



Title	Critical Analysis of Trump's Nuclear Policy : Toward the Only Winner Through the Rule of Power
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Citation	Osaka University Law Review. 2020, 67, p. 1-26
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://hdl.handle.net/11094/73748
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Critical Analysis of Trump's Nuclear Policy: Toward the Only Winner Through the Rule of Power

*Mitsuru KUROSAWA**

Abstract

This paper will clarify the nuclear policy of the administration of United States (US) President Donald Trump by critically examining two documents and one particular event. The first document is the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), submitted to the US Congress by the Trump administration on February 2, 2018; the second one is the Missile Defense Review (MDR), submitted accordingly on January 17, 2019. The above-mentioned event was the withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) on February 2, 2019. These documents along with the withdrawal clearly display the essence of the US nuclear policy and strategy. In general, President Trump's nuclear policy is quite different from those of the previous administrations. It adopts an "America First" policy in every field—for example, by withdrawing from important international treaties and commitments. It also completely opposes the principle of international cooperation and collaboration. Additionally, it is seeking to acquire unrivaled military strength mainly through nuclear forces and by denying the rules of international law and international organizations. It also is changing the fundamental norms of international peace and security. This paper criticizes many aspects of President Trump's nuclear policy, and researches on what exactly is the strategy he is pursuing.

I Nuclear Posture Review

In February 2018, the United States (US) Secretary of Defense James Mattis submitted the Trump administration's Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)¹⁾ to Congress. The report specified the future US nuclear policy and its decisive influence on the progress of the issues surrounding nuclear weapons regarding international diplomacy. This is the fourth report, following those produced by the

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1) *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, Washington DC: US Department of Defense. <https://dod.defense.gov/News/SpecialReports/2018NuclearPostureReview.aspx>

administrations of President Bill Clinton in 1994, President George W. Bush in 2002, and President Barack Obama in 2010.

1 Perception of the International Security Environment and Threat

In the preface of the NPR, Secretary Mattis made the following statement:

For the decade, the United States led the world in efforts to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons. Today, Russia is modernizing these weapons as well as its other strategic systems. Even more troubling has been Russia's adoption of military strategies and capabilities that rely on nuclear escalation for their success. China, too, is modernizing and expanding its already considerable nuclear forces. Like Russia, China is pursuing entirely new nuclear capabilities tailored to achieve particular national security objectives while also modernizing its conventional military, challenging traditional US military superiority in the Western Pacific.²⁾

The report perceives a marked worsening of global threat conditions since the 2010 NPR. It concludes that the current threat environment and future uncertainties necessitate a national commitment to maintain modern and effective nuclear forces and the infrastructure necessary to support them.

The report describes the international security situation as follows: "Since 2010, we have seen the return of Great Power competition. To varying degrees, Russia and China have made clear they seek to substantially revise the post-Cold War international order and norms of behavior."

The report stresses that the Russian strategy and doctrine emphasizes the potential coercive and military use of nuclear weapons, and it mistakenly assesses that the threat of nuclear escalation or actual first use of nuclear weapons would serve to "de-escalate" a conflict in favorable terms to Russia. It also mentions that China continues to increase the number, capabilities, and protection of its nuclear forces and that while its declaratory policy and doctrine have not changed, its lack of transparency regarding the scope and scale of its nuclear modernization program raises questions regarding its future intent.³⁾

In contrast, the previous three US administrations did not perceive Russia as an enemy. During the Clinton administration, Russia was no longer perceived as an enemy and subsequently the imminent threats were considered to be nuclear terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.⁴⁾

2) *Ibid.*, p. I.

3) *Ibid.*, pp. 2-11.

The Bush administration believed that while some contingencies were necessary for Russia, the present and most serious threats were nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, biological weapons, and the missile delivery systems possessed by many states. In particular, the most threatening problems were the so-called rogue states such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria.⁵⁾

The Obama administration recognized that the most serious threat was no longer Russia, but rather nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation. The Obama administration attempted to reduce the confrontation and succeeded in its “reset” of their confrontational relationship.⁶⁾

The Trump administration began working on its NPR when the security environment with Russia disintegrated, and its subsequent NPR stresses that the most imminent security threat to the US is recent Russian behavior. Russia possesses many non-strategic nuclear weapons, and by modernizing them, it adopted a new military doctrine. Additionally, it behaves contrary to the rules of international law and international commitments, and subsequently, the US believes that Russia is bringing the world back to a great-power competition. As a result, the Trump NPR perceives Russia as the most imminent threat to the US. Additionally, the Trump administration sees China as a threat because they are modernizing and expanding their nuclear weapons and challenging traditional US supremacy in the Western Pacific. The emphasis on the great-power competition is one of the most significant characteristics of this new NPR.

2 The Role of Nuclear Weapons

I will discuss the issues of the policy concerning the use of nuclear weapons, the policy of no first use, and negative security assurances. Regarding the policy on the use of nuclear weapons, the Trump NPR declares, “the United States would only consider the employment of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States, its allies, and partners.” The same

4) William Perry, *Defense Department Briefing on Nuclear Posture Review*, September 22, 1994.

5) J. D. Crouch, ASD ISP, *Special Briefing on the Nuclear Posture Review with Slide*, January 9, 2002 Washington DC: US Department of Defense. <https://fas.org/sgp/news/2002/01/npr-briefing.html>

6) *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 2010. Washington DC: US Department of Defense, pp. 3–6. https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/defenseReviews/NPR/2010_Nuclear_Posture_Review_Report.pdf#search=%27US+department+of+defense+nuclear+posture+review+report+2010%27

sentence appears in the Obama NPR. However, in the Trump NPR, it is followed by a passage that significantly changes its meaning:

Extreme circumstances could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks. Significant non-nuclear strategic attacks include, but are not limited to, attacks on the United States, allies, or partner civilian population or infrastructure, and attacks on the United States, or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities.⁷⁾

The Trump NPR emphasizes the role of nuclear weapons against attacks from both nuclear and conventional weapons, as it mentions the “deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear attacks” as the first and most important role of nuclear weapons. This position is different from that of the Obama NPR, which attempted to limit the employment of nuclear weapons only to responding to nuclear attacks. The Obama NPR stated that the fundamental role of US nuclear weapons was to deter nuclear attacks on the US and its allies and partners. According to that document, the role of US nuclear weapons as a deterrence and a response to non-nuclear attacks—conventional, biological, or chemical—had declined significantly and the US would continue to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks.⁸⁾

James Acton states that the Trump NPR includes a seemingly innocuous threat to consider using nuclear weapons if an adversary launches non-nuclear attacks against the US nuclear command and control, warning abilities, or attack assessment capabilities. He then critically points out that this threat marks a significant—and unwelcome—departure from US declaratory policy, and such a response would be utterly disproportionate, and lacks credibility and could prove both ineffective and damaging to US interests.⁹⁾

George Perkovich criticizes the Trump NPR because it declares an intention to use nuclear weapons against cyberattacks. He provides three points in this regard, the first of which is nuclear war would be much more devastating to the US than any conceivable cyberattack. Second, it is irrational to retaliate with nuclear weapons, as the combined conventional and cyber capabilities of the US are greater

7) *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 21. <https://dod.defense.gov/News/SpecialReports/2018NuclearPostureReview.aspx>

8) *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 2010. Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 15.

9) James J. Acton, “Command and Control in the Nuclear Posture Review: Right Problem, Wrong Solution,” *War on the Rocks*, February 5, 2018. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/02/command-and-control-in-the-nuclear-posture-review-right-problem-wrong-solution/>

than those of its adversaries. Finally, international humanitarian law (IHL) requires that military operations be strictly necessary, that their harm be proportionate to the objectives, and that they do not cause unnecessary suffering.¹⁰⁾

Regarding the policy of “no first use” of nuclear weapons, which limits the use of nuclear weapons only to the scenario of nuclear attacks from another state, neither the Obama nor the Trump NPR adopted this policy. The Trump NPR argues that the US has never adopted a “no first use” policy and, given the contemporary threat environment, such a policy is currently not justified. On the other hand, the Obama NPR used the phrase “the sole purpose,” which has almost the same meaning as “no first use.” The Obama administration explained that the US was not prepared at the time to adopt a universal policy stating that “the sole purpose” of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attacks on the US but would work to establish conditions under which such a policy could be safely adopted.¹¹⁾ The Obama administration strongly contended that this idea should be vigorously pursued.

As for negative security assurances, the Trump and Obama NPRs reflect the same policy in the main part, which is that “the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations.” However, the Trump NPR includes a provision that given the potential for significant non-nuclear strategic attacks, the US reserves the right to make any adjustment in their assurance, which may be warranted due to the evolution and proliferation of non-nuclear strategic attack technologies and US capabilities to counter that threat.¹²⁾ Yet, the Obama NPR reserved the right to adjust the assurances that may be required due to the evolution and proliferation of the biological weapons and the capabilities to counter that threat.

3 Nuclear Strategy and Nuclear Capabilities

Regarding nuclear strategy, the key elements of the Trump NPR are the application of a tailored approach that will effectively deter a spectrum of

10) George G. Perkovich, “Really? We’re Gonna Nuke Russia for a Cyberattack?” *Politico*, January 18, 2018. <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/01/18/donald-trump-russia-nuclear-cyberattack-216477>

11) *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 2010. Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 16.

12) *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 21.

adversaries, threats, and context and the adoption of flexibility to have the appropriate range and mix of nuclear and other capabilities. Russia could threaten limited nuclear first use, suggesting a mistaken expectation that coercive nuclear threats or limited first use could paralyze the US and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and thereby end a conflict on terms favorable to Russia, which is called Russia's "escalate to de-escalate doctrine." In order to correct any Russian misperceptions of advantage and credibly deter Russian nuclear or non-nuclear strategic attacks, the US President must have a range of limited as well as graduated options. China has emerged as a major challenge to US interests in Asia through its military modernization and pursuit of regional dominance. The tailored strategy for China is designed to prevent them from mistakenly concluding that it could secure an advantage through the limited use of its nuclear theater capabilities.¹³⁾

Regarding nuclear capabilities, the nuclear triad remains the central element of US nuclear capabilities, consisting of nuclear ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) armed with submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs); land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs); and strategic bombers carrying gravity bombs and air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs). There are currently four active replacement programs. One is the sea-based deterrent force where the Columbia-class program will deliver a minimum of 12 SSBNs to replace the current Ohio fleet. As a replacement of the ICBM, the US will begin fielding the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrence (GBSD). Another program is for strategic bombers, where the US will develop and deploy the next-generation bomber, the B-21 Raider. Finally, the long-range standoff (LRSO) system will be introduced as the replacement for the aging ALCMs.¹⁴⁾

One of the most notable characteristics of this NPR is the significant enhancement of deterrence with non-strategic nuclear capabilities. Russia's belief that limited nuclear first use—potentially including low-yield weapons—can provide an advantage is partly based on their perception that their greater number and variety of non-strategic nuclear systems provides a coercive advantage in crises and lower-level conflicts. The Trump administration thinks that by expanding flexible US nuclear options now, including low-yield options, is important for the preservation of a credible deterrence against regional aggression.¹⁵⁾

In connection with this emphasis on non-strategic nuclear forces, Steven Pifer

13) *Ibid.*, pp. 25-40.

14) *Ibid.*, pp. 44-50.

critically analyzes the concept itself with the following observation:

Getting into a competition in low-yield nuclear arms runs the risk of inadvertently signaling that use of low-yield non-strategic nuclear weapons would be seen as different from strategic nuclear arms and somehow might be acceptable. However, it is profoundly in the American interest that in a conflict, nuclear weapons not be used. It would be wiser to seek to raise the threshold for nuclear use.¹⁶⁾

Maxwell Downman also criticizes this US policy:

Small yield nuclear weapons with increased accuracy are destabilizing. They make nuclear weapons more usable, as they would theoretically cause fewer indiscriminate civilian casualties. This gives opportunities and incentives to use nuclear weapons in a wider set of conflict scenarios. By developing a range of low-yield options, the United States is beginning to mimic the Russian policies they frequently criticize.¹⁷⁾

In the near term, The Trump administration plans to modify a small number of existing SLBM warheads to provide a low-yield option and in the longer term, they will pursue modern nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). The reason for the development of a low-yield warhead is to ensure a prompt-response option that can penetrate the defenses of adversaries.

SLCMs will provide a much-needed non-strategic regional presence as well as an assured response capability. Additionally, they represent a response to Russia's continuing violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) that is compliant with the treaty. The US pursuit of SLBMs may provide the necessary incentive for Russia to seriously negotiate a reduction of its non-strategic nuclear weapons, just as the prior Western deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe led to the 1987 INF Treaty.¹⁸⁾ This option goes in the opposite direction from the one taken by the Obama NPR, which decided to withdraw nuclear-armed SLCMs.

Steven Pifer also criticizes the Trump NPR policy of modifying existing

15) *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

16) Steven S. Pifer, "Questions about the Nuclear Posture Review," *Brookings*, February 5, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/02/05/questions-about-the-nuclear-posture-review/>

17) Maxwell M. Downman, "Trump's Nuclear Posture Review Endangers Europe," *BASIC*, February 8, 2018. <https://www.basicint.org/blogs/maxwell-downman-analyst-and-clerk-all-party-parliamentary-group-global-security-and-non/02>

18) *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 55.

SLBM warheads to provide a low-yield option:

While submarine-launched ballistic missiles have traditionally been regarded as strategic, the new NPR describes the low-yield Trident D5 warheads as bolstering US regional non-strategic nuclear capabilities. But this concept prompts questions. First, could a Trident D5 launch be misinterpreted? It would not be clear that the warhead is “small” until it detonated over a target. Second, the reason the United States maintains such a large portion of its nuclear warheads on submarines is that they are hard to find and thus survivable. However, a submarine firing a Trident missile to deliver a low-yield warhead would reveal its location. Would the US Navy want to risk that?¹⁹⁾

Regarding nuclear weapons infrastructure, the Trump NPR expresses its intention to resume nuclear testing, and does not exclude the development of new nuclear weapons.²⁰⁾ Contrarily, the Obama NPR clearly stated, “the United States will not conduct nuclear testing and will pursue ratification and entry into force of the CTBT [Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty]. The United States will not develop new nuclear warheads.”²¹⁾

4 Nuclear Disarmament

I will discuss the following four issues in connection with nuclear disarmament. First, regarding the NPT, the Trump NPR understands that the NPT is the cornerstone of the nuclear nonproliferation regime and stresses that the US remains committed to nuclear nonproliferation, continues to abide by its obligations under the NPT, and will work to strengthen the NPT regime.²²⁾

When considering the CTBT, the Trump NPR recognizes its effectiveness, but it will not seek its ratification from the Senate and reserves the option of resuming nuclear testing.²³⁾ In contrast, the Obama NPR stated that the US would not conduct nuclear testing and would pursue ratification and entry into force of the CTBT.²⁴⁾

19) Steven S. Pifer, “Questions about the Nuclear Posture Review,” *Brookings*, February 5, 2018.

20) *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 63.

21) *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 2010. Washington DC: US Department of Defense, pp. 33-39.

22) *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 70.

23) *Ibid.*, p. 72.

24) *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 2010. Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 38.

The Trump NPR flatly rejects the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with this statement:

It is important to recognize that the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, opened for signature at the UN in 2017, is fueled by wholly unrealistic expectations of the elimination of nuclear arsenals without the prerequisite transformation of the international security environment. This effort has polarized the international community and seeks to inject disarmament issues into non-proliferation fora, potentially damaging the non-proliferation regime. This Treaty could damage US security and the security of many allies and partners who rely on US extended nuclear deterrence.²⁵⁾

On US-Russia nuclear reductions, the Trump NPR only says that the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) “is in effect through February 2021 and with mutual agreement, may be extended for up to five years to 2026.”²⁶⁾ It is not clear whether the Trump administration is willing to continue the nuclear reduction process or to extend the treaty. By stating that further progress is difficult, the Trump NPR seems to indicate that the Trump administration does not plan to take any positive action on nuclear arms control.

The Obama administration said in their 2010 NPR that they would conclude a verifiable New START; push ratification and early entry into force of the CTBT; seek commencement of negotiations on the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT); and initiate a comprehensive national research and development program to support continued progress toward a world free of nuclear weapons.²⁷⁾

Maggie Tennis and Strobe Talbott sharply criticized the Trump NPR:

Trump ignores America’s responsibility since the dawn of the atomic age to avoid Armageddon and maintain a commitment to arms control and non-proliferation. His words suggest a willingness in both the administration and Congress to risk key nuclear treaties, like the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction (New START) Treaty, for the sake of muscle-flexing and displays of military might. This trend is misguided and ruinous. Without concerted efforts to maintain INF and New START, the arms control regime could fall apart.²⁸⁾

25) *Nuclear Posture Review*, February 2018, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, p. 72.

26) *Ibid.*, p. 73.

27) *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 2010, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, pp. 12-13.

28) Maggie Tennis and Strobe Talbott, “Another Arms Race? No and Nyet,” Brookings, *Order from Chaos*, February 20, 2018. <http://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/> ↗

5 Evaluation of the Nuclear Posture Review

The most significant characteristics of the Trump NPR are the perception of Russia and China as enemies along with the declared need to modernize and strengthen the US nuclear arsenal in order to win the great-power competition with those two countries.

Anna Peczeli states that the justification for the proposed modernization program is questionable and that these steps might lead to a renewed arms race in low-yield nuclear capabilities. This could force Russia and China to lower the nuclear threshold, undermining the security of the US and its allies, and weakening alliance cohesion and solidarity.²⁹⁾

The Trump NPR, by emphasizing the threat from Russia and China, is planning to improve nuclear forces, mainly in the intermediate range, and to increase the role of nuclear weapons by broadening the circumstances in which nuclear weapons can be used. Furthermore, the Trump NPR has no interest in nuclear arms control and disarmament. In short, it indicates that the US will select the route of unilaterally strengthening its military power and rejecting international cooperation to reduce the tension among states.

II Missile Defense Review

The Trump administration's MDR,³⁰⁾ which was submitted on January 17, 2019, is radically different from the Obama administration's 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR)³¹⁾ in many aspects. It is true that security circumstances have changed, but the unique characteristics of the Trump administration appear in many areas.

1 The Content of the Missile Defense Review

President Trump introduced a very ambitious and comprehensive initiative, explaining, "Our goal is simple: to ensure that we can detect and destroy any

↘02/20/another-arms-race-no-and-nyet/

29) Anna Peczeli, "The Trump Administration's Nuclear Posture Review: Back to Great Power Competition," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 1 (2), 2018, pp. 238-255. <http://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2018.1530741>

30) *Missile Defense Review*. 2019, Washington DC: US Department of Defense. <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jan/17/2002080666/-1/-1/1/2019-MISSILE-DEFENSE-REVIEW.PDF>

31) *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report*, February 2010. Washington DC: US Department of Defense. https://archive.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf

missile launched against the United States—anywhere, anytime, anyplace,” and “in a time of rapidly evolving threats, we must be certain that our defensive capabilities are unrivaled and unmatched anywhere in the world.”³²⁾

Then, he emphasized the following six major changes in missile defense policy would be necessary for a new strategy. First, the US will prioritize the defense of American people above all else. The US is committed to establishing a missile defense program that can shield every city in the US. Second, the US will focus on developing new technologies. The US must pursue advanced technology and research to guarantee that they are always several steps ahead of those who would do the US harm. Third, the US will now adjust its posture in order to defend against any missile strikes—including cruise and hypersonic missiles.

Fourth, the US will recognize that space is a new warfighting domain, with the Space Force leading the way. Regardless of the missile type or the geographic origins of an attack, the US will ensure that enemy missiles find no sanctuary on Earth or in the skies above. Fifth, the US will remove bureaucratic obstacles in order to dramatically speed up the acquisition and deployment of new technology. Finally, the US will insist on fair burden sharing with their allies. In furtherance of this goal, this plan directs the Department of Defense to prioritize the sale of American missile defense and technology to US allies and its partners.

The main elements of the content of the report are the following four areas including evolving threat environment, role of missile defense, missile defense programs and capabilities, and working with its allies and partners.

One of the areas the report discusses at some length is the evolving threat environment. The discussion encompasses these three topics:

- (1) The threat to the US homeland. The report emphasizes that while the US relies on deterrence to protect against large and technically sophisticated Russian and Chinese ICBM threats to the US homeland, an active US missile defense can and must outpace existing and potential rogue state offensive missile capabilities.
- (2) Missile threats to US forces abroad, as well as its allies and partners. Expanding and modernizing US regional missile defenses is imperative in order to meet these ongoing advancements by adversaries in regional

32) US White House, “Remarks by President Trump and Vice President Pence Announcing the Missile Defense Review,” January 17, 2019. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-announcing-missile-defense-review/>

offensive missile capabilities.

- (3) Potential advancements by adversaries' missile defense and anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. The report says that potential adversaries have long made substantial investments in their own missile defense systems. Russia and China are also developing ASAT capabilities that could threaten US space-based assets.³³⁾

The report lists the following roles of the missile defense: (1) protection of the US homeland, forces abroad, its allies, and partners; (2) deterrence of attacks against the US, its allies, and partners; (3) assurance of its allies; (4) strengthening of US diplomatic efforts; (5) stabilization by missile defense; (6) hedging against future risks; and (7), enabling regional military operations.

The report lists the following principles of the missile defense: (1) US homeland missile defense will stay ahead of rogue states' missile threat; (2) missile defense will defend US forces deployed abroad and support the security of its allies and partners; and (3) the US will pursue new concepts and technologies.

It also lists the following elements of missile defense: (1) comprehensive missile defense capabilities including active missile defense, passive missile defense, and attack operations; (2) flexibility and adaptability; (3) tighter offense-defense integration and interoperability; and (4) importance of space.³⁴⁾

Concerning the US missile defense programs and its capabilities, it lists four activities. The first activity is the strengthening and increasing of the ground-based midcourse defense (GMD) for homeland security purposes. The second is for regional active defense and it involves the upgrade of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), improvement of the Aegis sea-based missile defense system, deployment of Aegis Ashore in Poland, and the improvement of the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missile. Third, as new systems, there will be the development of intercepting offensive missiles in their boost phase, high-energy laser technology, space-basing for sensors, as well as space-basing of interceptors. Finally, there will be an attack operation in place before any missiles are launched.³⁵⁾

With regard to working with allies and partners, it emphasizes deepening interoperability and expanding burden sharing.³⁶⁾

33) *Missile Defense Review*. 2019, Washington DC: US Department of Defense, pp. 5-24.

34) *Ibid.*, pp. 25-37.

35) *Ibid.*, pp. 39-60.

36) *Ibid.*, pp. 65-78.

In conclusion, the MDR summarizes its contents of the review, stating:

This 2019 MDR [Missile Defense Review] establishes a policy framework for US missile defense that is responsive to new threats and exploits new approaches to the defensive mission. Moving forward, the United States, its allies, and partners will pursue a comprehensive missile defense strategy that will deliver integrated and effective capabilities to counter ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missile threats. The BMDs [ballistic missile defenses] of the United States must be continuously strengthened and expanded given the growing challenges posed by potential adversaries, particularly rogue states.³⁷⁾

2 Arguments Against the Missile Defense Review

Frank A. Rose evaluates US missile defense as follows:

- (1) On homeland missile defense, plans of deploying 20 additional long-range interceptors in Alaska, improving the kill vehicle on the long-range interceptors, additional discrimination radars in Alaska, Hawaii, and other locations, upgrading existing radars, and examining the feasibility of the SM-3 Block IIA interceptor to engage certain ICBM-class threats.
- (2) On regional missile defense and cooperation with its allies and partners, there should be an assessment of the need for additional THAAD systems, a continuation of the deployment of the Aegis Ashore site in Poland, and an increase of the number of Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)-capable warships.
- (3) For the boost-phase defense system, the MDR recommends exploring two boost-phase intercept options: an F-35 Lightning fighter plane armed with a kinetic interceptor and a compact high-energy laser on an unmanned drone. Rose recommends their research and development but warns that the operational and technical challenges should not be underestimated.
- (4) On the research and development of a space-based sensor layer, Rose points out that it is certain to face technical, operational, and cost-related challenges.
- (5) For space-based interceptors, Rose says that it would not only involve technical and cost concerns, it would have significant strategic and political implications, as Russia and China are certain to react.³⁸⁾

37) *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

38) Frank A. Rose, "The Trump administration's new Missile Defense Review is a mixed bag," ↗

Kingston A. Reif states that the review expands the purpose of missile defense to defend against cruise and hypersonic missiles. He proposes a more aggressive defense against Russian and Chinese regional missile threats; alludes to the future development of airborne interceptors for “boost-phase” missile defense; and proposes to augment the defense of the US homeland with additional ground-based and sea-based Aegis SM-3 IIA missile interceptors. One point on which he expresses concern is that the goal of US missile defense is to “ensure we can detect and destroy any missile launched against the United States anywhere, anytime, anyplace,” to which, he argues, would be costly, unachievable, and destabilizing. Another criticism from him is that the review proposes “to further thicken defensive capabilities for the US homeland” with the new Aegis SM-3 Block IIA interceptors. This would have an adverse impact on Russian and Chinese threat perceptions and increase the risk of instability. He recommends that the US pursue a wide-ranging dialogue with Russia and China on strategic stability.³⁹⁾

Benjamin Zala points out that the US missile defense system ultimately is supposed to defend against the arsenals of Russia and China, and the official policy of the US is to no longer rely on nuclear deterrence based on mutual vulnerability to keep the chances of nuclear war as low as possible.⁴⁰⁾

The general trend of the evaluations of the Trump MDR can be summarized as follows: The parts taken over from the previous review that focused on rogue states such as North Korea and Iran are generally accepted, but they are very aggressive and ambitious new elements. These harshly criticized elements include such new programs against Russia and China, attacks on missiles during the boost stage, deployment of sensors in space, deployment of interceptors in space, and attacks against missiles before launching. Obama's BMDR made defending against near-term regional threats a top priority of its missile defense plans, programs and capabilities. President Obama's report also directed to sustain and enhance the US military's ability to defend the homeland against attack by a small number of long-range ballistic missiles. It also sought to engage Russia and China on missile defense through the shared early warning of missile launches, possible technical

↘ *Brookings*, January 25, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/01/25/the-trump-administrations-new-missile-defense-review-is-a-mixed-bag/>.

39) Kingston A. Reif, “Trump's Dangerous Missile Defense Buildup,” *Arms Control Association*, January 17, 2019. <https://www.armscontrol.org/issue-briefs/2019-1/trumps-dangerous-missile-defense-buildup>

40) Benjamin B. Zala, “Missile Defense Review makes less safe,” *The Hill*, January 25, 2019. <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/426392-missile-defense-review-makes-us-less-safe>

cooperation, and even operational cooperation.⁴¹⁾

The ambitious and futuristic recommendations within the Trump MDR—including attack during boost stage and deployment of space sensors and space interceptors—will be technically and economically be very challenging to accomplish. Additionally, these ambitious recommendations, if implemented, would pose a threat to international peace and security.

III Withdrawal from the INF Treaty

1 Announcement of the Withdrawal

On February 2, 2019, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made the following statement:

Today the United States provided Russia and other Treaty Parties with formal notice that the United States will withdraw from the INF Treaty in six months, pursuant to Article XV of the Treaty. The United States has concluded that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of the Treaty arising from Russia's continued noncompliance have jeopardized the United States' supreme interest, and the United States can no longer be restricted by the Treaty while Russia violates it. If Russia does not return to full and verifiable compliance with the Treaty by eliminating all 9M729 missiles, their launchers, and associated equipment in this six-month period, the Treaty will terminate.⁴²⁾

One day before, President Trump stated, "Tomorrow, the United States will suspend its obligations under the INF Treaty and begin the process of withdrawing from the INF Treaty." As for its reason, he explained:

The United States has fully adhered to the INF Treaty for more than 30 years, but we will not remain constrained by its terms while Russia misrepresents its actions. We cannot be the only country in the world unilaterally bound by this treaty, or any other. We will move forward with developing our own military response options and will work with NATO and our other allies and partners to deny Russia any military advantage from its

41) *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report*, February 2010. Washington DC: US Department of Defense. https://archive.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf

42) US Department of State. "US Intent to Withdraw from the INF Treaty February 2, 2019." Press Statement, Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State. Washington DC: US Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-intent-to-withdraw-from-the-inf-treaty-february-2-2019/>

unlawful conduct.⁴³⁾

Just after the US announcement on its planned withdrawal from the INF Treaty, Russian President Vladimir Putin said, "As the American partners have declared that they suspend their participation in the deal, we suspend it as well." He also stated his willingness to start working on creating new missiles, including hypersonic ones, and told his ministers not to initiate disarmament talks with the US.⁴⁴⁾ Moreover, he announced:

Russia would match any US move to deploy new nuclear missiles and would be forced to create and deploy types of weapons which can be used not only in respect of those territories from which the direct threat to United States originates, but also in respect of those territories where the centers of decision-making are located.⁴⁵⁾

2 Violation of the INF Treaty

The INF Treaty was implemented without dispute, and the missiles possessed by the two countries were completely destroyed in three years. However, other states, such as China, India, Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea, have developed and deployed missiles prohibited under the INF Treaty. Russia, in particular, expressed dissatisfaction at the situation, and in 2007 at the United Nations it proposed to change the treaty into a multilateral treaty, but there was no progress on this point.

In 2014, the US formally criticized Russia for its violation of the INF Treaty for the first time in *Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments*.⁴⁶⁾ Every year thereafter, the US mentioned Russia's violation in this report, and in 2018, it

43) US White House, "Statement from the President Regarding the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty," February 1, 2019.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-regarding-intermediate-range-nuclear-forces-inf-treaty/>

44) Vladimir Soldatkin, "Russia suspends nuclear arms treaty after US says to pull out," *Reuters*, February 2, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-usa-nuclear/russia-suspends-nuclear-arms-treaty-after-u-s-says-to-pull-out-idUSKCN1PR06T>

45) Andrew Osborn and Ktya Golubkova. "Moscow ready to cut time for nuclear strike on US if necessary: Putin," *Reuters*, February 29, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/US-Russia-putin-USA-missiles/moscow-ready-to-cut-time-for-nuclear-strike-on-us-if-necessary-putin-idUSKCN1Q918U?il=0>

46) *Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments*. Washington DC: US Department of State, 2014. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/230108.pdf>

clearly stated that the system in question was a 9M729 missile. Secretary Pompeo said that Russia had deployed several battalions of 9M729 missiles in December.

In response to the repeated US warnings about their violation, Russia repeatedly denied that it had flight-tested a cruise missile with a range that would violate the INF Treaty. President Trump, on October 20, 2018, expressed with this statement his intent to withdraw from the treaty.

Russia has violated the agreement. They have been violating it for many years. We are not going to let them violate a nuclear agreement and we are not allowed to. We are the ones that have stayed in the agreement and we have honored the agreement, but Russia has not unfortunately honored the agreement, so we are going to terminate the agreement, we are going to pull out.⁴⁷⁾

On December 4, Secretary Pompeo stated that as Russia had committed the material breach of the treaty, the US would suspend, as a corrective measure, the obligations effective in three months unless Russia would come back to a complete and verifiable compliance.

Russia also asserts that the US is violating the INF Treaty in connection with the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). This includes the Aegis Ashore system stationed in Romania, which deployed the similar MK-41 Vertical Launching System (VLS) which is deployed on Aegis-enabled warships. Russia argues that if the MK-41 VLS is deployed on land, it can be used to launch intermediate-range missiles, which will be a clear violation of the treaty.

The US responded to this argument by announcing:

The SM-3 interceptor missile system is a type of missile that has been developed and tested solely to intercept and counter objects not located on the surface of the Earth. Although it utilizes some of the same structural components as the sea-based MK-41 Vertical Launch System installed on ships, the Aegis Ashore vertical launching system is not the same launcher as the sea-based MK-41 Vertical Launch System.⁴⁸⁾

Referencing this dispute, Theodore Postol said, “Publicly available

47) The Guardian, “Trump says US will withdraw from nuclear arms treaty with Russia,” October 21, 2018. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/20/trump-US-nuclear-arms-treaty-Russia>

48) US Department of States Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance, “Refuting Russian Allegations of US Noncompliance with the INF Treaty,” Fact Sheet, December 8, 2017. <https://www.state.gov/2017-report-on-adherence-to-and-compliance-with-arms-control-nonproliferation-and-disarmament-agreements-and-commitments/>

information makes it clear that the Aegis-based systems in Eastern Europe, if equipped with cruise missiles, would violate the INF.⁴⁹⁾ He also noted, "The actual facts of the matter support the Russian position. This reality must be considered if the United States and Russia are to come to agree on continued control of intermediate-range missiles."⁵⁰⁾

Considering the issues of the violation explained above, both the US and Russia have strongly criticized each other for noncompliance, but both have denied their own alleged violations. Although both sides strongly argue for the legality of their own actions, they have neither submitted all of the information regarding precise facts nor have worked hard for the solution of the dispute at the Special Verification Committee.

Greg Thielmann and others have proposed, as one option, to seek a trade-off between two principal INF Treaty compliance issues raised by Washington and Moscow. Russia could eliminate its 9M729 missiles and launchers in exchange for a NATO commitment to freeze the expansion of the Aegis ballistic missile defenses in Europe.⁵¹⁾ William Tobey and others proposed the following measures from a military-technical standpoint: Russia could provide US technical experts with a demonstration of its technologies believed by the US government to be in violation of the INF Treaty, including the relevant technical documentation, such as information on the testing of missiles. The US in return could organize a demonstration of its missile defense base in Romania for Russian technical specialists, including explanations of possible technical solutions for precluding the use of the MK-41 VLS for launchers of attack missiles.⁵²⁾

The opinions of the two countries have directly contradicted each other and there have been no consultations between Moscow and Washington, which have

49) Theodore Postol, "Are Trump and Putin Opening Pandora's Box?" *New York Times*, February 19, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/19/opinion/inf-treaty-missile-defense.html>

50) Theodore Postol, "Russia may have violated the INF Treaty. Here's how the United States appears to have done the same." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, February 14, 2019. <https://thebulletin.org/2019/02/Russia-may-have-violated-the-inf-treaty-heres-how-the-united-states-appears-to-have-done-the-same/>

51) Greg Thielmann, Oliver Meier, and Victor Mizin. "INF Treaty Compliance: Path to Renewal or the End of the Road?" *Deep Cuts Issue Brief* #8, May 2018. http://deepcuts.org/files/pdf/Deep_Cuts_Issue_Brief_8-INF_Treaty_Compliance.pdf

52) William Tobey, Pavel Zolotarev, and Ulrich Kuhn. *The INF Quandary: Preventing a Nuclear Arms Race in Europe*, Russia Matters, January 24, 2019. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/inf-quandary-preventing-nuclear-arms-race-europe-perspectives-us-russia-and-germany>

succeeded in solving the confrontation. Finally, on February 2, 2019, the US announced its intention to withdraw from the INF Treaty, and they officially withdrew from it on August 2, 2019.

3 Reasons for the Withdrawal

There are two main reasons that the US decided to withdraw from the INF Treaty. The US wanted to object to and take countermeasures against Russia's violation because it wants to compete with China, which is strengthening their intermediate-range forces without being beholden to the terms of the INF Treaty.

The most fundamental reason for the US to withdraw from the INF Treaty is based on the their judgment that Russia has flight-tested intermediate-range missiles for several years and deployed them in 2018. That would be contrary to Russia's obligations under the treaty. The US is concerned that in a situation of parity in strategic nuclear forces, the new deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces by Russia will give them an advantage. By withdrawing from the treaty, the US is seeking to eliminate the apparent Russian advantage by freeing itself from the treaty's prohibition of deployment of intermediate-range forces.

However, there are many experts who say that withdrawal is a mistake. First, it is noted that the US will be strongly criticized politically because they unilaterally withdrew from it. The US stated that it would withdraw from it because there was no violation on their side, but Russia is in violation of it. From a legal point of view, withdrawal is permitted if there really is a substantive violation and it satisfies the treaty's conditions for withdrawal. However, the US will be criticized if it withdraws from the treaty without clear counterarguments against the argument that they are also in violation.

Another reason is since the US is withdrawing from the treaty first, Russia will not be criticized much, even if it violated the treaty. Criticism of Russia will disappear and they will have the legal and political freedom to take actions that were prohibited under the treaty. As Russia claims that if the US deploys new missiles they will follow accordingly, the situation seems more advantageous to Russia, because now they are free to develop and deploy missiles that were forbidden under the treaty.

Some experts argue that the US does not need to deploy new ground-launched missiles, which were prohibited under the treaty, as the US has enough air- and sea-launched intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Although the Obama administration judged that the issue of the violation did not have enough impact to upset the strategic balance between the two states, the Trump administration seems

to be trying to surpass other states in military power. From that point of view, the US announced its withdrawal; by rejecting the Treaty's limits, the US is trying to be a militarily powerful country.

An important issue concerning the withdrawal from the INF Treaty has been mainly a European security issue which is strongly connected to the interests of the European states. The origin of this issue came from the concern of European states regarding US nuclear deterrence in the late 1970s. Accordingly, the conclusion of the INF Treaty was the excellent resolution of this issue. The end of the INF Treaty would create several serious problems for Europe.

NATO issued a statement saying that it fully supported the decision of the US to withdraw from the INF Treaty,⁵³⁾ but Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stated that NATO did not have any intention to deploy new ground-launched nuclear weapons to Europe⁵⁴⁾. In the 1980s, NATO accepted the deployment of new missiles that promoted negotiations with the Soviet Union. The negotiations ultimately led to the conclusion of the INF Treaty and the total destruction of the missiles. However, it is very difficult to imagine the same scenario now because the NATO member states are opposed to new deployment.

Another reason why the Trump administration wants to withdraw from the INF Treaty is to take countermeasures against China. The Trump administration understands that China is now a military threat to the US, as the 2018 Trump NPR described China as a strategic competitor as well as Russia. Also, in the withdrawal statement, the US emphasized its concern that nonparties, in particular China, are increasing and upgrading ground-launched intermediate-range missiles without the regulation of the treaty. The US also strongly contended for the negotiation of a multilateral treaty on this issue with China among the parties.

David Sanger noted:

The United States has insisted Russia's action sank the Treaty. But Trump Administration's real aim is to broaden its prohibitions to include China and other countries. Constrained by the treaty's provisions, the United States has been prevented from deploying new weapons to counter China's efforts to cement a dominant position in the Western Pacific and keep

53) NATO, "Statement on Russia's failure to comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty," February 1, 2019. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_162996.htm

54) Lesley Wroughton and Arshad Mohammed, "US says to withdraw from arms control treaty in six months," February 1, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/US-USA-nuclear-Russia/us-says-to-withdraw-from-arms-control-treaty-in-six-months-idUSKCN1PQ4VW>

American aircraft carriers at bay. Much of Beijing's growing nuclear arsenal currently consists of missiles that fall into the ranges that are prohibited by the Treaty. The real action is likely to be in Asia. The Pentagon is preparing to modify existing weapons, including its non-nuclear Tomahawk missiles, and is likely to deploy them in Guam.⁵⁵⁾

Pranay Vaddi critically asserts:

Analysts have made three arguments in favor of withdrawing from the INF Treaty and deploying ground-based, intermediate-range missile systems (GBIRs): US GBIRs will better deter China, GBIRs are far cheaper than US air and sea platforms, and land-based missiles are more survivable than US air- and sea-based assets. Each of these arguments has some merit. However, their proponents ignore the very real political challenges associated with deploying GBIRs in Asia Pacific region. They also ignore specific military challenges, including the potential for a missile race and long-term regional and strategic instability.” He also states, “absent serious consultations with Asian allies, withdrawing from the INF Treaty and attempting to deploy GBIRs will likely create a rift between allies, would weaken US relationships and play into China's hands.”⁵⁶⁾

It is unthinkable that China will become a party to the INF Treaty, and that a multilateral treaty including China and other states on this issue will be negotiated under the present circumstances. Although the US claims that it is now free to deploy this kind of missile in East Asia, there will be unsurmountable political resistance from Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, and Taiwan. As a result, deploying the missiles in Guam may be the only remaining possibility. Additionally, there remains the question of how much value the deployment of ground-launched missiles in Guam will have in comparison with the existing air- and sea-launched missiles.

4 Challenges to Nuclear Disarmament

First, it is deeply worrying that the extension of New START will be as a result of the US withdrawal from the INF Treaty. After the extinguishing of the

55) David Sanger, “US Suspends Nuclear Arms Control Treaty with Russia,” *New York Times*, February 1, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/01/us/politics/trump-inf-nuclear-treaty.html>

56) Pranay Vaddi, “Leaving the INF Treaty Won't Help Trump Counter China.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 31, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/01/31/leaving-inf-treaty-won-t-help-trump-conter-china-pub-7826>

INF Treaty, the only treaty in effect regarding nuclear disarmament between the US and Russia is New START, which was signed in 2010 and entered into force on February 5, 2011. According to the treaty's provisions, it shall remain in force for 10 years, and if the parties decide to extend this treaty, it will be extended for a period of no more than five years. Russia has expressed its intention to extend the treaty, but the US is still reluctant to express its intention.

Alex Moore has argued that the US needs New START. He says that the treaty's mutual limits play a vital role in maintaining stability at the nuclear threshold by negating the arms race dynamics and making sure that each side has confidence in the survivability of its nuclear deterrent. Without the verifiable constraints that New START provides, the US risks lapsing into a US-Russian nuclear relationship characterized by heightened crisis instability. The agreement provides the US with invaluable insight into Russia's strategic forces by way of its verification measures.⁵⁷⁾

Frank Klotz claims in the following passage that New START has been and remains in the military and national security interests of the US.

Whatever happens, the existing mutual limits on strategic nuclear forces and the associated transparency and verification measures of New START should not be allowed to expire without replacement. It is manifestly in the best interests of the United States and Russia to agree to extend New START as soon as possible, rather than waiting until the last minute to broker a deal.⁵⁸⁾

Jon Wolfsthal also emphasizes the importance of the extension of New START:

By capping the arsenals of both countries, the New START pact brings a much-needed predictability to the long-standing nuclear relationship between Washington and Moscow. The expiration of the deal might lead Russia and the United States to expand further their costly and dangerous nuclear forces and remove ability of Washington to cooperatively monitor Moscow's nuclear development.⁵⁹⁾

57) Alex Moore, "Stability Now: Why Washington Needs the New START Treaty," *National Interest*, February 28, 2019. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/stability-now-why-washington-needs-new-start-treaty-45807>

58) Frank Klotz, "Extending New START Is in America's National Security Interest," *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2019. <https://www.armscontrol.org/oct/2019-01/features/extending-new-start-americas-national-security-interest/>

59) Jon Wolfsthal, "The Trump-Putin Summit's Potential Nuclear Fallout," Shadow Government, July 10, 2018. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/10/the-trump-putin-summits-/> ↗

Many experts have presented their case for the extension of New START. This treaty obligates the reduction of strategic nuclear forces of the US and Russia to the same lower level. As required by the treaty, this reduction was successfully completed in seven years. Furthermore, the treaty includes very strict verification measures such as intrusive onsite inspections. Each of the parties has implemented the reductions while verifying that the other party is also doing the same. There have been no clear complaints by either side concerning the other not complying with its obligations. The treaty functions as one of the most important elements for the two countries to maintain collaborative development and strategic stability. With these functions, the INF Treaty has been a very useful tool for peace and security to both countries. It is expected that the treaty will be extended or should be superseded by a more attractive one.

However, because of the unique personal nature of President Trump, there is the possibility that he will refuse to extend the treaty because he dislikes any policy put in place by the Obama administration or because he believes that the US is an exceptional nation and it should act freely and get rid of any treaty restriction.

Next, the risk of collapse of the nuclear disarmament regime is also worrying. Jon Wolfsthal said the following after expressing what's certain is that the end of the treaty would make the US and its allies less safe and would undermine the global basis for nuclear restraint and nonproliferation.

And it may get worse. America's potential withdrawal from the INF Treaty suggests that the 2010 New START arms reduction treaty with Russia might be next. The untimely death of these two agreements would add fuel to a new arms race and further undermine stability and predictability between Washington and Moscow.⁶⁰⁾

Frank A. Rose said that while the end of the INF Treaty is certainly unfortunate, it is a symptom of a much larger problem: the collapse of the existing US-Russia strategic stability framework. Rose insists that the US must first closely coordinate with its allies as it considers how to effectively respond to Russia's new ground-launched cruise missile capability. Second, the Trump administration and Congress should take steps to identify what the US wants to achieve in a future strategic arms control regime. Third, with relations between the US and Russia at

↘ potential-nuclear-fallout

60) Jon Wolfsthal, "Trump Is Pushing the United States Toward Nuclear Anarchy," Shadow Government, October 31, 2018. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/31/trump-is-pushing-the-united-states-toward-nuclear-anarchy>

its lowest point since the end of the Cold War, it is critical to maintain the dialogue between the two countries regarding strategic issues. Fourth, the US must seriously consider how best to bring China and other new actors into a future strategic stability framework. Finally, the US should extend New START in order to facilitate continued bipartisan domestic political support for strategic nuclear modernization.⁶¹⁾

If New START disappears after the demise of the INF Treaty, the US-Russia bilateral nuclear disarmament regime will end. This regime depends on the efforts of the two states and is extremely useful for not only bilateral peace and security but also for maintaining and strengthening peace and security for all members of the international community.

IV Conclusion: Characteristics of the Trump Administration's Nuclear Policy

In his 2018 State of Union Address, President Trump clearly declared his fundamental approach to US national security:

Around the world, we face rogue regimes, terrorist groups, and rivals like China and Russia that challenge our interests, our economy, and our values. In confronting these dangers, we know that weakness is the surest path to conflict, and unmatched power is the surest means of our defense. As part of defense, we must modernize and rebuild our nuclear arsenal, hopefully never having to use it, but making it so strong and powerful that it will deter any acts of aggression.⁶²⁾

What becomes clear from an analysis of the Trump NPR, the Trump MDR, and the withdrawal from the INF Treaty is that the US relations with other countries have changed from collaborative to confrontational and have been moving in a more dangerous direction. The INF Treaty led to the end of the Cold War and the deep reduction of US and Soviet strategic arms, promoting and strengthening international cooperation. Also, if New START is abandoned, it would be difficult to maintain strategic stability which controlled the nuclear arms race between the two states.

The first characteristic of the Trump administration is that it maintains the

61) Frank A. Rose, "The end of an era? The INF Treaty, New START, and the future of strategic stability," *Brookings*, February 12, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/02/12/the-end-of-an-era-the-inf-treaty-new-start-and-the-future-of-strategic-stability/>.

62) US White House, "President Donald J. Trump's State of Union Address," January 30, 2018. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-state-union-address/>

policy of “America First,” which embodies the administration’s unilateralism and egoism. As in other policy areas, this administration tends to decide on a nuclear policy based on whether it would be consistent in the narrowest sense with regard to short-term US interests. The Trump NPR clearly shows the will of the US to further their lead over any state in military power. The main reason why the US decided to withdraw from the INF Treaty is that despite the US compliance with the treaty, Russia has increased its arsenal by violating the treaty. China, which is not a party to the treaty, is also increasing its arsenal. With regard to missile defense, US policy is based on the unilateralist belief that the enhancement of US security is the only outcome that matters and the US has the technical capability to overcome the countermeasures by other states. This kind of thinking is fundamentally incompatible with the idea of international collaboration, an approach through which countries seek to serve the interests of international society as well as their own national interests.

The second characteristic of the Trump administration is that it is pursuing its policy not through the rule of law but through the rule of power. The Trump NPR contains a request for unmatched military power, and the central emphasis of the Trump MDR is the pursuit of unrivaled and unmatched defense technology and facilities that can detect and destroy any missiles fired at the US. It includes plans to attack missiles before they are launched and it designs to increase their military superiority over other countries. It has plans to strengthen their advanced position even further over Russia and China in the context of both intermediate-range missiles and missile defense. Therefore, if New START is not extended, the US will then seek to expand their lead over Russia and China in strategic forces.

Traditional arguments surrounding nuclear weapons have been based on the concept of strategic stability among major states. This concept is dependent on nuclear deterrence based on mutual vulnerability through the theory of mutual assured destruction (MAD). The unilateral strengthening of defensive forces would deny mutual vulnerability and help other states strengthen their offensive forces. It would lead to a nuclear arms race among major states, and subsequently jeopardizing the security of every state. For nuclear deterrence to work, every state must keep its vulnerability and international treaties, which regulate their indispensable offensive and defensive forces. Nuclear deterrence presupposes dialogue and cooperation among major powers, yet the Trump administration is now pursuing the policy of unilateral and military victory.

The nuclear policy that the Trump administration is currently pursuing apparently seeks to destroy almost all longtime treaties, norms, and principles that

have maintained international peace and security. This situation is very dangerous to all humanity. The Trump administration seems to be trying to become the only winner by unilaterally using its power throughout the world. However, it will lead to nuclear anarchy, resulting in a much more dangerous world.