Beijing has long said that it would not engage in nuclear controls with countries that have much larger stockpiles. China has less than one-tenth the nuclear weapons that Russia and the US have, it has a no first use policy and is believed to store its warheads apart from its missiles.

"China isn't even in the same ballpark," said Bell. "They're not even playing the same game."

Unless Beijing agreed to be the junior partner in a broader pact -- a

highly unlikely scenario -- bringing China under the New START's restraints would present Washington and Moscow with an excruciating choice.

To reach parity, they would either have to have radically reduce their own weapons holdings or let China begin a massive nuclear build up to match US and Russian numbers.

The Chinese embassy did not respond to CNN's request for comment. European defense officials say there's value in the idea of drawing China into strategic discussions, but they don't hold out much hope.

"On the one hand there's the talk about wanting to include China; on the other hand there's the realistic expectation that China is not interested in joining that framework," one official said. "When you put those two together, the prospects are not terribly optimistic."

In April, during a meeting with Chinese vice premier Liu He in the Oval Office, Trump said that he thinks Moscow and Beijing will "come along" on a nuclear deal and said it could happen after the US and China complete trade negotiations.

"I think it's much better if we all got together and we didn't make these weapons," Trump said. "As you know, China is spending a lot of money on military. So are we. So is Russia. And those three countries, I think, can come together and stop the spending and spend on things that maybe are more productive toward long-term peace."

China 'will not participate' in Trump's proposed three-

way nuclear talks

By **Ben Westcott**, CNN

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US President Donald Trump and China's President Xi Jinping arrive at a state dinner at the Great Hall of the People on November 9, 2017 in Beijing, China.

Hong Kong (CNN) China won't take part in three-way nuclear talks with the United States and Russia, a government spokesman said Monday, potentially scuttling plans by the Trump administration for a grand nuclear deal between the three nations.

CNN reported in April that US President Donald Trump had been privately eying [the possibility of a new pact with Russia and China](#), after previously describing the New START nuclear agreement with Moscow as a "bad deal."

Multiple White House officials told CNN that Trump's team was looking

into options for a new nuclear treaty after New START expires in 2021 which would involve China and "include all the weapons, all the warheads, all the missiles."

Trump said on Friday he had spoken to both Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Chinese government about [a potential three-way agreement](#), a move which administration officials said could be one of his signature foreign policy achievements.

"China, I've already spoken to them. They very much would like to be a part of that deal. In fact, during the trade talks, we started talking about that," Trump said at the time.

But the Chinese Foreign Ministry publicly denied on Monday it was interested in any such deal. "We oppose any country's attempt to make an issue out of China on arms control and will not participate in any negotiation for a trilateral nuclear disarmament agreement," spokesman Geng Shuang said at his daily press briefing.

Geng said it was up to the US and Russia, as the world's largest nuclear powers, to reduce their weapons stockpiles before other countries took part.

CNN has reached out to the White House for a response to the Chinese spokesman's remarks.

According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, China has about [280 nuclear warheads](#), compared to the thousands held by [the United States](#) and [Russia](#).

Experts previously said they were worried that if negotiations for a new nuclear deal ahead of the 2021 deadline dragged on too long, both Washington and Moscow might just drop out of the agreement.

This could leave both countries without a limit on their nuclear arsenal, for the first time in decades. "The only reason you bring up China is if you have no intention of extending the New START Treaty," said Alexandra Bell, senior policy director at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told the US Congress in April that the Trump administration wanted to "get the deal right."

"We need to make sure we've got all of the parties that are relevant as a component of this as well," Pompeo said. "Other countries besides Russia and China."

Lapse of US-Russia arms treaty will heighten missile threat, says UN

INF treaty, which kept nuclear missiles off European soil, was ‘an invaluable brake on nuclear war’, says António Guterres

Julian Borger in Washington and **Dan Sabbagh** in London

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The 9M729 on display after a briefing in Russia, on 23 January. The US and its Nato allies say it violates the INF range restrictions. Photograph: Pavel Golovkin/AP

The UN secretary general has warned that the world will lose “an invaluable brake on nuclear war” with the expiry of a cold war-era arms control treaty on Friday.

The 1987 **Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty** has kept nuclear missiles off European soil for more than three decades, but the US and Russia have failed to agree on how to keep it alive.

“This will likely heighten, not reduce, the threat posed by ballistic missiles,” António Guterres told reporters, adding that he was concerned about rising tensions between nuclear-armed states.

There have already been signs of a rekindled arms race in the class of weapons that the treaty banned: ground-launched missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500km.

Nearly 2,700 of the cruise and ballistic nuclear missiles were destroyed under the treaty, removing a potent source of European insecurity. A targeted country would only have a few minutes warning of a launch, fueling paranoia and hair-trigger alerts on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

These weapons are now beginning to return.



Death of the treaty that removed missiles from Greenham Common

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/aug/01/death-of-the-treaty-that-removed-missiles-from-greenham-common>

“2 August marks the demise of the INF, which played a major role in enhancing stability in Europe,” said Laura Kennedy, the former US permanent representative to the conference on disarmament in Geneva. “Its termination could be both unsettling in Europe and could lead to new arms competition in other areas, such as Asia.”

The death of the INF comes amid aggressive nuclear weapon modernisation programmes being carried out by the US and Russia. Among the new weapons the US is contemplating is a **nuclear bunker-buster**, considered and then shelved under the George W Bush administration.

Russia has developed a land-based nuclear-capable cruise missile, which the US and its Nato allies say violates the INF range restrictions. Moscow initially denied the existence of the missile (known as the **9M729** or by its Nato designation, SSC-8) and then claimed its range was under 500km. It is thought likely to be a land-based version of the Russian navy Kalibr missile.

“They are dual-capable, they can carry nuclear weapons, they can reach European cities within minutes, they are mobile, hard to detect and they also reduce the threshold of any potential use of nuclear weapons in armed conflict,” the Nato secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said on Wednesday.

Russia’s refusal to scrap the weapon led Donald Trump to **withdraw the US** from the INF treaty, and the US is now developing at least three types of medium-range missiles, all of them designed for conventional warheads.

The first of these, believed to be a land-based version of the Tomahawk cruise missile with a 1,000km range, is due to be tested later this month. A second option, a medium-range ballistic missile, is due to be tested in November, with a range of up to 4,000km. Third, the army is planning to develop a new missile to be mounted on a mobile launcher, either a ballistic weapon or a hypersonic glide vehicle.

Pentagon officials have said the first weapon, the cruise missile, could be deployed within 18 months.

The prospect of the INF’s demise on Friday is viewed with little enthusiasm among UK officials, not least because the country falls in the range of the previously banned intermediate-range surface-to-surface missiles.

“It is a proper serious moment,” a Whitehall source observed, although there are no plans for the new administration of Boris Johnson to publicly mark the moment.

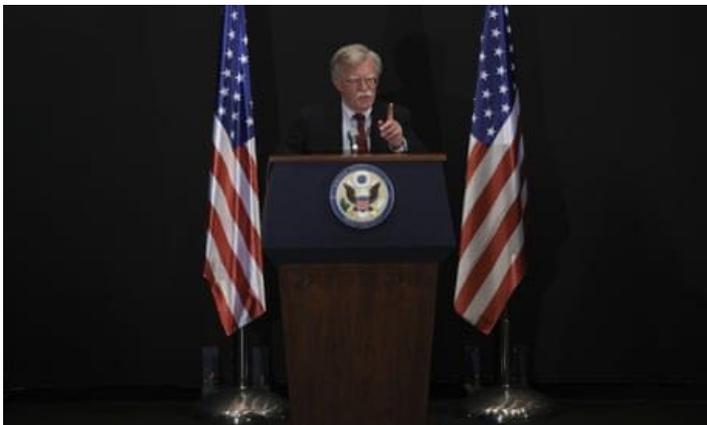
European officials say there has been limited discussion with their US counterparts on Nato policy after INF, in part because European policy was focused on saving the treaty.

Now that that has failed, UK officials argued there was unlikely to be an immediate return to a nuclear standoff between rival missile systems in Europe, as witnessed in the 1980s when US cruise and Pershing missiles were ranged against Soviet SS-20s.

The new Russian missile is nuclear capable, but not necessarily nuclear armed. They are presently believed to be organised in four battalions, only one of which is west of the Urals, though they are mobile allowing for rapid redeployment.

The US missiles are, for now, strictly conventional and Nato has said it has no intention of deploying nuclear missiles in Europe.

“We will not mirror what **Russia** is doing,” Stoltenberg said.



US arms control office critically understaffed under Trump, experts say

[Read more](#)

Furthermore, the Democratic majority leadership in the House of Representatives is opposed to the new US missiles, arguing there is no sign of a coherent strategy behind them, and has removed the \$96m research and development budget for them from the House 2020 budget. The fate of the programmes now depends on the reconciliation process between the House and Senate versions.

It is unclear where a US cruise missile would be based. They would have to be located in eastern Europe to be in range of Russian targets, but one of Washington’s closest allies in the region, Poland, has insisted there would have to be unanimous Nato support for their deployment, which is unlikely.

“Any US attempt to force the alliance to accept the missiles or to go around Nato and try to negotiate a bilateral agreement with an individual Nato member would be a significant source of division within Nato and one Russia would be eager to try and exploit,” said Kingston Reif, the director for disarmament and threat reduction policy at the Arms Control Association.

Administration hawks led by John Bolton, the US national security adviser, are also eyeing a possible Pacific deployment as a counter to Chinese medium-range missiles. The fact that China was outside the INF was one of the reasons cited by Bolton and others in their

opposition to the treaty. But basing problems would also be a serious obstacle in the Pacific, as any host nation would become a primary target for a pre-emptive attack.

“Our east Asian allies aren’t exactly rushing to host these these missiles,” Reif said. They could be based on Guam, but that is 3,000km from China, and expose the population on the tiny US Pacific territory.

“There is no plan for what comes after INF,” said Pranay Vaddi, a former state department arms control official now at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. “Not having a plan or not at least forecasting that you’re thinking of a plan of what to do for European security and Asian security after the treaty is what strikes me as irresponsible.”

After the collapse of the INF, the last remaining arms control treaty is the 2010 New Start agreement limiting US and Russian strategic warheads, **but that is due to expire in 2021** and Bolton has said it is unlikely to be extended.