

THE TREATY ON
INTERMEDIATE-
RANGE NUCLEAR
FORCES:
History and
Lessons Learned

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

On December 8, 1987, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signed the most dramatic nuclear arms reduction treaty of the Cold War. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles—referred to as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (or INF) Treaty—resulted in the elimination of all U.S. and Soviet ground-launched missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. The treaty entered into force on June 1, 1988 and, by the end of its elimination period three years later, 2,692 U.S. and Soviet missiles had been destroyed.

The INF Treaty gave a boost to nuclear arms control in general, although reducing strategic weapons took longer and proved more of a challenge. Two-and-a-half years later, President George H.W. Bush joined with Gorbachev to sign the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START I)—the first U.S.-Soviet agreement to reduce, rather than merely limit, the two superpowers' strategic nuclear weapons systems.

Several factors combined in the 1980s to make the INF Treaty possible. Today, 25 years later, are there lessons that can be drawn from the INF experience that could be useful in further reducing nuclear weapons? In particular, many analysts—and many in the U.S. Senate, which must consent to ratification of any new arms control treaty—believe that the point has been reached where it will be difficult to

cut strategic nuclear arms further without addressing the question of non-strategic nuclear weapons.

This paper reviews the history of the INF negotiations and recaps the main provisions of the 1987 treaty. It then describes the factors that led to a successful negotiation, including why a treaty became possible in 1985-1987 that was not doable in 1981-1983, and discusses developments regarding the treaty since 1991. It concludes with a discussion of lessons from the INF negotiation that might be applied in future U.S.-Russian, or other nuclear arms reduction, efforts.

THE INF TREATY

The INF Treaty proved a milestone in the changing relationship between Washington and Moscow during the 1980s. Reagan took office in 1981, at a time of considerable concern about the ongoing Soviet military expansion, including a growing advantage in INF missile systems with the deployment of the new, multi-warhead SS-20 ballistic missile. NATO had decided in 1979 to respond to the SS-20 by deploying new U.S. INF missiles—the Pershing II ballistic missile and ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM)—to gain leverage in negotiating lower levels of Soviet INF or to address a perceived gap in the nuclear escalatory ladder if an agreement was not possible. Negotiations began in late 1981. Deployment plans and preparations proceeded in parallel with preparations for and conduct of the arms control negotiations.

At the end of 1983, following two years of dismal talks, the sides remained far apart, and the Soviets broke off negotiations following the arrival of the first GLCMs and Pershing IIs in Europe. Most analysts concluded that Moscow had little interest in finding a solution in this first phase of negotiations but believed that the Soviets instead hoped that public opposition in the five European basing countries would derail the U.S. missile deployments. They miscalculated; deployments proceeded.

Negotiations resumed in 1985. Gorbachev had taken the helm in Moscow and questioned the rationale for devoting so many resources to the military, given the Soviet economy's dire situation. For his part, in his second term, Reagan showed a greater interest in concluding serious arms reductions. Over the next two years, U.S. and Soviet negotiators moved past old roadblocks, found increasing common ground, and by the end of 1987 agreed on terms for the elimination of all their INF missiles.

Twenty-five years later, the INF Treaty stands as a milestone in nuclear arms control. Not only did it eliminate an entire class of nuclear missiles, it did so relatively quickly, in just three years. The treaty, moreover, applied the most innovative and intrusive verification measures that any arms control agreement to that point had seen.

FACTORS BEHIND THE NEGOTIATIONS' SUCCESS

The successful outcome of the INF negotiations was hardly a foregone conclusion; indeed, the arms control picture looked particularly bleak in November 1983 following Moscow's decision to break off both the INF and START negotiations. But negotiations resumed in 1985 and ultimately yielded success. Six core issues explain why the negotiations eventually succeeded.

The Impact of Political Change: The outcome of the INF talks cannot be understood in isolation from the political circumstances that surrounded the negotiations. In this context, Gorbachev played a very important role. He criticized Soviet diplomacy for

moving too slowly, and, given his interest in reforming the Soviet system, he sought an improved international environment, and INF benefited from that.

NATO Solidarity: In order to achieve success at the negotiating table, NATO had to make clear its commitment to deploy U.S. INF missiles. That required particular political courage on the part of the five European allies who had agreed to host the missiles, especially given the strong anti-nuclear movements in those countries. Pursuit of an arms control solution and close consultations between the United States and its NATO partners proved key to sustaining this resolve. A multilevel process of Alliance consultations continued over the course of the negotiations. As a result, the positions the United States took into the negotiations were very much a collaborative product.

Reconciling Security Interests and Resolving Treaty Issues: The outcome of the INF negotiations cannot be understood without accounting for the ways in which the security interests of both sides were ultimately satisfied. The United States and NATO sought the zero-zero outcome—the elimination of all INF missiles on both sides—but were prepared to accept a limited number, provided it was equal for both sides. Once it became clear that NATO was proceeding with its own INF missile deployment, the Soviets faced compelling choices. One by one, they chose to drop their demands, ultimately concluding that they would rather sacrifice all their INF missiles than face the deployment of Pershing IIs and GLCMs in Europe and have to sanction them in a treaty.

The Place of Strategic Insurance: The panoply of U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear arms inevitably loomed over the INF talks. In the end, the Soviets could accept elimination of their large force of INF missiles in the belief that, if their strategic power could deter the United States, it could equally counterbalance the United Kingdom, France, and China. The U.S. calculation was more complicated because of the need to preserve the credibility of the U.S. extended nuclear guarantee for its allies. It seems clear that U.S. and Soviet strategic arms—the strategic

insurance—allowed both a freer hand to make the kinds of steps they did in INF.

The Role of Innovations: Concluding the INF Treaty required innovations, particularly in the area of verification. The United States was almost invariably the demandeur, and the Soviets often resisted. Still, the distance the Soviet Union came on verification in the INF Treaty was unprecedented. The resulting verification provisions pushed the curve of what had ever been seriously contemplated for nuclear arms control up to then. Since both U.S. and Soviet INF systems were deployed in third countries, the treaty needed accompanying agreements to allow inspections on their territory. This took innovative diplomacy but was accomplished effectively by both sides.

Conducting Multilevel Diplomacy: Finally, accounting for the success of the INF talks cannot exclude the complex negotiating effort that achieved the agreement. Over the span of seven years, U.S.-Soviet exchanges on INF took place at many levels: Reagan-Gorbachev, ministerial meetings, and the negotiations in Geneva. Many people's work made the treaty happen.

LATER INF TREATY DEVELOPMENTS

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991—after all U.S. and Soviet INF missiles had been destroyed—meant that the INF Treaty regime needed some adjustment. At the Special Verification Commission (SVC), responsible for addressing issues related to the treaty's compliance, the Soviet side was supplanted by officials from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. The SVC technically remains an active body, as the INF Treaty is of unlimited duration, though it last met in 2003.

In 2005-2007, senior Russian officials suggested that Moscow was considering withdrawal from the INF Treaty unless it could be expanded to ban all states' INF missiles. The Russians proposed negotiating a "global" version of the INF Treaty, an idea that the United States initially supported, although U.S. officials did not think a "one-size-fits-all" approach

would work, given regional differences. In the end, nothing came of the withdrawal suggestion, which may have been related more to Russian unhappiness about U.S. missile defense plans for Europe than anything else.

No authoritative Russian official has advocated withdrawal in the past several years, and the chief of the Russian General Staff ruled withdrawal out in May 2012. To date, no third country has expressed readiness to give up its INF missiles, probably because for most such states their INF-range missiles are "strategic."

Neither Moscow nor Washington appears to be pressing INF multilateralization now. However, if the two were to engage in a process of reducing their nuclear arms—strategic and non-strategic—below current levels, at some point, U.S. and Russian officials would likely seek some limitations on third-country nuclear forces. That might revive the idea of broadening adherence to constraints on intermediate-range missiles.

APPLYING INF'S LESSONS TO ARMS CONTROL TODAY

Today, the Cold War is long over and the global security problems are significantly different from those of the past. There are certainly some general lessons to be drawn from the INF experience. Some may be relevant for arms control negotiations today; others, less relevant, belong to the period in which they occurred.

To begin with, the overall strategic picture has changed radically since 1987. Over the past two decades, tens of thousands of U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons have been reduced and eliminated, either by arms control treaty or by parallel unilateral action. Although many nuclear weapons remain, the United States and NATO no longer formally regard Russia as an enemy.

But the obstacles to negotiating any agreement on non-strategic nuclear weapons are considerable, reflecting in part fundamental strategic changes in Europe since the end of the Cold War. NATO's

conventional forces are now considered more than a match for Russia's, though NATO has reaffirmed that it remains a nuclear alliance and that deterrence based on "an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities" remains a core element of overall strategy. At the same time, as Russian conventional forces declined relative to NATO's, Russia now explicitly relies on the threat of nuclear weapons to repel a conventional attack "when the very existence of the [Russian] state is under threat." Nuclear weapons have been integrated into its war-fighting strategies.

Given Russia's large numerical advantage in non-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons, and because of Russia's reliance on these weapons, persuading Moscow to reduce or even significantly limit them will be difficult. To date, they have been reluctant to discuss them in negotiations. And the United States and NATO have no bargaining chip comparable to the 1980s' deployment of U.S. INF missiles to induce the Russians to negotiate.

Some analysts have thus suggested that, in a future round of U.S.-Russian negotiations, the United States should put all nuclear weapons—strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed—on the table. By seeking a single aggregate limit covering all U.S. and Russian weapons, U.S. negotiators might be able to leverage Russian concerns about U.S. strategic forces (e.g., the much larger "upload" capacity of the U.S. force of intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles) and trade reductions in U.S. non-deployed strategic warheads for Russian reductions in non-strategic nuclear warheads.

But INF also teaches that we should be careful what we ask for. Even if at some future moment the Russians should be willing to negotiate on non-strategic nuclear weapons, they will certainly have their own idea of what constitutes an acceptable *quid pro quo*. In return for any reductions or limitations, they would be very likely to resurface their long-standing demand that all nuclear weapons should be based on national territory—in other words, for the withdrawal of all U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe. This would be a price that many in NATO and perhaps

non-NATO allies could find difficult to accept, although the acceptability would depend in large measure on the overall terms of the agreement. Further, if the United States seeks to fold non-strategic weapons into a larger discussion about all nuclear weapons, it might well face Russian demands for inclusion of third-party systems, which it would resist. That said, at some point, as U.S. and Russian nuclear forces are reduced, it will be necessary to bring third countries into the arms control process.

This is not meant to rule out the possibility of a U.S.-Russian agreement limiting or reducing non-strategic weapons, perhaps as part of a larger negotiation covering all their nuclear forces. But it will be difficult and will take time. More realistic goals for the near term might be to seek greater transparency regarding non-strategic nuclear weapons and other confidence-building measures.

In short, a replication of the INF experience for non-strategic weapons is probably not in the cards. Some lessons, however, certainly would be applicable:

- The United States (and NATO) should keep the door to negotiations open;
- Washington needs to be clear what price it might be asked to pay and what it and the allies are willing to pay for a reduction or limitation of these weapons, given that Washington does not have an obvious non-strategic bargaining chip. A clear and defensible set of principles would be essential to undergird and sustain any negotiating effort in this area;
- Allied solidarity—maintaining today's rather fragile allied nuclear consensus—now as then will be key. If negotiations do begin, a close consultative process in which allied concerns and ideas may be fully aired and discussed is the *sine qua non* for allied support; and
- Translating negotiations into a concrete agreement will once again rely on the vast

body of expertise accumulated on both sides over several decades. The direct engagement of top leadership would be vitally important for decision-making and resolution of major negotiating issues.

But it is far from clear that the basis for agreement exists. INF was a truly remarkable achievement that

opened the door to even more sweeping changes—changes that have left the world, whatever the challenges we face today, a better and safer place. The nuclear threat has receded, and the role of nuclear weapons in the strategies of the nuclear weapons powers has greatly diminished—and for this we should thank, in part, the INF experience.

2. HISTORY OF THE INF NEGOTIATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Formal negotiations on the intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) of the United States and the Soviet Union began in November 1981 and concluded with the signing of the INF Treaty in December 1987. Subsequently, the treaty was reviewed by the U.S. Senate, ratified in May 1988, and entered into force in June.

The first phase of negotiations (1981-1983) produced little real convergence between the sides. After a 15-month hiatus, the negotiations resumed in 1985. The sides began to make real progress in 1986, which accelerated in 1987.

The INF negotiations were the first attempt to reduce and dismantle existing nuclear weapons delivery systems in a verifiable manner. Heretofore, nuclear negotiations between the superpowers simply established agreed limits on nuclear arms growth. Although both sides agreed implicitly at the outset that actual reductions were on the table, they had varying interpretations of what reductions were to be.

Another first was the successful negotiation to eliminate an entire class of nuclear delivery systems. At the beginning, such an outcome was not considered seriously by either side. Indeed, the original NATO formulation of the objective was to reach the lowest possible equal limits. Later in the negotiations, changes, particularly on the Soviet side, made possible a treaty result that few would have predicted in 1981.

Finally, the INF agreement called for actual verification of compliance through on-site inspections,

some of them conducted on short notice. That was a breakthrough for U.S. and Soviet arms control efforts, which provided a model for subsequent treaties, including the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) and its successor, the New START Treaty.

THE BEGINNINGS

In the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union began to replace its aging “medium-range” (the term the Soviets used for intermediate-range) nuclear delivery systems, the SS-4 and SS-5 ballistic missiles, with a new variant, the SS-20. Medium-range systems had existed for several decades in the Soviet arsenal to threaten its immediate neighbors—principally Western Europe—with nuclear attack. Notably, SS-4 and SS-5 missile systems were also used during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 to threaten the United States by attempted deployment in the western hemisphere. For its part, by the early 1960s, the United States had opted for intercontinental range missiles that could strike Soviet territory from U.S. soil. The American foray into the medium-range category, the Thor and Jupiter missiles, was overtaken by technology advances in intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and the United States abandoned that category of land-based missiles.

Although the Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 missiles had existed for some time, their threat to Western Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was perceived to be limited. While their ability to devastate Europe was obvious to order-of-battle analysts, European publics did not concentrate on their potential effects. The missiles

themselves were not particularly accurate, and each carried only one warhead. As they were liquid-fueled, preparation time for firing was long, and the missiles were generally immobile and not easily concealed. U.S. reconnaissance assets were capable of providing some early warning of such preparation; the implicit hope was that, were war in the offing (or already underway), NATO strikes could destroy the missiles before launch.

The SS-20 began a new phase in Soviet medium-range missile development. It had a range of 5,000 kilometers, which meant that it fell just below the definition of an ICBM in the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II (SALT II) signed in 1979; that agreement defined an ICBM as having a range in excess of 5,500 kilometers. The SS-20 carried three warheads with greater accuracy than its predecessors. It had a solid fuel rocket motor, speeding preparation time. Importantly, it was a fully mobile system and could be concealed until it was erected for launch. Its range enabled it to strike most Western European capitals from deep inside the Soviet Union. In addition, its range and mobility enabled it to strike targets in Asia as well, notably China, Japan, and South Korea.

The United States did not see the SS-20s as particularly threatening. The missiles were countered by U.S. strategic systems, some of which were designated for NATO's Supreme Allied Commander's nuclear operations plan, and nuclear-capable aircraft deployed in Europe. But, in a speech in late 1977, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt warned of the threat to Western interests posed by the SS-20, which was increasing the Soviet advantage in nuclear forces in Europe at a time when the soon-to-be-concluded SALT II Treaty would codify U.S.-Soviet parity in strategic nuclear forces. Schmidt called on NATO to consider a response.

NATO, in turn, called on the United States to field a counter to the new Soviet threat. The United States under President Jimmy Carter was less sensitive to the deficiency Schmidt had articulated, although it was concerned about the growing vulnerability of dual-capable aircraft assigned the mission of carrying

tactical nuclear weapons. It had nothing on the drawing board that approximated the capabilities of the SS-20. Moreover, U.S. officials felt that the U.S. strategic deterrent coupled with an array of shorter range nuclear delivery systems in Europe were adequate to deter conventional land and air attack against NATO from the east.

However, in order to mollify growing concerns in Europe, the United States agreed with NATO to what became known as the "dual-track" approach to deal with the Soviet missile threat. Adopted by NATO in December 1979, the dual-track decision called for U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces with the goal of achieving a balance at the lowest possible levels—the "arms control" track—while the United States prepared to deploy new INF missile systems in Europe if negotiations did not obviate the need for that deployment—the "deployment" track.

The dual-track approach created a problem for the United States. What would it deploy as a response to the SS-20? The United States had a modernization program underway for the Pershing IA missile system, 108 of which were already deployed in West Germany. The program was in the process of developing a more accurate guidance system and improved rocket motor on a missile of the same range as the Pershing IA—approximately 800 kilometers. (Another 72 Pershing IA launchers were operated by the West German Luftwaffe in addition to the 108 Pershing IA launchers deployed by U.S. Army Europe.)

Another complication was the concern of the West German government that it not be "singularized" as the only country with intermediate-range missiles on its soil. The Germans insisted that other NATO partners take the risk of retaliatory action by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. No other delivery system, however, was on the U.S. drawing board. The Pershing II as designed did not have the range to threaten targets deep in the Soviet Union. It was determined, nonetheless, that the range of the missile could be extended with modifications to approximately 1,800 kilometers, enabling it to strike targets up to the western reaches of Moscow from West Germany.

German concern about singularization and the problems and expense related to moving Pershing II launchers to other NATO locations, from which they would have less reach into Soviet territory, made it imperative that the United States look for other options. Washington decided to take the Tomahawk sea-launched cruise missile and mount it on a ground launcher, itself on a mobile vehicle. The missile was extremely accurate, had a range exceeding that of the Pershing II, and flew a course difficult to observe and intercept. Thus, by late 1979, the potential deployment of a counterbalance to the SS-20 was feasible. The U.S. Army continued to develop a longer-range Pershing II, and the U.S. Air Force took on the task of preparing a ground launcher for the ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM).

NATO's dual-track decision agreed that, if negotiations failed to alter the deployment track, the United States would replace its 108 Pershing IA missile systems in West Germany with 108 Pershing II missile systems, and would deploy in the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Italy 116 GLCM launchers, each carrying four GLCMs, for a total deployment of 464 GLCMs. Since Pershing IIs and GLCMs each carried a single warhead, this would mean the deployment of 572 INF missile warheads in Europe.

THE NEGOTIATIONS—KEY ISSUES

Four issues emerged that were destined to block agreement until the late stages of the INF negotiations process. Finding solutions to these was fundamental to an eventual positive outcome, but the obstacles seemed almost insurmountable in the early stages.

Weapons to be Negotiated: The United States proposed that the negotiations be about ground-launched U.S. and Soviet nuclear-capable missiles, to include the Pershing II, the GLCM, the Soviets' obsolescent SS-4 and SS-5 but most particularly their new SS-20. Having lost the argument to include so-called "forward-based systems" such as U.S. tactical aircraft in Europe that could carry nuclear weapons in earlier strategic agreements, the Soviets proposed

that all U.S. nuclear-capable missiles and aircraft in Europe, except for very short-range systems (such as the Lance missile), be included. The United States resisted this effort, since it would mean placing constraints on dual-capable aircraft, which had primarily conventional roles and missions, and could restrict deployment of U.S. Navy aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean Sea.

Geographic Scope: The United States argued that the weapons being negotiated were highly mobile and could be moved across significant distances in a relatively short period. Moreover, the long range of Soviet SS-20s made them a threat not only to Europe but also to much of the rest of the world. Therefore, the United States took the position that all INF missile systems must be included in the negotiation, regardless of where they were deployed. The Soviet side, on the other hand, insisted that the negotiations only pertained geographically to Europe and that the mobility of Soviet missiles was highly overrated by NATO.

Range: Closely related to the differences over location of INF missiles was the problem of range. The Soviet side asserted that the Pershing II had a range of about 2,400 kilometers and thus could threaten Moscow from deployment locations in West Germany, making it a special threat. The United States insisted that the Pershing II's range was no more than 1,800 kilometers and that all INF missiles—those in the 1,000 to 5,500 kilometer range—should be included in the negotiations.

British and French Nuclear Weapons: The Soviet Union asserted that British and French nuclear delivery systems should be included in the INF negotiations since, in their view, these were weapons at NATO's call and ultimately controlled by the United States. The United States, on the other hand, argued that the British and French governments were not party to the negotiations and controlled their nuclear deterrents independent of NATO. The Soviet goal was readily apparent: counting British and French systems as part of a NATO-Soviet balance in a potential agreement could easily constrain or eliminate the planned U.S. deployments.

THE NEGOTIATIONS: 1981-1983

The core INF arms control principles that NATO established in 1979 governed the positions that the United States pursued throughout the negotiations. Specifically, these were (1) that negotiations on INF would be bilateral between the United States and Soviet Union; (2) that any limitations on U.S. INF systems must be accompanied by limitations on Soviet systems; (3) that the immediate objective of negotiations should be agreed limitations on U.S. and Soviet INF missile systems; (4) that agreed limitations should take the form of *de jure* equality, both in ceilings and in rights; and (5) that agreed limitations must be adequately verifiable.

U.S. and Soviet officials had conducted discussions on INF issues in 1980, but formal negotiations only began on November 30, 1981. The delegations met in Geneva for the first time with the battle lines already drawn. Ambassador Paul Nitze, a veteran of several previous arms control negotiations, led the U.S. delegation. Shortly before the negotiations began, President Ronald Reagan announced the U.S. position, known as the zero-zero proposal: the United States would not deploy its Pershing IIs and GLCMs if the Soviets would agree to dismantle their SS-4s, SS-5s, and SS-20s. The first three weeks were consumed with a presentation of the sides' positions, and this continued when negotiations resumed in early 1982. The zero-zero proposal had broad public appeal, especially in Europe, but most analysts considered it a non-starter.

In February, the U.S. delegation tabled a draft treaty embodying the zero-zero proposal to ban all INF missiles globally. The U.S. draft also imposed collateral constraints on "shorter-range" missiles, defined as those with a range between 500 and 1,000 kilometers. The treaty provided that the limits would be implemented under strict verification, although the draft text did not detail specific verification measures.

The Soviet delegation summarily rejected the U.S. proposal. While not tabling a counter-draft immediately, the Soviets argued that "equality and equal security" demanded that both sides have equal

levels of medium-range systems in Europe. The Soviets proposed that each side be limited to 600 medium-range missiles and aircraft in or "intended for use" in Europe by 1985, with the limit falling to 300 in 1990. Since the Soviet proposal counted British and French systems on the U.S. side, the effect would have been to prevent the United States from deploying its INF missiles and to require reductions in U.S. aircraft in Europe. The U.S. countered with arguments for "equal rights and limits" for the two participating parties, the United States and Soviet Union. Thus, if the Soviet side continued to deploy SS-20 missiles, the United States should have the right to match that deployment.

The U.S. and Soviet delegations established a negotiating schedule that applied through the first two years of the INF negotiations, during which the sides met six times for periods of about two months each. The INF negotiating schedule was modeled on the earlier SALT negotiations. When the negotiations were in session, on Tuesday and Thursday of each week the delegations met at 10:00 a.m., rotating between missions. After the formal exchange of statements laying out the sides' positions on an issue and often refuting counter-arguments from the other, delegation members with their advisors met less formally over coffee. Much was discussed, but little progress was made in these exchanges in 1981-1983.

Various stratagems evolved during the initial negotiations. U.S. negotiators, in an attempt to remove the aircraft issue from the table, suggested that a separate "data experts group" be convened to examine and attempt to agree upon specific data that described tactical theater aircraft with nuclear capability. For more than a year, the group met weekly, reaching only preliminary conclusions. However, it effectively took the issue off the agenda for the principals, helping to focus the negotiations on INF missiles.

In an attempt to bridge differences and find a mutually acceptable solution, Nitze met with his Soviet counterpart, Ambassador Yuli Kvitsinsky, in what became known as the "walk in the woods" in mid-1982. Nitze proposed an agreement that would permit the United States to deploy only the GLCM,

but not the Pershing II, at equal launcher levels with the Soviets: each side would be allowed 75 INF missile launchers in Europe. Such an agreement would have given the United States a 300-to-225 advantage in warheads in Europe, as each GLCM launcher carried four GLCMs while each SS-20 carried three warheads. But the United States would forgo deployment of the Pershing II and deploy only slower, more vulnerable weapons. The Soviets also would be constrained to no more than 90 SS-20s in Asia.

The “walk in the woods” encountered opposition in Washington, primarily because the Office of the Secretary of Defense opposed any agreement which would block U.S. ballistic missile deployments in Europe while permitting continued deployments on the Soviet side. More importantly, the “walk in the woods” did not gain support in Moscow. Consequently, the formula was never tested in formal negotiations.

Part of what motivated Nitze to suggest the “walk in the woods” was the intense efforts of various groups of European anti-war, environmental, and peace activists to influence the negotiations in Geneva as well as to encourage the governments in basing countries to abandon the deployment track. National elections in the United Kingdom and West Germany further exacerbated tensions, as political parties took sides. Although the main opposition came from anti-nuclear and anti-war groups, the Soviets did their best to turn the demonstrations to their advantage. NATO remained united, however, and the agitation had little effect on the course of the negotiation.

In early 1983, following consultation with NATO allies, U.S. negotiators outlined their criteria for an agreement other than zero-zero, including equal rights and limits, no inclusion of third-country (British or French) systems, and limits to apply on a global basis. They also offered an “interim” proposal, under which each side would be allowed no more than 450 INF missile warheads globally, with zero remaining the ultimate objective. The Soviets responded with their prerequisites, which included no deployment of any U.S. INF missiles in Europe, a focus on Europe, inclusion of aircraft as well as missiles, and “taking into account” third-country nuclear forces.

The sides exchanged several proposals in the fall 1983 negotiating round, though it was clear that they remained far apart in their basic approaches. The United States proposed that each side deploy no more than 420 INF missile warheads worldwide, while the Soviets offered an “equal reductions” plan: they would cut their INF missile warheads by 572 if the United States gave up the plans to deploy 108 Pershing IIs and 464 GLCMs in Europe.

From the U.S. and NATO side, the announced first deployments of GLCMs and Pershing IIs in Europe in late 1983 put a tacit marker on the table, since the Soviet Union had indicated that it would withdraw from the negotiations if deployments commenced (additional deployments of the SS-20 had continued throughout the negotiations). True to their stated course of action, the Soviets walked out of the negotiations in November just as the first Pershing II deployments began in West Germany. (They had ignored the first GLCM deployments that arrived a bit earlier in Britain.) The Soviets also broke off the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) negotiations.

THE NEGOTIATIONS: 1985-1987

Following the November 1983 walkout, the Soviet Union reiterated its earlier threats to take “analogous measures” in response to the U.S. INF missile deployments. These failed to deter NATO, and the Pershing II and GLCM deployments proceeded as scheduled in 1984. There was little expectation that the Soviets would change their positions until NATO basing countries had missiles on the ground. Curiously, with the negotiations no longer dominating the news headlines, the anti-nuclear movements in Europe appeared to lose steam. By the end of 1984, Moscow was sending quiet signals to Washington of its readiness to resume negotiations.

Following Reagan’s reelection, Secretary of State George Shultz and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko met in Geneva in January 1985 and agreed to resume the INF negotiations, along with the START negotiations, and new discussions on missile defense and space issues, in what was called the Nuclear and Space Talks. The Soviet plan initially

appeared to be to tie progress in one area to progress in the others, including to prevent the United States from developing missile defense technology. The INF negotiations resumed in March 1985 together with discussions in the other two fora. The “linkage” issue, with Moscow attempting to implement a lockstep advance by each of the three negotiations, was a key problem early on. A major objective of the U.S. INF negotiators was to separate INF from the START and defense and space issues in order to concentrate on the segment of nuclear arms control that appeared most amenable to resolution.

Ambassador Maynard “Mike” Glitman replaced Nitze as the U.S. chief INF negotiator; Nitze became a special advisor to Reagan and Shultz. The United States maintained its earlier proposals (zero-zero and an interim agreement at the lowest possible equal limits). The Soviets initially maintained the key elements of their position as well, particularly that there be no U.S. INF missiles in Europe, accompanied by calls for a moratorium on new deployments.

In October 1985, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev suggested that the Soviets might accept a separate agreement on INF, delinked from the other two negotiations, and that the Soviet Union might reduce its INF missiles in Europe to 243 SS-20s (with 729 warheads). In Geneva, the Soviet negotiators suggested that the United States might deploy 100 to 120 GLCMs, but only for a limited time.

The most important aspect of this proposal, made while Gorbachev was taking his first trip to the West (London and Paris) in his new capacity as general secretary, was to abandon the long-standing Soviet demand for compensation for British and French nuclear systems. He announced they were “off the ledger.” For Gorbachev to drop this demand suggested a harbinger of future agreement.

The logjam in the negotiations began to break further in 1986. Soviets officials indicated that they might be prepared to accept an equal limit of 100 INF missile warheads in Europe—without compensation for British and French systems—although the United States could deploy only GLCMs, not the Pershing II.

U.S. negotiators found this idea worth exploring and offered to discuss the mix of GLCMs and Pershing IIs, but pressed the Soviets regarding the reduction and limitation of INF systems in Asia as well.

At the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Reykjavik in October 1986, the Soviet side went further. Gorbachev proposed that the United States and Soviet Union eliminate all of their INF missile systems in Europe—in essence accepting Reagan’s original zero-zero proposal, at least as applied to Europe. Under Gorbachev’s plan, the Soviets would retain 100 INF missile launchers in the Asian part of the Soviet Union, while the United States could have 100 INF missile launchers in the United States. While still problematic from the U.S. point of view, this represented a major evolution in the Soviet position.

Meeting back in Geneva in March 1987, the U.S. negotiators tabled a new draft treaty, allowing each side 100 INF missile warheads globally, with zero in Europe, and with equal limits on shorter-range missiles. At the same time, they reiterated that zero-zero remained the preferred U.S. position.

The Soviet desire to maintain INF systems in Asia was not popular in Asia. Japanese officials in particular expressed concern that Europeans would benefit from Soviet reductions while they remained under threat (moreover, SS-20s could quickly be redeployed to threaten Europe).

The Soviets began to move closer toward the U.S. position during the spring of 1987. Gorbachev told an Indonesian journalist in July that he was willing to give up INF missiles globally. As they came to accept the zero-zero outcome globally for INF missiles, the Soviets took a distinctly more proactive stance on shorter-range missiles. This initiative included a proposal for a global ban on such missiles. That found resonance with many in the West: the shorter-range missiles at maximum range and deployed in Warsaw Pact countries could threaten many of the European targets covered by more remotely based SS-20s.

Late in the negotiations, the Soviets even accepted the U.S. demand to include the Soviet SS-23 mis-

sile system, which the Soviets had long insisted did not have a range of 500 kilometers. Although the Soviet offer to eliminate all shorter-range missiles was advantageous to NATO, some analysts argued that eliminating shorter-range systems as well as INF missiles would weaken “linkage” between the United States and Europe by eliminating more U.S. nuclear systems in Europe. The U.S. government was willing to reject the Soviet offer to eliminate shorter-range missiles and address only INF systems, but that would mean that the Europeans would have to accept U.S. counter deployments to Soviet shorter-range and SS-23 systems. Not wanting another domestic INF-like contretemps, the Europeans decided that the deal was too good to reject.

With the Soviet Union prepared to agree to eliminate all INF and shorter-range missiles, Soviet officials indicated that they wanted West Germany to give up its Pershing IA missiles as well. U.S. officials responded that these systems were German systems and not U.S.-controlled (although nuclear warheads for the German missiles were under U.S. control). Consequently, as was the case for French and British systems, U.S. negotiators argued that they could not be part of a U.S.-Soviet treaty. Nevertheless, in August German Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced that the Germans were prepared to eliminate their Pershing IA missiles in parallel with a U.S.-Soviet agreement. A complex set of provisions in the INF Treaty preserved the polite fiction that these systems were separate from the treaty’s reduction/elimination requirements.

Work in fall 1987 focused on verification issues and drafting treaty language, with the U.S. delegation tabling a detailed inspection protocol in September. The inspection protocol was the longest and most complex of the treaty provisions; its most difficult and controversial element was the management of the verification problem created by the fact that the first stage of the SS-20 was *de facto* identical with the first stage of the SS-25 ICBM, and both were produced at the same facility. This was not disclosed until the final weeks of the negotiations; it would have been a treaty-breaker if the verification modalities had not been resolved.

As a forcing event to complete the treaty, Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who had succeeded Gromyko, met in September and agreed that the INF Treaty would be signed when Gorbachev visited Washington in December. With a deadline set, the negotiators in Geneva worked overtime (virtually around the clock for two months) to finish the treaty text, completing initialing of the texts on board a U.S. military aircraft that flew the U.S. negotiating team and the principal Soviet negotiators to Washington on the summit’s eve. On December 8, Reagan and Gorbachev signed the treaty.

Three days later in Brussels, Shultz signed a key implementing accord with counterparts from the five NATO nations where U.S. INF missiles were based. This multilateral Basing Country Agreement provided the legal basis for permitting and facilitating Soviet INF inspection activities in those countries. The Soviets shortly thereafter signed a substantially identical agreement with the two Warsaw Pact countries hosting Soviet shorter-range missiles. The legal nexus was completed by early 1988, as each NATO basing country separately exchanged bilateral diplomatic notes with the Soviets authorizing INF inspections on its own territory, and East Germany and Czechoslovakia did likewise with the United States.

THE OUTCOME

The INF Treaty provided for the elimination of all ground-based intermediate-range and shorter-range missile systems—that is, missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers—worldwide from the inventories of the two nations. As a result, the United States eliminated all of its Pershing II, GLCM, and Pershing IA missiles and launchers. The Soviet Union eliminated all of its SS-20, SS-4, SS-5, SS-12, and SS-23 missiles and launchers. The treaty set a three-year period, following entry into force, for the elimination of all the systems that were to be destroyed under its terms.

The INF Treaty included what were the most detailed and intrusive verification measures ever negotiated. Those measures included a detailed exchange of data, which among other things specified the number of missiles and launchers at each INF

base or facility. The measures also included: initial base-line inspections of INF sites; inspections during the destruction of INF systems; perimeter/portal monitoring at the SS-20 production site in Votkinsk and the Pershing II production facility in Magna, Utah; and a ten-year inspection period of suspect sites or production facilities capable of building INF missile systems.

The treaty also established a dispute settlement regime, the Special Verification Commission (SVC), which was modeled on the earlier Standing Consultative Commission in the SALT II agreement. The SVC worked effectively in the joint settlement of compliance issues and cooperative implementation of the INF Treaty.

By the end of May 1988, both sides had ratified the treaty. The U.S. Senate moved relatively quickly (for consideration of treaties), giving its consent to ratification five months after signature, despite some opposition from conservative quarters. The treaty went into force on June 1, 1988. The U.S. and Russian governments established agencies to conduct inspections and to insure that the terms of the treaty were observed. In July, the first inspections began, and the Soviets carried out their first treaty-required missile eliminations; the United States initiated its eliminations in September. By the time the treaty's reduction period ended in June 1991, the United States had eliminated 846 missiles, while the Soviet Union had eliminated 1,846.

3. FACTORS THAT LED TO A SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION

WHY DID THE INF NEGOTIATIONS SUCCEED?

The successful outcome of the INF negotiations was hardly a foregone conclusion. At the outset of the talks, expectations of success were extremely low. The politics driving East-West relations in the early 1980s were marked by mutual distrust as profound as at any time during the Cold War. The geostrategic confrontation over INF missiles assured that the talks would be distinctly adversarial, with high stakes for both sides. Moreover, the United States and Soviet Union were entering into a realm of arms control that was largely new, where, despite previous skirmishes within the strategic arms talks over forward-based systems and the like, the actual parameters of negotiations about INF were undefined. Not surprisingly, there was a yawning gap in the approaches and positions the two sides brought to the table.

Against this inauspicious background, the results of the INF Treaty were as surprising as they were unprecedented. Remarkably, the outcome hewed closely to the goals and principles that the United States and NATO established at the outset. The Soviet negotiating effort succeeded in the sense that the outcome reflected a single-minded focus that drove inexorably toward the goal of zero deployment of U.S. INF missile systems. At the same time, the leaderships on both sides saw the INF talks in far larger political and strategic terms than simply the nuclear weapons systems that were under discussion.

There were complex factors that went into the successful outcome of the INF negotiations. The review

below identifies six core reasons the INF negotiations succeeded: changes in the political context, NATO solidarity, the merging of critical security interests, the place of strategic insurance, the role of innovations, and the effective conduct of multilevel diplomacy.

THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL CHANGE

The outcome of the INF talks cannot be understood in isolation from the political circumstances that surrounded the negotiations. In this context, the most intriguing question in explaining the success of the INF negotiations is the Mikhail Gorbachev factor. Was General Secretary Gorbachev the critical variable that led to agreement in 1987?

History does not reveal its alternatives, but it seems plausible to speculate that, had Yuri Andropov or Konstantin Chernenko remained in power as general secretary for any significant period of time after Leonid Brezhnev's death in 1983, INF might have had an entirely different story. The style of engagement when Gorbachev's three predecessors were in power was regularly inflexible and confrontational. Perhaps Gorbachev put it best in his memoirs when he criticized the Soviet diplomatic community for moving slowly along the same old beaten track. "Our diplomatic style was toughness for toughness' sake. The main thing was to demonstrate an unyielding spirit and an attitude of arrogant pride which was justified neither by political or practical considerations."¹

Soviet conduct in Geneva throughout the first phase of negotiations seemed to hew to this description. Rigidity in negotiations ran parallel to an emphasis

on public pronouncements transparently aimed toward swaying public opinion in the West, which was caught up in the vast anti-nuclear demonstrations of the early 1980s. It seemed apparent that the Soviet goal was to derail NATO missile deployments through political opposition in the basing countries rather than negotiated limitations.

Gorbachev, on the other hand, brought a distinctly different style to the table, in part due to his desire to improve Soviet relations with the West and in part due to his desire to reform the Soviet system. With hindsight it now seems clear that Gorbachev was sincere in his belief that internal political and economic reform required an improved international environment; continuation of the Cold War rivalry worked against his domestic goals. INF was poised to have the earliest and most direct impact on East-West relations and thus was ripe for serious negotiations. It might also be argued that Gorbachev really did harbor aspirations of a world free of nuclear weapons that he first began to trumpet in 1986, which the West largely dismissed at the time as nothing more than public posturing. Perhaps, however, Gorbachev saw INF as a first step in that direction.

What is clear is that, beginning in 1986 and intensifying in 1987, the Soviets dropped, one by one, long-standing positions that were obstacles to an agreement with the United States. These moves ran against the grain of many in the Soviet nomenklatura, but Gorbachev succeeded in marshaling the necessary support within the Soviet foreign and defense communities.

Gorbachev's approach was made easier by the fact that Ronald Reagan in his second term showed far greater interest in negotiating nuclear arms reductions than during his first term. Reagan's commitment to the zero-zero outcome was such that he overruled those within his administration who opposed zero-zero once the Soviets had accepted it, and he stoutly defended the treaty against outside critics.

NATO SOLIDARITY

INF was unique in the degree to which it involved one country, the United States, conducting a bilateral

negotiation that was intrinsically linked to the vital security interests of other countries and an entire alliance. Securing the trust and cooperation essential for this enterprise to work required an unprecedented effort of bilateral and multilateral consultation. The negotiations could not have succeeded without it.

Nuclear weapons had long been among the most sensitive topics of consultations within the Alliance. The place that the United States held as the dominant trustee of nuclear power in NATO, and the reliance that other NATO members put on the U.S. nuclear guarantee, made this inevitable. NATO's strategy of flexible response, which relied on the threat of nuclear escalation for deterrence, made the nuclear posture and doctrine of the Alliance a topic of continuous examination and debate. The Soviet deployment of SS-20 missiles beginning in the mid-1970s brought new intensity to these questions.

The Deployment Track: The NATO decision to deploy Pershing IIs and GLCMs was hardly a foregone conclusion. It took political courage by the basing countries who agreed to host these systems—the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Germany, as the sole host of Pershing IIs and the frontline of NATO defense, carried an especially difficult political burden. Moreover, the deployment planning had to be pursued over more than three years while the Americans moved ahead with the development and production of the weapons and the allies prepared the basing facilities in Europe.

Fueled by the intensifying nuclear confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the anti-nuclear movements in Europe and the United States reached their highest pitch in the early 1980s. Massive public demonstrations put enormous pressure on governments in Europe. The Soviet Union, particularly in 1981-1983, attempted to capitalize on these developments with a steady flow of public enticements and blandishments. Despite these pressures, the NATO allies held to the deployment plans.

The Arms Control Track: NATO's intensive work on arms control in the run-up to the dual-track decision in 1979 was notable for innovative consultative

mechanisms and the new ground it covered in arms control policy. The effort involved a wide range of joint studies, high-level NATO meetings, and numerous bilateral consultations. Although the United States led this effort, its views on arms control policy and positions for INF were largely unformed at the beginning and only emerged gradually from its own work and the consultation process with NATO. In this sense, the positions that the United States took into the INF negotiations were very much a collaborative product.

The path to the eventual INF Treaty in 1987 was long and arduous. NATO consultations remained critical throughout the talks. A multilevel process of consultations took place that included the work of the NATO Special Consultative Group that was charged in 1979 with following the negotiations on a continuous basis, frequent briefings at NATO and in capitals by U.S. negotiators from Geneva, special meetings between officials from capitals, and high-level discussions between ministers and heads-of-state. Consultations were especially critical at pivotal steps in the negotiations, such as for the zero-zero option for INF that Reagan announced when formal talks opened in 1981, and the move to the double-zero outcome (banning INF and shorter-range missiles) that emerged much later in the negotiations. NATO consultations and solid backing for the U.S. negotiating effort were vital to the successful conclusion of the INF Treaty.

RECONCILING SECURITY INTERESTS AND RESOLVING TREATY ISSUES

Just as the outcome of the INF negotiations cannot be separated from the political changes that influenced the talks over some seven years, the outcome cannot be understood without accounting for the ways in which the security interests of both sides were ultimately satisfied. There were substantial debates within the United States and NATO, as well as in the public sphere in the West, over the prospects and consequences of INF positions. Although little visible at the time, it is now known that there were also lively debates within the Soviet bureaucracy over decisions in the INF talks.

Zero-Zero and Its Alternatives: Reagan's announcement of the zero-zero option before the opening of formal negotiations in November 1981 brought to a conclusion a sometimes heated debate within Washington that had echoes in NATO. While zero as an optimal goal (versus an ultimate goal) was part of this debate in both the United States and Europe, there was substantial support for an approach providing for finite limits on INF missiles, particularly among those who doubted the Soviets would ever accept zero-zero. The case for this approach centered on the argument that it would afford a more flexible and publically credible negotiating position with the greatest likelihood of success. The zero-zero option as decided by Reagan, however, was distinctive in that it was the sole position the United States brought to the table.

There were mixed motives in this choice. Recognizing that INF was first and foremost a political battle, the progenitors of zero maintained that establishing the high ground with publics was more important than negotiability. As long as NATO deployments existed solely on paper, it was argued, the Soviets were unlikely to negotiate seriously on anything approaching equal terms, so it made little sense to adopt a less-than-optimum public position. At the same time, there was a strong case on security grounds that an outcome that got rid of virtually all Soviet INF missiles would be the best of all worlds for NATO. Some who advocated zero-zero understood that it could well prove non-negotiable and seemed to support the option precisely for that reason. In the end, the simplicity of the proposal and the prospect of eliminating a class of nuclear weapons appealed to Reagan's instincts.

Those who opposed the zero-zero option believed that it would have, for a time, broad public appeal but had no chance of being taken seriously by the Soviets and thus was a recipe for stalemate at the negotiating table. Moreover, some feared that, if successful, it would not maintain the escalatory ladder connecting conventional forces with the U.S. strategic deterrent, one of the original goals of NATO's dual-track decision. While initially there was support from NATO allies for a position that appealed

to their anti-nuclear publics, as time wore on and the negotiations remained frozen, there was increasing pressure from the Europeans to move to a more flexible negotiating position, i.e., an interim proposal establishing specific limits.

The push and pull between zero-zero and finite INF limits continued throughout the course of the negotiations. This was largely an internal U.S. debate, with little encouragement from the Soviets. The 1982 “walk in the woods” reflected the first U.S. breach in the zero-zero wall. Paul Nitze’s unauthorized gambit with Yuli Kvitsinsky was driven by his perception that some form of agreement in Geneva would be necessary to keep NATO unity and public support intact; he believed that his formula satisfied the minimal requirements of both sides.

Otherwise, the United States made two principal moves in the formal negotiations to advance an interim agreement. The first occurred during the 1981-1983 phase of negotiations when, well into the talks, U.S. negotiators tabled principles for an interim agreement with finite, equal limits, and subsequently detailed proposals for such an outcome. The second occurred after the renewal of negotiations in 1985, when the U.S. side, while stressing its previous position favoring the global elimination of INF missiles, reiterated its willingness to conclude an interim agreement with finite limits. What is notable about these developments is that the Soviets at no time during the talks from 1981 to 1987 demonstrated any ultimate willingness to accept a treaty that would legitimize the deployment of U.S. INF missiles, particularly the Pershing II.

The Soviet Position: During the first phase of negotiations, the Soviets stonewalled the zero-zero option and dismissed any interim agreement because they saw a good chance of blocking deployments through political opposition in the West. However, once U.S. deployments began in 1983 and NATO governments weathered the worst of the political storms from the anti-nuclear movement, the Soviet Union faced compelling choices. One by one, the Soviets chose to drop their positions on core issues in the interest of securing a treaty that eliminated the Per-

shing IIs and GLCMs altogether, e.g., the linkage of INF to the strategic and defense and space talks, inclusion of aircraft in the agreement, compensation for British and French nuclear systems, restriction of an agreement to Europe, and retention of Soviet INF missiles in Asia.

Undoubtedly, Gorbachev’s “new thinking” played a large role in shaping Soviet positions. But it is hard not to conclude that the INF talks would not have emerged as they did in the absence of the Pershing II and GLCM deployments. Ultimately the Soviets concluded that they would rather sacrifice all their INF missiles than face the deployment of Pershing IIs and GLCMs and sanction their deployment in a treaty. The Pershing II appeared to generate particular concern on the part of the Russians, who may have believed that it had the range to reach Moscow and thus could threaten a quick, decapitating nuclear strike.

The Shorter-Range Missile Story: Whereas the elimination of INF missiles emerged as a goal from the time the United States began the negotiations, the double zero—eliminating all U.S. and Soviet INF and shorter-range missiles—followed a more complex path. The U.S. position at the opening of the talks called for collateral constraints on shorter-range missiles (with ranges of 500 to 1,000 kilometers) to buttress the viability of an agreement banning INF missiles. The Soviets agreed in principle with the concept, but the sides did not engage in detailed discussion of this aspect of the negotiations until well into the second phase of the INF talks after 1985.

In 1987, the Soviets moved to advance a double zero, but this posed difficult issues for the United States and NATO. There were concerns that elimination of shorter-range missiles would further weaken the link between NATO defense and the U.S. strategic deterrent, already affected by the emerging agreement that would eliminate all U.S. INF missiles. NATO confronted the issue in June 1987, deciding to accept the elimination of shorter-range missiles while stressing the importance of preserving other elements of the U.S. nuclear linkage in Europe, such as dual-capable aircraft.

The Soviets sought to eliminate the German Pershing IA missiles as well. The United States held consistently to its position of principle that a U.S.-Soviet agreement could only cover U.S. and Soviet systems. The Soviets first pressed successfully for the prohibition of the transfer and conversion of U.S. Pershing II missile components slated for elimination. They then turned their sights directly on the German Pershing IA missiles, and here they held strong cards. For the German government, the prospect of West Germany remaining as the sole NATO country with shorter-range missiles in the wake of a double-zero treaty was politically untenable. With the aid of some deft political pressure, Moscow was rewarded by the decision of the German government to scrap its Pershing IA missiles in the context of the U.S.-Soviet treaty.

THE PLACE OF STRATEGIC INSURANCE

The panoply of strategic nuclear arms the United States and Soviet Union deployed inevitably loomed over the INF talks. Although never a specific topic of discussion in the INF negotiations, the global elimination of U.S. and Soviet INF missiles would not have transpired as it did without the ultimate security provided by the strategic arms of both sides. The Soviets could swallow the elimination of their large force of INF missiles in the belief that, if their strategic power could deter the United States, it could equally counterbalance the much smaller nuclear forces of the United Kingdom, France, and China.

Moreover, it can be argued that the SS-20 and its predecessors (the SS-4 and SS-5) were always more “political” than “military,” designed for political intimidation of Western Europe rather than military attack. Under those circumstances, if they were no longer politically useful—e.g., if they were at variance with Gorbachev’s “common European home” theme, they could be sacrificed as militarily superfluous. These factors appeared to shape the calculation that Soviet leaders ultimately made in deciding upon their concessions to reach the INF agreement.

The calculation the United States had to make was more complicated because of the real and perceived

credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee for its allies. In one sense, the nuclear issue came full circle under INF, which began initially with the United States in the late 1970s seeking to assure allies about the credibility of extended strategic deterrence for NATO but then agreeing to fill the perceived gap in flexible response with the dual-track decision in 1979, only to return to the original circumstances in the wake of the INF Treaty—no modern INF missiles in Europe but robust strategic forces that underpinned the U.S. security guarantee to Europe.

Whatever the calculations that each side made, it seems clear that U.S. and Soviet strategic arms allowed both sides a freer hand to make the kinds of dramatic steps they did in INF, steps that otherwise would not have been possible. The strategic insurance that each side had by virtue of its strategic forces shared importantly, if implicitly, in accounting for the success of the INF negotiations.

THE ROLE OF INNOVATIONS

Verification. The verification provisions of the INF Treaty stand out as one of the singular accomplishments of the agreement. The success of the negotiations in this area was essential for the viability of the agreement and for securing political support in the Senate for ratification. Here, as in few other areas, innovation was necessary because U.S. and Soviet negotiators were working from whole cloth.

The United States was almost invariably the demander on verification in the negotiations, though some in Washington had reservations about the intrusive nature of the verification measures when applied to U.S. missile systems. The Soviets, for purposes of political perception, proclaimed themselves as interested in verification as the United States, but in practice they did not offer concrete ideas about verification measures and often resisted the measures that U.S. negotiators put forward. Still, it must be said that the distance the Soviet Union came on verification in the INF Treaty was totally unprecedented and contrary to the attachment to secrecy that the Soviet Union had displayed throughout its history.

The verification provisions the United States advanced in the INF negotiations pushed the curve of what had ever been seriously contemplated for nuclear arms control up to then. Whereas in the SALT talks verification by national technical means was the prevailing mantra, the smaller and more mobile systems in INF and the missile destruction provisions it entailed introduced a whole new set of verification challenges. With notions of “any where, any time” inspections that were part of the debate at the time, the United States came up against its own legal and political constraints on intrusiveness. The challenge became to develop verification provisions that would meet the more rigorous criteria of “effective” verification that the Reagan administration adopted while satisfying its own security concerns.

Reaching agreement on these verification tasks dominated the latter part of the talks. For the Soviets, this process was largely a matter of reacting to U.S. proposals, often trying to scale back the intrusiveness they saw in those measures. But with agreement to eliminate all U.S. INF missile systems in hand, they recognized that the treaty could not be brought to fruition without acceptance of the main lines of verification that the United States put forward.

What the Soviets demanded consistently was optical equality in the application of verification provisions. Thus, for example, in response to the U.S. demand for the right to monitor the missile production facility at Votkinsk that manufactured similar missile stages for both the SS-20 (banned by the INF Treaty) and the strategic SS-25 (not banned), the Soviets demanded a similar presence in the United States, settling finally on the Hercules plant in Magna, Utah, even though there was no demonstrably comparable verification problem there.

Soviet agreement to verification provisions of this scope was unprecedented. For Washington, though, verification was a treaty breaker if agreement could not be reached, and U.S. negotiators pressed home this point. In the end, the outcome secured the political support the U.S. government needed for treaty ratification. Of equal significance, the INF verification measures became the benchmark and model

for subsequent arms control negotiations between the United States and Soviet Union, and between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Other Innovations: The verification obligations the treaty established for the United States and Soviet Union did not represent the whole of what would be necessary for the agreement to work. Since INF systems of both sides were deployed on foreign soil, accompanying agreements had to be negotiated with the countries concerned to allow U.S. and Soviet inspections on their territory. This took some innovative diplomacy but was accomplished effectively by both sides.

In addition, a verification regime as new and as ambitious as the one established by the INF Treaty required the creation of organizations on both sides to carry it out. For this purpose, the United States established the On-Site Inspection Agency under the Department of Defense but staffed by military, diplomatic, and technical personnel. The Soviets established a similar body. The two organizations implemented the treaty effectively throughout the duration of its inspection provisions.

Taken together, these additional innovations played important roles in the successful achievement of the INF Treaty.

CONDUCTING MULTILEVEL DIPLOMACY

Finally, accounting for the success of the INF talks cannot exclude the complex negotiating effort that achieved the agreement. Over the span of seven years, the negotiations took place at many levels. Although the constant thread throughout the negotiations rested with the delegations in Geneva, at critical junctures—as happened with other arms control agreements—senior officials in Washington and Moscow played pivotal roles in bringing the treaty to conclusion.

Foremost among these were the Reagan-Gorbachev summits in November 1985 in Geneva and October 1986 in Reykjavik. The first summit was not concerned with INF issues but set the stage for much

that followed. The Reykjavik summit, on the other hand, was devoted almost entirely to arms control issues. While no agreements were reached in Reykjavik, important steps were made in INF that subsequently emerged and drove progress in Geneva.

The roles of the two leaders were also decisive in the public diplomacy that played a central part in the INF story. Just as Reagan opened the INF talks with the announcement of the U.S. zero-zero proposal, many of the critical moves in INF first emerged in head-of-state pronouncements. This was especially true for Gorbachev, who had a constant eye on the political impact of each major Soviet move. What mattered most, though, was that the two leaders became equally interested in achieving an INF treaty and lent their political weight to the effort. This was essential within both governments to make the negotiations succeed.

Because of the high stakes involved in INF, the engagement of high-level officials became essential, especially during critical stages of INF talks in 1987. Secretary of State George Shultz and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze held several meetings in Washington, Moscow, and Geneva that were instrumental in moving the negotiations forward.

As for the negotiations in Geneva, the United States profited from the strong leadership and delegations

it sent to the front lines of the talks. Paul Nitze, one of America's foremost public servants, led the delegation during 1981-1983 when the negotiations were freighted by the contest of wills over INF and during a time of maximum political pressure on the allies. He played a uniquely vital role in providing assurance of U.S. steadfastness on INF and in maintaining Alliance unity in the face of significant opposition among European publics to the idea of NATO deploying new nuclear missiles to Europe and to the perceived bellicosity of the Reagan administration.

Equally, during the second phase of negotiations from 1985 to 1987, Mike Glitman, as head of the U.S. negotiating team that brought the INF Treaty to conclusion, proved a consummate professional with the diplomatic skills to conduct a complex negotiation, a full grasp of the technical substance of the talks, and a deep understanding of the larger political and strategic forces at play in INF, notably the need to maintain alliance cohesion in the process.

In short, accounting for the success of the INF negotiations is not complete without recognition of the many people who made it all happen. The outcome was not preordained and might have been different with a different group of players.

4. INF TREATY DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 1991

SORTING OUT THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union collapsed at the end of 1991, five months after completion of the elimination of all U.S and Soviet INF missile systems in accordance with the INF Treaty. Six of the Soviet successor states—Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan—had INF facilities on their territory still subject to inspection. In October 1992, they agreed, as part of the Commonwealth of Independent States, to fulfill the Soviet INF Treaty obligations.

While the United States negotiated with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to conclude the 1992 Lisbon Protocol to the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, under which those four countries legally assumed the Soviet Union's START I obligations, there was no parallel push for a comparable protocol for the INF Treaty. That was largely due to the fact that all INF missile systems had already been destroyed, whereas the START I eliminations had not yet even begun (START I only entered into force in December 1994).

Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine agreed to continue to observe the treaty and participate in its Special Verification Commission, and a memorandum was signed formalizing that arrangement. Thereafter, the SVC met in the format of five parties in two sides, with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine agreeing among themselves on issues such as how to divide inspections of U.S. INF facilities.

The other two states—Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which each had only a single eliminated INF site—chose to take a less active role; they did not participate in the SVC or in inspections.

The INF Treaty inspection period ended in 2001, as did U.S. INF perimeter/portal monitoring of the missile production facility at Votkinsk, where SS-20s had previously been produced, and Russian perimeter/portal monitoring at the missile production facility at Magna, Utah. (Monitoring at Votkinsk continued for purposes of the START I Treaty until that treaty's expiration in 2009.) As the INF Treaty is of unlimited duration, the SVC continues to exist—Mikhail Streltsov, the original Soviet commissioner, remains the commissioner of record for Russia. It last met in 2003 but could be called to convene again should the United States, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, or Ukraine wish to raise a concern about the treaty's implementation.

Apart from the INF Treaty, in September 1991 President George H. W. Bush announced a series of unilateral nuclear initiatives. These resulted in a significant reduction in the overall U.S. nuclear stockpile and the removal of all U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe except for gravity bombs. President Gorbachev responded shortly thereafter with his own set of unilateral nuclear initiatives. Between 1990 and 1993, the number of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe declined from some 4,000 to about 600, while the overall U.S. non-strategic stockpile fell from around 8,000 in 1990 to about 2,000 in 1996.²

RUSSIAN HINTS AT WITHDRAWAL—AND A PROPOSAL TO MULTILATERALIZE

In 2005, Russian officials suggested a possible interest in withdrawing from the INF Treaty. The issue received greater attention following the Munich Security Conference in February 2007. In his prepared remarks at the conference, President Vladimir Putin appeared to question Russian adherence to the treaty:

“In connection with this I would like to recall that in the 1980s the USSR and the United States signed an agreement on destroying a whole range of short- and medium-range missiles, but these documents do not have a universal character. Today many other countries have these missiles, including the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, India, Iran, Pakistan, and Israel. Many countries are working on these systems and plan to incorporate them as part of their weapons arsenals. And only the United States and Russia bear the responsibility to not create such weapons systems. It is obvious that in these conditions we must think about ensuring our own security.”³

Putin’s remarks came on the heels of comments by Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov, who stated: “The gravest mistake was the decision to scrap a whole class of missile weapons—medium-range ballistic missiles. Only Russia and the United States do not have the right to have such weapons, although they would be quite useful for us.”⁴ On the margins of the Munich conference, Ivanov reportedly said that observance of the treaty could not continue.

Suggestions of possible withdrawal emerged at a time when Moscow was increasingly unhappy with the George W. Bush administration’s policies, particularly its plans to deploy ten missile defense interceptors in Poland and a supporting radar in the Czech Republic. Chief of the General Staff Yuriy Baluyevskiy drew precisely such a linkage. Analysts expressed the view that the Russian comments were aimed more at generating pressure in Europe against

the U.S. missile defense plans rather than foreshadowing an actual Russian intent to leave the INF Treaty.

In October 2007, Putin suggested that the INF Treaty be made “global in scope,” i.e., that it become a multilateral accord banning all states’ INF missiles. The U.S. government quickly endorsed the idea. Later that month at the U.N. General Assembly, a joint U.S.-Russian statement affirmed the two countries’ continued adherence to the treaty and called upon other states to eliminate their INF missiles.

Speaking to the Conference on Disarmament in February 2008, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov gave greater specificity to what Russia sought: a legally-binding treaty that would obligate all parties “not to conduct flight testing and not to manufacture” INF missiles; require the parties to “eliminate, by an agreed deadline,” all INF missiles, INF missile launchers, and associated facilities and equipment; “set rules for counting and defining the types” of INF missiles; and establish “procedures for their elimination and compliance verification.”⁵ U.S. officials, however, rejected the idea of a “one-size-fits-all” treaty, given regional differences.

Although Russia has advanced the idea of broadening participation in the INF Treaty, there have been few indications of a concerted Russian diplomatic effort to persuade third countries to eliminate their INF missiles. Russian officials in the past several years have not advocated withdrawal from the treaty; indeed, Russian General Staff chief Nikolai Makarov ruled out withdrawal at a May 2012 conference in Moscow. The Obama administration has not pressed the idea of broadening INF Treaty participation either; a senior State Department official in June 2012 noted the difficulties of trying to multilateralize the treaty.

Adapting the INF Treaty to ban all ground-launched intermediate-range and shorter-range ballistic and cruise missiles worldwide would require bringing at least ten states other than the United States and Russia under the treaty’s terms. As of January 2012, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria each had

ground-launched ballistic missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.⁶ In addition, China and Pakistan have ground-launched cruise missiles with ranges in excess of 500 kilometers.⁷ India and South Korea also apparently have developed or are developing ground-launched cruise missiles in this range category.

While bringing some or all of these countries into a multilateral treaty banning intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles would be a very positive step in controlling and rolling back the proliferation of missiles, securing agreement would prove difficult. Each country places value on its missile capabilities and, absent significant changes in their geopolitical circumstances, would likely be unready to agree to eliminate those capabilities. For most of these countries, INF missiles are their “strategic” option, and China regards its conventionally armed ballistic missiles as a key component of its security posture. (The October 7, 2012 announcement by South Korea that it intended to nearly triple the range of its offensive missiles beyond the Missile Technology Control Regime standard demonstrates the magnitude of the challenge.)

IS THE TREATY AT RISK?

Suggestions continue to come from time to time out of Moscow that Russia ought to reconsider its adherence to the INF Treaty. Over the past several years, however, these have not been voiced by authoritative Russian officials.

Would withdrawal from the INF Treaty allow Russia to deploy military capabilities that it needs at present? While the New START Treaty codifies a rough parity between the United States and Russia in strategic nuclear forces, Russian officials remain concerned about their conventional force disadvantages vis-à-vis NATO and—although Moscow rarely voices these concerns publicly—China. The Russian military has launched a conventional arms modernization effort, but it is not expected to be completed until 2020 or later, and it is not clear whether the ambitious rearmament program will receive the funding that it needs.

Russian analysts thus indicate that for the foreseeable future Russia will rely more heavily on its nuclear forces, and Russia maintains by far the largest non-strategic nuclear arsenal in the world. Although Russia is prohibited from having INF missiles, it is believed to have hundreds of nuclear gravity bombs, air-to-surface missiles, and sea-launched cruise missiles, among other weapons, above and beyond its strategic nuclear forces.⁸ Given Russia’s numerical advantage in non-strategic nuclear weapons compared to the United States or China, Russia does not appear to have a need for the additional non-strategic nuclear capability that INF missiles would provide. Russian military analysts may have concluded that the missions of ground-launched INF range systems can be effectively assumed by other weapons.

Moreover, a decision by Moscow to withdraw from the INF Treaty could entail significant political costs in its relations with states in Asia and Europe. Depending on their ranges and locations, new Russian INF missiles could target most of Asia and Europe but likely could not reach the United States other than perhaps Alaska. A new deployment of INF missiles would complicate Russian relations with countries such as China, Japan, Germany, and others, who would not see a justification for Moscow’s recreation of the Cold War INF missile threat, especially given other Russian nuclear capabilities.

In 2011, former Bush administration arms control officials John Bolton and Paula DeSutter argued in the *Wall Street Journal* that, given the proliferation of INF missiles in third countries, the United States should withdraw from the treaty if it could not be expanded to cover at least Iran, China, and North Korea.⁹ They did not indicate, however, where the United States would be able to deploy new INF missiles—the enthusiasm for hosting such missiles on the part of American allies in Europe and Asia would be minimal. Their proposal gained little traction.

A FUTURE PUSH FOR ADDRESSING INF MISSILES?

Neither Russia nor the United States now appears actively to seek to secure broader international

adherence to the INF Treaty. If Washington and Moscow pursue a process of further reductions in their nuclear arsenals beyond the New START Treaty, perhaps including non-strategic nuclear weapons, there may be room for one more bilateral U.S.-Russia nuclear arms reduction agreement. Thereafter, however, U.S. and Russian officials will likely seek commitments by other nuclear weapons states regarding constraints on their arsenals.

Such commitments likely would not immediately entail any regional, let alone global, agreement

to eliminate all INF missiles. But they could begin with an agreement not to increase numbers of nuclear weapons or numbers of dedicated missile delivery systems for such nuclear weapons. While not as dramatic as a global ban on all INF missiles, the assumption by third states of obligations not to increase the numbers of their intermediate-range nuclear missile systems would be a positive development.

5. LESSONS FOR FUTURE ARMS CONTROL

THE INF EXPERIENCE

The signing of the INF Treaty on December 8, 1987 is justly commemorated as a major milestone, a multiple first: in the history of arms control, in the history of nuclear weapons, and in the history of the Cold War; the first U.S.-Soviet agreement actually to reduce nuclear weapons, the first to provide for the elimination of a whole class of weapons, and the first to introduce on Soviet territory an intrusive system of on-site inspection that many thought was unachievable.

Most important, the INF Treaty was the first step towards the beginning of the end of the nuclear arms competition that, to a large extent, defined the Cold War, and in this sense it was the beginning of the end of the Cold War itself. It was also a highly successful example of a three-way negotiation, with NATO allies being a non-voting, but very concerned and on occasion vocal partner in the enterprise. (On verification issues, the European basing countries had a greater say regarding measures that would be carried out on their territory.) Twenty-five years on, it is appropriate to ask what lessons, if any, the INF experience can offer for the future.

It is useful to recall two essential features of the INF experience. First, it involved a very specific category of weapons, and the decision to eliminate them cannot realistically be considered in separation from the original decision to deploy them—NATO's dual-track decision of December 1979. From the outset, the decision to deploy INF was as much political as strategic, taken less in response to a perceived

strategic need than to the concerns of America's Western European allies.

Foremost among these concerns was the anxiety aroused in Europe by the Soviet deployment of the SS-20 missile. This replacement for the older SS-4s and SS-5s arguably did not qualify as a new category of missile, but by virtue of its mobility, accuracy, and multiple warheads, the SS-20 was perceived to pose a qualitatively new and enhanced threat to Western Europe. The growing imbalance in the number and range of Soviet INF missile warheads was occurring in parallel with the gradual erosion in the ability of NATO fighter-bombers to penetrate Warsaw Pact air defenses.

A second, related concern, famously articulated by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in his 1977 lecture to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, was that the United States, in negotiating the SALT II Treaty, was neglecting European interests, focusing only on the threat to the United States and ignoring the danger to Europe of Soviet nuclear weapons.

In the classic language of extended deterrence, the SS-20 did not really change the basic equation: according to the doctrine of flexible response, the U.S. strategic deterrent was available to protect Europe against any attack, nuclear or conventional. Indeed, many in the U.S. government initially argued against new Europe-based deployments on precisely these grounds; namely, that Europe-based deployments to counter the SS-20 would be decoupling because it suggested that a nuclear conflict could be limited to European soil, casting in doubt the link to U.S. strategic forces.

But in reality, the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella was always inseparable from psychological confidence in U.S. leadership, and in 1977, European confidence in the Carter administration was at a low ebb following Carter's clumsy handling of the neutron bomb issue as well as perceived setbacks in Angola and elsewhere. Thus from the outset, the decision to deploy INF was a highly political one that had as much to do with reassuring the allies as it did with satisfying military requirements.

In short, deployment of INF, however important for other reasons, lacked a compelling strategic rationale in the eyes of military planners as compared to the far more numerous intercontinental systems of U.S. strategic forces. In fact, NATO struggled to come up with a compelling rationale for INF. There was never a strong consensus for the missiles, and for that reason it turned out to be far easier to give them up than it was to proceed to the next stage involving a significant reduction in strategic weapons.

It proved impossible to conclude the START I Treaty during the Reagan administration for a number of reasons, including but not limited to differences over the Strategic Defense Initiative. When Ronald Reagan appeared ready to agree to a wholesale elimination of ballistic missiles at Reykjavik, there was an uproar from Europeans and Americans alike that forced him to back down. Not until well into the George H. W. Bush administration, with the Cold War already winding down, were the final issues resolved and START I agreed. In a sense, it was possible to agree to the elimination of INF because the act, despite its immense political significance, did not affect the strategic deterrents that remained in place. The agreement left intact each side's ability to retaliate in the event of nuclear attack.

More important, the INF Treaty belongs to a specific moment in history. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev came to power and, though it was not immediately apparent, the Cold War at that moment entered its final phase. Gorbachev inherited a Soviet Union economically crippled by the burden of military spending, lagging badly behind the West, and paralyzed under a government of old men. He understood

better than anyone how counterproductive the decades of armaments build-up had been and how little they had improved Soviet security. The SS-20 in particular had galvanized the Western Europeans and United States to respond with an unprecedented deployment of powerful U.S. weapons—including the Pershing IIs that, because of their range, short flight-time, accuracy, and firepower, as well as the fact of their deployment in Europe, were far more threatening to the Soviet Union than anything that had preceded them.

The INF deployments were also a huge political defeat for Soviet policy, which had mobilized every resource to try to block them. Gorbachev, desperate to get his country moving again, realized that this would not happen so long as the burden of military armaments continued to weigh down the Soviet economy. The road to diminishing this burden lay through demilitarizing his relations with the West and moving to a new definition of security through mutual arms reduction agreements with the United States. He sought to do this, in part, by throwing out one dramatic arms control proposal after another: a moratorium on INF deployments, then on nuclear testing, then a 50 percent reduction in strategic weapons, and so on.

Of all of these, a treaty eliminating INF missiles proved the easiest to negotiate. It mattered, too, that Gorbachev found an answering spirit in Reagan and his genuine detestation of nuclear weapons. But it is safe to say that, without Gorbachev, there would have been no INF Treaty. And its importance lies in what that agreement represented at the particular moment in history at which it occurred: the beginning of the end of the nuclear arms race, the beginning of the end of the Cold War.

APPLYING INF'S LESSONS TO ARMS CONTROL TODAY

Today the Cold War is long over, and the global security problems are significantly different from those of the past. There are certainly some general lessons to be drawn from the INF experience. Some may be relevant for arms control negotiations today; others,

less relevant, belong to the period in which they occurred. Among the lessons of INF:

Never shut the door on negotiations. INF is doubly pertinent here. First, without the arms control track (about which many in Washington had reservations), the December 1979 decision would never have been approved by NATO. With anti-nuclear feeling at a high level, the deployment decision ran into strong headwinds from the outset in several NATO member countries. NATO's stated willingness to negotiate even while deploying provided essential ammunition to governments under strong domestic pressures and helped appease popular opinion.

In addition, during the four long years that lay between the 1979 decision and the beginning of deployments, NATO's demonstrated commitment to arms control was critical to maintaining allied resolve and solidarity. When the Reagan administration initially appeared reluctant to pursue the negotiations, the ensuing uproar obliged the president to go forward.

In 1983 the deployments began, at which moment—and this is the second lesson—unexpected help arrived from the Soviets, who walked out of the negotiations. This turned out to be a huge mistake. The Soviets had convinced themselves that the backlash in Europe would be so severe that deployments would have to be halted. Instead, deployments continued; in the interim, NATO was able to present itself as the party willing to talk while the Soviets sulked in their corner. Moscow had no choice but to return to the negotiating table under less favorable conditions in 1985. (It might be noted in passing that this lesson does not apply only to negotiating with the Russians. It is not clear that U.S. insistence over the years on meeting certain preconditions before sitting down with the Iranians has been in the U.S. interest. But that is another story.)

Alliance solidarity and buy-in are critical, even in a bilateral negotiation, if European equities are involved. A fairly self-evident point perhaps but a crucial one. The United States would not have

succeeded had not even America's most nuclear-allergic allies come to believe that, in the final analysis, it was essential to stand up to Soviet bullying and go ahead with the INF deployments. Conversely, the United States could not have maintained Alliance solidarity had it not heeded the Europeans' imperative need for an arms control track. The consultation process in NATO's Special Consultative Group was key, providing a forum for the discussion of allied concerns and helping to secure public support for the U.S. positions advanced at the negotiating table as well as for continued deployments.

It is important to have a bargaining chip. Without Gorbachev, there would probably have been no INF treaty. But even with Gorbachev, without the actual deployments of INF missiles that occurred between 1983 and 1987, the Soviets would have had little incentive to negotiate the elimination of the SS-20. The bargaining chip was not only the 1979 decision but the actual appearance in Europe of the Pershing IIs and GLCMs. No agreement was possible until NATO had shown that it had the will to deploy the missiles.

Be careful what you ask for. The zero-zero option, the Reagan's administration superficially plausible proposal for eliminating all INF missiles, was initially proposed by the opponents of arms control within the Reagan administration as a surefire means of blocking the road to agreement; it was opposed by the proponents of an agreement for exactly the same reason. But four years later, in the hands of Reagan and Gorbachev, it became the basis for the groundbreaking treaty.

Arms control expertise matters. Even after Reagan and Gorbachev agreed at Reykjavik to give priority to INF negotiations, much work remained to conclude an agreement. That the INF Treaty resulted was due, first, to the skill and dedication of the negotiators, second, to the will of capitals to see it done, and, last but not least, to the shared U.S.-Soviet experience of arms control negotiations stretching back almost two decades. On and off since the late 1960s, U.S. and Soviet officials had been meeting in Geneva for the declared purpose of negotiating nuclear arms

agreements. The results were decidedly mixed, but what did emerge from literally hundreds of hours of discussion and patient explication was a common language for talking about nuclear weapons and a broad understanding of the other side's concerns. These provided an essential basis for reaching this, as well as subsequent, agreements. When the governments decided to move rapidly forward, the tools were already at hand.

TODAY'S ARMS CONTROL CHALLENGES

The lessons of INF can be clearly articulated. Some of them may be relevant for arms control negotiations today, although it is important to recognize that the international context is different, e.g., Vladimir Putin is not Mikhail Gorbachev. It is also important to recognize that the challenges of arms control today are significantly different from those of the late 1980s.

To begin with, the overall strategic picture has changed radically since 1987. Over the past two decades, tens of thousands of U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons have been reduced and eliminated, either by arms control treaty or by parallel unilateral action. Though many remain, the United States and NATO no longer formally regard Russia as an enemy. Neither Americans nor Europeans feel the same sense of threat from Russian nuclear weapons as they did 25 years ago.

Among the forces that remain, the large numbers of non-strategic nuclear forces deployed on Russian territory have been of continuing concern to the United States and its allies. In 1997, President Bill Clinton persuaded President Boris Yeltsin to agree to address these weapons in the framework of the (never realized) START III Treaty. Congress has repeatedly voiced its concerns about Russian non-strategic weapons, most recently during the New START ratification debate in 2010. The resolution of ratification instructed the administration to seek to initiate within one year "negotiations with the Russian Federation on an agreement to address the disparity between the non-strategic [tactical] nuclear weapons stockpiles of the Russian Federation and of

the United States and to secure and reduce tactical nuclear weapons in a verifiable manner." Specific concerns have focused on the numerical disparity between NATO and Russian holdings, Russia's reliance on these weapons, and their overall safety and security.

But the obstacles to negotiating an agreement on this category of weapons are considerable, reflecting in part fundamental strategic changes in Europe since the end of the Cold War. On the NATO side, no more than 160-200 U.S. nuclear weapons are estimated to remain in Europe, all of them gravity bombs that would have to be fitted to airplanes in the event of conflict.¹⁰ In addition, NATO has long since moved away from the doctrine of flexible response and its Cold War reliance on nuclear weapons to counter the Warsaw Pact preponderance in conventional forces. NATO's conventional forces are now considered more than a match for Russia's.

The Alliance's most recent Strategic Concept (2010) as well as its *Deterrence and Defense Posture Review* (2012) reaffirmed that NATO remains a nuclear alliance and that deterrence based on "an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities" remains a core element of overall strategy. Allied leaders approved these documents, although some allies are themselves divided about whether the United States should retain a nuclear presence in Europe. In the recent past, German, Belgian, and Dutch political leaders have called for the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe, inspired in part by President Barack Obama's April 2009 speech, in which he articulated the objective, albeit in the long-term, of a world without nuclear weapons. Other allies, mostly located closer to Russian territory, consider a continued U.S. nuclear presence in Europe to be essential to their security.

At the same time, Russia has moved sharply in the other direction: as its conventional forces declined relative to NATO's, more importantly, with the loss of its strategic *glacis* and forward base in Eastern Europe, Russian doctrine since the late 1980s has moved to its own version of flexible response. Abandoning a decades-long no-first-use pledge, Russia

now explicitly relies on the threat of nuclear weapons to repel a conventional attack “when the very existence of the [Russian] state is under threat.” Nuclear weapons have been integrated into its war-fighting strategies. The situation has, in other words, been totally reversed. Russian non-strategic forces are now considered essential to the defense of the homeland. Perhaps not surprisingly, they far outnumber U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons by, most conservatively, a four-to-one margin.

Given the numerical disparity, and because of Russia’s reliance on these weapons for the defense of the homeland, persuading the Russians to reduce, or even significantly limit them will be difficult. To date, they have been reluctant to discuss them in negotiations. And the United States and NATO have no bargaining chip comparable to the 1980s’ deployment of U.S. INF missiles to induce the Russians to negotiate. Despite the significant disparity—both globally and in Europe—between the number of Russian and U.S. non-strategic weapons, there is no appetite in Europe for a new “deployment” track to balance out the Russian advantage. Consequently, any negotiation limited to non-strategic nuclear weapons would require the United States to persuade the Russians to give up their numerical advantage as well as to restrict a category of weapons that they regard as vital to their homeland defense.

In short, the lesson from INF—that it is important to have a bargaining chip—remains highly pertinent. Without a bargaining chip, the negotiating challenge is daunting, perhaps impossibly so. Some analysts have thus suggested that, in a future round of U.S.-Russian negotiations, the United States should put all nuclear weapons—strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed—on the table (with the possible exception of retired weapons in the dismantlement queue). By seeking a single aggregate limit covering all U.S. and Russian weapons, U.S. negotiators might be able to leverage Russian concerns about U.S. strategic forces (e.g., the much larger “upload” capacity of the U.S. force of intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles) and, by combining strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces under one limit, they might trade

reductions in U.S. non-deployed strategic warheads for Russian reductions in non-strategic nuclear warheads.

But INF also teaches that we should be careful what we ask for. Even if at some future moment the Russians should be willing to negotiate on non-strategic weapons, they will certainly have their own idea of what constitutes an acceptable *quid pro quo*. In return for any reductions or limitations, they would very likely resurface their long-standing demand that all nuclear weapons should be based on national territory—in other words, for the removal of all U.S. nuclear forces from Europe. This would be a price that many in NATO and some non-NATO allies could find difficult to accept. Even those NATO allies who favor removing all U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe could be uncomfortable with a permanent ban on their reintroduction under any circumstances, although the acceptability would depend in large measure on the overall terms of the agreement.

Further, if the United States seeks to fold non-strategic weapons into a larger discussion about all nuclear weapons, it might well face Russian demands for inclusion of third-party systems, which it would resist. That said, at some point, as U.S. and Russian nuclear forces are reduced, it will be necessary to bring third countries into the arms control process.

This is not meant to rule out the possibility of a U.S.-Russian agreement limiting or reducing non-strategic weapons, perhaps as part of a larger negotiation covering all their nuclear forces. But it will be difficult and will take time.

More realistic goals for the near term might be greater transparency and other confidence-building measures regarding non-strategic nuclear weapons. Such measures could include agreement to provide transparency regarding the numbers, types, and locations of non-strategic nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Given that most non-strategic nuclear weapons are believed to be demated—or separated—from their delivery systems, the United States and Russia might state that each intends to keep its non-strategic weapons demated from delivery systems.

Other possibilities include measures to consolidate and/or relocate non-strategic weapons away from the NATO-Russian border, though such measures could fall more heavily on the Russian side and or could be difficult for NATO to apply. Beyond such confidence-building measures but still short of a negotiated treaty, Washington and Moscow might consider parallel unilateral reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons similar to the unilateral nuclear initiatives of 1991.

Pursuant to the 2010 resolution of ratification to the New START Treaty, U.S. officials pursued with their Russian counterparts possible measures to reduce the disparity in non-strategic nuclear weapons. As of late 2012, however, no progress has been reported in this regard.

A replication of the INF experience for non-strategic nuclear weapons is probably not in the cards. Some lessons, however, certainly would be applicable:

- The United States (and NATO) should keep the door to negotiations open;
- Washington needs to be clear what price it might be asked to pay and what it and the allies are willing to pay for a reduction or limitation of these weapons, given that Washington does not have an obvious non-strategic bargaining chip. A clear and defensible set of principles would be essential to undergird and sustain any negotiating effort in this area;
- Allied solidarity—maintaining today’s rather fragile allied nuclear consensus—now, as

then, will be key. Despite some differences within the Alliance, the United States and its European allies worked closely together to reach agreement on the *Deterrence and Defense Posture Review*, the statement of Alliance policy on nuclear weapons and nuclear arms control that was blessed at the 2012 NATO Summit. If negotiations do begin, a close and regular dialogue between Washington and its NATO allies (and as needed with allies in Asia as well) will be essential. A consultative process in which concerns may be fully aired and discussed is the *sine qua non* for allied support; and

- Translating negotiations into a concrete agreement will once again rely on the vast body of expertise accumulated on both sides over several decades. The direct engagement of top leadership would be vitally important for decision-making and resolution of major negotiating issues.

But it is far from clear that the basis for agreement exists. More importantly, the past is another country, as the saying goes, and we are in a different era. INF was a truly remarkable achievement that opened the door to even more sweeping changes—changes that have left the world, whatever the challenges we face today, a better and safer place. The nuclear threat has receded, and the role of nuclear weapons in the strategies of the nuclear weapons powers has greatly diminished—and for this we should thank, in part, the INF experience.

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