



## INFORMATION SERIES

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### Arms Agreements Must Adapt to Contemporary Threats

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This week, heads of state are meeting for a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit. Two weeks ago, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo went to NATO Headquarters in Brussels for meetings in preparation of that summit and I had the privilege to ride along. One issue that will be a priority for discussions among NATO members is strategic stability. Russia has a pattern of violating treaties and agreements and it was because of Russia's continued violation of the INF Treaty that the United States, with the full support of NATO, withdrew. Now the United States is evaluating the Open Skies Treaty as well as the New START Treaty, which expires in February 2021 if the United States and Russia choose not to extend it.

Further complicating matters, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) military ascendance requires the United States adapt its military posture and strategies, and to reconsider the treaties that were negotiated at a time of different considerations. That was essentially Secretary Mike Pompeo's message when I asked him about arms control at a press conference at the NATO headquarters in Brussels last week. His comments on the subject are included below.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So when I became Secretary of State, in front of us was the INF Treaty. We did what the Trump administration always does. We looked at



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reality. We recognized the facts. The facts had changed. We had two parties to a treaty, only one of which was complying with that treaty. It made no sense to stay in it. And we worked with our European partners to make sure that there was unanimity, that we understood the risks, that we understood the costs, and then moved forward together, declaring that Russia was in violation and that the appropriate thing to do was for the United States to leave that treaty. That goes for a broader set of arms control issues. President Trump will never allow America to enter into any arms control agreement that doesn't make sense for the United States of America or to renew any existing arms control agreement that expires if it no longer makes sense for America.

So with that - with that as the central core principle, we - the President has spoken deeply about how the world has changed since New START was originally created. We now have an expanded threat from the Chinese Communist Party. The President's made clear that any time we begin to have a conversation about how to create a strategic - a strategic structure that secures America, it's no longer the case that it can only be the United States and Russia. And so we will - we will work to make sure that as we move these conversations forward, these dialogues about what's the right way to ensure American national security, whether that's in arms control or, frankly, for that matter, in any other space, we will have the protection of the American people and the stability for the free peoples of the world foremost front and center in how we think about that problem set.<sup>1</sup>

A few significant things to note.

One, central to China's military ascendance, and in Xi's mind, key to its great power status, is its missile force. China is currently amassing a large missile arsenal designed to threaten U.S. assets, bases, and allies in the region and in 2018 China tested more missiles than the entire world combined. Not only are the numbers of missiles concerning, but the kinds of missiles are also concerning, including hypersonic cruise missiles, designed to exploit the gaps in U.S. ballistic missile defense systems.

Two, while China's number of long-range nuclear capable delivery vehicles is smaller than that of Russia's, Chinese missiles that have shorter ranges can still have strategic consequences. It is still the commitment of the United States to defend freedom of navigation in key areas in the Pacific, and if the United States is to successfully do this, and maintain the ability to make good on its commitments to its allies-- nations like Japan that are committed to the rule of law, to the wellbeing of its free citizens, and to respecting the sovereignty of its neighbors-- the United States should work to regain the strategic advantage over the Chinese.



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The Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. General Ashley, emphasized the importance China places on its nuclear program and pushed back on the notion that it is less concerning because it's smaller than that of Russia's. He said at the Hudson Institute:

Over the next decade, China is likely to at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile in the course of implementing the most rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear arsenal in China's history... And like Russia, China is also working to field nuclear, theater-range precision-strike systems. While China's overall arsenal is assessed to be much smaller than Russia's, this does not make this trend any less concerning.<sup>2</sup>

And, three, the New START Treaty has inherent shortcomings even without considering China. Russia continues to stockpile tactical nuclear weapons, amounting to nearly 2,000, primarily threatening NATO members.<sup>3</sup> Those are, of course, outside the scope of the New START Treaty.

Former National Security Council senior official Tim Morrison raised the following observation regarding another inherent problem with the New START Treaty.

But just - when I went to law school, they talked to us about legal constructions. You sort of create a reality. What sense does it make to limit a Russian submarine-launched ballistic missile that can range CONUS from a submarine platform, but not to limit a Russian sea-launched cruise missile that can range CONUS from a submarine platform? That's what we do right now. Under the New START treaty, we limit submarine-launch ballistic missiles, but we've excluded Russian sea-launch cruise missiles. That just doesn't continue to make sense. And we watched the Russians exploit those loopholes.<sup>4</sup>

We have entered a new missile era, one with different challenges, and a dynamic threat environment, perhaps it makes sense for President Trump to appoint a Special Envoy on Arms Control to tackle these challenges and to wrestle a better deal for the country, and to do so with a sense of urgency and purpose.

1. Press conference by Secretary of State Michael Pompeo in Brussels, November 20, 2019.
2. Comments of Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley, Jr. to the Hudson Institute, May 29, 2019, available at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.hudson.org/Hudson%20Transcript%20-%20The%20Arms%20Control%20Landscape.pdf>.
3. Ibid.
4. Comments of Timothy Morrison to the Hudson Institute, op. cit.



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