

# THE INF TREATY: ITS SUCCESSES, FAILURES AND THE FUTURE

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Post the Cuban missile crisis, the arms race started to be viewed as a “necessary evil.”<sup>1</sup> A predominant feature of the US-Soviet relationship comprised the efforts made by the two superpowers to indulge in nuclear arms reduction for strategic stability. The Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was one such effort of the arms control measures. On December 8, 1987 President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed the treaty and agreed to a ‘double global zero’ in which both short range and intermediate range missiles would be eliminated.<sup>2</sup> This paper aims to study the background of the treaty by briefly tracing the reasons for the signing of the treaty, the obligations of the treaty, the successes of the treaty, its limitations, and the implications of withdrawing from the treaty. A brief look at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s (NATO’s) strategy of flexible response after the implementation of the treaty is also aimed at. It also tries to answer the question of whether the treaty could become a multilateral framework.

## REASONS FOR THE INF TREATY TO COME INTO FORCE

One of the most crucial reasons for the INF Treaty to come into force was the

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1. TT Poulouse, *The Future of Nuclear Arms Control* (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1987), p.3.
2. See “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,” <<http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/inf.html>>

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realisation by both the superpowers that nuclear weapons were catastrophic in nature and that they needed to be eliminated. Gorbachev was keen on denuclearisation of Europe since he believed that any nuclear escalation, even at a limited level, could lead to full scale nuclear war.<sup>3</sup> For the United States, on the other hand, it made sense since any kind of nuclear escalation between NATO and the Soviet Union could have resulted in a Soviet retaliation against the United States homeland. Though the INF Treaty was one of its kind, the steps towards arms control measures started in the early stages of the Cold War with the Strategic Arms

Limitation Treaty (SALT) I and SALT II which laid the foundation for the INF Treaty to come into force. Lynn E Davis, an American strategist, observes that SALT II which aimed to “limit the nuclear threat to the United States,” without addressing the nuclear threat to Europe<sup>4</sup> could have been the reason for the initiation of the INF Treaty, since the Europeans felt left out from the nuclear escalation control measures. NATO’s political will to take tough decisions on arms control measures in Europe and also abide by them, contributed to the INF Treaty. As Richard Haass puts it, “The progress on INF only came after NATO demonstrated its determination to follow through on the December 1979 dual-track decision and deployed enough systems to pose a serious threat to the USSR.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, this treaty enabled Europe to prevent the Soviet Union from gaining any political advantage from the catastrophic missiles. It also prevented the Soviet Union from coercing Western Europe to accommodate its political and strategic interests. In fact,

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3. Caroline Kennedy, “The Development of Soviet Strategies in Europe,” in Colin McInnes, ed., *Security and Strategy in the New Europe* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2002).
  4. Lynn E Davis, “Lessons of the INF Treaty,” *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1988, <<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/43068/lynn-e-davis/lessons-of-the-inf-treaty>>
  5. Richard Haass, “Arms Control Choices,” *Beyond the INF Treaty: Arms, Arms Control, and the Atlantic Alliance* (United States of America: University Press of America, 1988).

the Soviet Union also acknowledged the fact that the French and British nuclear forces were “separate and independent” and that they need not be included in the agreement.<sup>6</sup>

Also, the failure of SALT I to curb the deployment of heavy Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) since the Soviets refused to agree to include the definition of “light” and “heavy” missiles, led to the success of the INF Treaty. This is because the INF Treaty, in its Article II, provided the specific definitions of certain key terms and also explicitly listed the missiles to be covered under the treaty in Article III, thereby lessening the chances of “circumvention.”<sup>7</sup> Further, while SALT II prohibited the deployment of “new” missiles, it permitted the US and the Soviet Union to upgrade the old ones.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the complete elimination of a particular category of missiles not only reduced the problem of verification but also the problem of identification of the category of the missiles (that is, whether the missile is “heavy” or “light” or “new” or “old”).

Under the Reagan Administration, even though the United States clarified that the increasing arms race had less detrimental effects on the US than on the Soviet Union, this might not have been the case. While the Soviets continued with their missile development programme, Washington also had to keep pace with the arms race.<sup>9</sup> In 1988, in an analysis, Albert Carnesale and Graham Allison argued that by ratifying the INF Treaty, the “democratically controlled Senate can help build a new consensus on the legitimacy of arms control.”<sup>10</sup>

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6. McInnes, ed., n.3.

7. John B. Barker, “The INF Treaty: A Survivable Document,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 19, 1988, <<http://www.csmonitor.com/1988/0519/etreat.html>>

8. Ibid.

9. See Daryl G. Kimball, “Looking Back: The Nuclear Arms Legacy of Ronald Reagan,” *Arms Control Association*, July/August 2004, <[http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004\\_07-08/Reagan](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004_07-08/Reagan)>

10. Albert Carnesale and Graham, “Why Ratifying the INF Treaty Really Matters?” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 3, 1988.

Gorbachev's approach to a "new thinking" on nuclear disarmament was also a major factor that led to the formulation of the INF Treaty.<sup>11</sup> Amidst the dire economic stagnation in the USSR, Gorbachev wanted relief from the arms race. In fact, he also wanted the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) to be implemented before the Reagan Administration left office. Hence, even though in the initial phases he was not willing to accommodate the demands of the United States, later on, he relented by "untying the package" of strategic arms, missile defence and Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABMs) in February 1987." In 1987, Russia under Gorbachev claimed that it had destroyed the technologically sophisticated missiles called the "Oka" and also gave up other tactical and operational missiles. He also agreed to eliminate the newly deployed SS-23 missiles.<sup>12</sup> Elimination of the Oka invited a lot of criticism from military officials in Moscow since they believed that the missile was below the range of the INF Treaty agreement and that there was no need for the Soviet Union to compromise on it. The Soviets also wanted reduction in conventional forces in Europe. It could be that Gorbachev saw the INF Treaty as a landmark treaty to commence negotiating on reduction in not only nuclear weapons but also conventional ones.<sup>13</sup>

There is little doubt that the SS-20 missiles of the erstwhile Soviet Union were one of the major reasons for the INF Treaty to come into force. Their ability to carry multiple nuclear warheads and to evade a ballistic missile defence system strengthened their first-strike capability. At the same time, their highly mobile launch platforms made them survivable and thereby, strengthened their second strike capability too. Even though the Soviet Union assured NATO and the United States that the missile would not be used as a first-strike weapon, the fact that it could be used even if it was for retaliation made NATO and the United States apprehensive. It could be that the ability of the missile to survive the enemy's first strike made the

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11. "1987: Superpowers to Reverse Arms Race," *BBC On This Day*, <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/8/newsid\\_3283000/3283817.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/8/newsid_3283000/3283817.stm)>

12. "The INF Treaty and the Washington Summit: 20 Years Later," *The National Security Archive*, December 10, 2007, <<http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB238/>>

13. The above inference is drawn from Ibid.

United States and NATO realise that they might not be able to completely launch a disarming first-strike. Moreover, for the United States, their Lance nuclear missiles which were deployed in Western Europe, were ageing and also were not capable of reaching Soviet targets from launch sites in Europe and, hence, “did not accomplish the same strategic objectives intended in deployment on the INF missiles.”<sup>14</sup>

The concept of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) for the United States and the Soviet Union on which nuclear deterrence relied then was based on intercontinental ballistic missiles. In fact, as William Watson of Western Michigan University had put it, “Under the threat of intercontinental MAD, the number of divisions the Soviets had in the European theatre was irrelevant,<sup>15</sup> since ICBMs could be used as the great equalizer of the 20th century.”<sup>16</sup> Hence, missiles in the 500-5,500 km range category were being viewed as destabilising for the security of the United States, the NATO countries and the Soviet Union.

Further, with this, the approval of NATO to base the US Pershing missiles in West Germany in response to the Soviet SS-20s could have led the Soviet Union to agree to make the INF Treaty a reality. The United States expected the Soviet Union to remove the SS-20 threat under the strategy called the “Zero Option.”

It cannot be eschewed that the Soviet Union achieving a rough strategic parity in the nuclear arms race with the United States during the 1970s could be a reason why the United States was interested in the INF Treaty coming into force.<sup>17</sup>

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14. Stanley R. Sloan, *NATO, the European Union, and the Atlantic Community: The Transatlantic Bargain Challenged* (United States of America: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005.)

15. The development of ICBMs reduced the reliance of both the superpowers on deploying their missile forces near the target since the ICBMs could reach any target from the homeland itself.

16. William D. Watson, “Trust, but Verify: Reagan, Gorbachev, and the INF Treaty,” *The Hilltop Review*, vol. 5, issue 1, Fall 2011, <<http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1045&context=hilltopreview>>

17. “Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-range and Short-range Missiles (INF Treaty),” *NTI*, <<http://www.nti.org/treaties-and-regimes/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/>>

## OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE INF TREATY

The treaty obligated parties to eliminate ground launched short range to intermediate range nuclear capable ballistic and cruise missiles ranging from 500 km to 5,500 km. It also demanded that the parties eliminate support structures and equipment of categories which was necessary for these missiles and their launchers as listed in the Memorandum of Understanding.<sup>18</sup> The treaty demanded that intermediate range nuclear forces be “dismantled” and “scrapped.” However, the United States added that these missiles could be “converted” into missiles which would remain outside the purview of the treaty.<sup>19</sup> They also maintained that the Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs) which were being eliminated could be redeployed as ship-based cruise missiles. However, the Soviet Union did not agree to the idea of redeploying those nuclear forces which were meant to be dismantled and scrapped. Therefore, it did not make any sense for the United States to proceed further with plans of redeploying those nuclear forces which were to be scrapped.

Though in the first instance, Gorbachev demanded limits on the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) development as a prerequisite to the INF Treaty, he later dropped firmness on this issue.<sup>20</sup> The treaty also included a “remarkable and extensive” verification process as well as the inspecting and monitoring at “any time and any place” proposal.<sup>21</sup> This proposal was accepted by both the Soviet Union and the United States. Since the treaty dealt with the complete elimination of a particular class of missiles, rather than just their reduction, the verification task became easier.<sup>22</sup>

## SUCCESS OF THE TREATY

The INF Treaty was successful in many ways. Firstly, it had one of the most

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18. Ibid.

19. “Soviet-American Talks in 1987,” *Disarmament and Security* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Limited, 1988).

20. Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (United States of America: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1990).

21. Carnesale and Graham, n.10.

22. John Russell, “On-Site Inspections Under the INF Treaty: A Post Mortem,” *Vertic Briefing Paper*, 01/02, August 2001, <[http://www.vertic.org/media/Archived\\_Publications/Briefing\\_Papers/Briefing\\_Paper\\_01\\_2.pdf](http://www.vertic.org/media/Archived_Publications/Briefing_Papers/Briefing_Paper_01_2.pdf)>

“stringent verification provisions in the history of arms control, including extensive data exchanges, on-site inspections and resident inspectors at a key missile facility in each country. It also prohibited interference with national technical means of verification.”<sup>23</sup> Secondly, the destruction of INF missiles “removed an entire category of nuclear weapons which might have been used early and preemptively in an East-West armed conflict because of their precision, penetrability and range—shorter than strategic nuclear delivery vehicles—as well as vulnerability.”<sup>24</sup> Thirdly, it excluded the possibility that such missiles would be equipped with conventional or chemical weapons since the treaty banned any kind of ground-based nuclear missiles of ranges between 500-5,500 km.<sup>25</sup> Fourthly, until the INF Treaty came into force, such agreements had only sought to put a ceiling on the development of nuclear weapons or their qualitative development. Lastly, this treaty became a “symbol of the new trust developing in the US-Soviet relations” and also paved the way for further arms reduction.<sup>26</sup>

### LIMITATIONS OF THE TREATY

The treaty comprises the Cold War heritage which failed to have a lower limit on missile range during flight tests, since during the Cold War, “parties were mostly concerned about the *maximum* capability of weapon systems, be it range or the number of warheads that could be placed on delivery vehicles.”<sup>27</sup> When the treaty was being implemented, a retired military chief of NATO, Gen Bernard Rogers had stated that “there should be no reductions in strategic weapons without agreement to reduce conventional

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23. White House Statement on the First Anniversary of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty,” <<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1988/120888d.htm>>, December 8, 1988.

However, it must be noted that the verification task was not easy in the initial stages. While the Soviet Union suggested the reduction on equal percentage basis, the United States, on the other hand, proposed equalising the number of warheads.

24. Jozef Goldblat, *Arms Control: The New Guide to Negotiations and Agreements* (Sweden: Sage Publications, 2002).

25. Ibid.

26. n. 12.

27. As given by Nikolai Sokov and Miles A. Pomper, “Is Russia Violating the INF Treaty,?” *The National Interest*, February 11, 2014, <<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/russia-violating-the-inf-treaty-9859>>



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arms in Europe.” For the United States then, as argued by former President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, “The Soviet cuts do not reduce, in any significant manner, the Soviet capacity to attack Europe with nuclear weapons and that they increase the conventional threat.” They also identified threats from long range weapons from the Soviet Union which could hit Europe.<sup>28</sup> But as William Watson had put it, “The fatal flaw in the Zero Option as a basis for negotiations was that it was not negotiable. It was absurd to expect the Soviets to dismantle the existing force of 1,100 warheads, which they had already put into the field at the cost of billions of rubles in exchange for a promise from the United States to not deploy a missile force that had not yet begun to be built.”<sup>29</sup>

Also according to Jonathan Dean, an American arms control negotiator, “The main problem raised by the INF agreement is neither a military nor an East-West one. It is a West-West one of dealing with the damage done to the confidence of an important minority of Western Europeans in the reliability of the US help in a crisis with the Soviet Union.”<sup>30</sup>

In 2007, the Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Ivanov had clearly described the treaty as “Cold War vestige” and said that it was an “outdated agreement” which favoured the United States during the Cold War.<sup>31</sup> Both the United States and Russia have time and again accused each other of violating the treaty. In 2000, the Russians had raised concerns over the US “Hera” missile which, they reportedly claimed, was violating the INF Treaty.<sup>32</sup> The missile

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28. Bryan Brumley, “Critics Say INF Treaty Will Expose Western Europe To Soviet Tank Attack With AM-Summit BJT,” *Associated Press*, October 31, 1987, <<http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1987/Critics-Say-INF-Treaty-Will-Expose-Western-Europe-to-Soviet-Tank-Attack-With-AM-Summit-Bjt/id-2150bb9b3d176056abb4b0a6f16e9d05>>

29. Watson, n.16. <<http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1045&context=hilltopreview>>

30. Stephen A. Garret, “NATO Deterrence and Defense After The INF Treaty,” *Naval Post Graduate School*, June 21, 1989.

31. Fred Weir, “Shades of the Cold War? US Eyes Russia on Arms-Treaty Violations,” *Christian Science Monitor*, January 31, 2014, <<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/2014/0131/Shades-of-the-cold-war-US-eyes-Russia-on-arms-treaty-violations>>

32. “Agreement to End INF Inspections Signed,” *Arms Control Association*, January-February 2001, <<https://www.armscontrol.org/print/2886>>



was being used by the US as a target for their theatre missile defence tests. Russia urged the United States to destroy the missile since it was “concerned by the continuation of the testing of the Hera in the United States in the framework of developing a non-strategic missile defence system.”<sup>33</sup> As claimed by the Russians, the Hera missile in the US arsenal was a violation of Article VI of the INF Treaty. The Russian Defence Ministry was also concerned about the modernisation programme of the Minuteman III missiles.

The Russians feared that the United States “could considerably improve the capabilities of the Hera” to increase the range of the missile from 1,000 km to 5,000 km by using Minuteman III stages which were retired”.<sup>34</sup> Reports suggest that the US Hera missile “not only plays the role of a target, but is basically tested in the same mode as ground launched intermediate range ballistic missiles, a means of delivering weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>35</sup>

The United States, on the other hand, reiterated that the use of the Hera booster system was in full compliance with its obligations under the treaty. Washington claimed that the treaty permits the use of “booster systems” as given in Article VII of the treaty.<sup>36</sup> The United States also justified its testing of Hera missiles on the grounds that Article XII of the treaty permits both parties to use existing missile stages for scientific purposes.<sup>37</sup>

In fact, the United States is being accused of providing allocations to Israel in its budgets, regardless of budgetary constraints, to encourage Tel Aviv to develop medium range missiles for the US. Recent reports of 2013

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33. Gennady Khromov, “Russia Urges US to End ‘Hera’ Ballistic Missile Development,” Federation of American Scientists, November 16, 2000, <<http://www.fas.org/news/russia/2000/russia-001116.htm>>

34. n.17.

35. “The Use of ‘Hera’ Missile Violates the INF Treaty,” Centre for Arms Control, Energy and Environmental Studies, November 20, 2000, <<http://www.armscontrol.ru/start/exclusive/gkk1120.htm>>

36. Ibid.

37. n.17.

suggested that the Silver Sparrow modification of the Israeli Encore missile is a “medium-range aero-ballistic missile” which would be delivered at a distance of 2,500-3,000 km.<sup>38</sup> The US is also accused of developing other kinds of target missiles like the LRALT with a range of 2,000 km and the MRT with the range of 1,100 km.<sup>39</sup> Israel is not a party to the INF Treaty. Thus, it has been suspected that the United States is using Israel as a proxy to develop missiles banned under the INF Treaty “under the guise” of promoting the Israeli defence system.<sup>40</sup>

The United States, on the other hand, accuses Russia of violating the INF Treaty. In October 2013, Russia tested its SS-25 road mobile ballistic missile which the US claimed violated the treaty. Russia’s new Yars-M intermediate range missile, with a range of less than 5,500 km, was also claimed by the US to be a violation of the INF Treaty.<sup>41</sup> Russia’s new missile system, the Iskander, which is reported to be a replacement of the SS-23 Oka missile, is claimed by Russia to have a range below 500 km and, hence, it does not violate the INF Treaty. However, the United States is concerned that Moscow could increase the range of the missile.<sup>42</sup> In fact, the Russian Iskander K, which can be stationed at the Kalingrad region, would be able to target some of the Eastern European countries with ease. This also further raises concerns amongst the Baltic states since Moscow had pledged in the 1990s to keep the Baltic region free of nuclear weapons.

The R-500 cruise missile which is reported to have a range of 360 km could also have an enhanced range “seven times longer.”<sup>43</sup> The Russians have also been accused of testing the RS-26 Rubezh missile which the US claims to be an intermediate range missile. Moscow, on the other hand,

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38. “The U.S. Creates Missiles by Passing the INF Treaty,” Peacekeeper.ru, February 7, 2014, <<http://www.peacekeeper.ru/en/?module=news&action=view&id=19408>>

39. “The Facts of Violation by the United States of its Obligations in the Sphere of Nonproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Arms Control,” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2010, <[http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/cc9c7d192f0ebc5ac325777a0057e1ae](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/cc9c7d192f0ebc5ac325777a0057e1ae)>

40. n.17.

41. Andrei Akulov, “INF: US False Accusations to Cover its Own Cheating on Treaty,” *Strategic Culture Journal*, December 17, 2013, <<http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2013/12/17/inf-us-false-accusations-to-cover-its-own-cheating-on-treaty.html>>

42. Sokov and Miles n. 27.

43. Ibid.

clarifies that the missile is an ICBM and, hence, should fall under the compliances of the new START and not the INF Treaty. However, as Hans Kristensen puts it, "Flying permitted ICBMs to less than intercontinental range does not mean they are banned INF ballistic missiles."

It has also been reported that when the Russians were violating the treaty, the Obama Administration was aware of it and yet failed to inform NATO. This lapse could challenge US "reliability and credibility with its allies."<sup>44</sup> In fact, according to some experts, "The Obama Administration's failure to acknowledge the treaty violations publicly or confront the Russians about them openly indicates that the Administration can't be trusted to take on potential violations by other actors with whom it has struck deals."<sup>45</sup> This could also result in US allies in Europe viewing the US as an "unreliable" partner.

Following the US Phase Adaptive Approach system in Europe where the United States plans to deploy its missile defence system, Moscow feels threatened that the missile defence system which the US claims is to negate the Iranian nuclear deterrent, is actually to negate Moscow's nuclear deterrent. Amidst this, Moscow has threatened to reconsider its decision of continuing to abide by the INF Treaty. However, Russian arms control expert, Vladimir Dvorking has suggested that Moscow should not withdraw from the INF Treaty.<sup>46</sup>

Sergei Ivanov had claimed that Russia had more imminent threats on its borders than the United States and, hence, the intermediate range nuclear capable missiles could be a necessity to augment its nuclear deterrent. In 2007, Putin had felt the need to withdraw from the treaty since he felt that the treaty was baseless unless it was expanded to other states developing intermediate range nuclear capable missiles.<sup>47</sup> The deployment of the DF-

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44. Bill Gertz, "Obama Administration Ignores Russian Nuclear Violations," *The Washington Free Beacon*, February 26, 2014, <<http://freebeacon.com/obama-administration-ignores-russian-nuclear-violations/>>

45. Josh Rogin, "US Knew Russia Violated Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty," *The Daily Beast*, November 26, 2013, <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/11/26/u-s-knew-russia-violated-intermediate-range-nuclear-forces-treaty.html>>

46. Ibid.

47. Luke Harding, "Putin Threatens Withdrawal From Cold War Nuclear Treaty," *The Guardian*, October 12, 2007, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/oct/12/russia.usa1>>

11, DF-15 and the DF-21 missile systems by China near the borders of Russia is a concern for the Russians. Moreover, at present, Russia is also facing threats from Japan over the Kurile Islands. In addition, the inclusion of Japan in the US missile defence strategy has also been a cause of grave concern for Russia. In fact, the Russian defence minister in November 2013, had clearly stated in the first joint conference between Russia and Japan, "We made no secret of the fact that the creation by the US of a global missile defence system, including a Japanese element, is causing us grave concern, primarily over the possible destruction of the strategic balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region."<sup>48</sup> A former commander of the Russian nuclear forces, Col Gen Viktor Yesin warned the United States that "China is seeking to eclipse the United States as the world's leading power by 2049", and, hence, "they want to become a superpower and without a strong military, that would be impossible."<sup>49</sup> The Chinese strategy of keeping its nuclear strategy ambiguous could also lead to the Russians and the United States withdrawing from the treaty.

According to Sergei Ivanov, the treaty benefits only the United States. He opines that Washington does not any need intermediate range nuclear missiles since such missiles could be used by the US only to attack Canada or Mexico.<sup>50</sup> However, the above argument can be debated upon. The United States not only faces threats from Russia in the present context, but also perceives a threat from China, Iran and North Korea. The United States has its forward bases in states like Japan, South Korea and Guam to name a few.

Since the Cold War, NATO has been protected under the nuclear umbrella of the United States. Deploying intermediate range nuclear missiles in these forward bases could reduce the US' reliance on its intercontinental range ballistic missiles and could provide Washington quick reaction time.

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48. "A New Page': Russia, Japan hold First 2+2 talks, aim to Boost Military Cooperation," RT.com, November 2, 2013, <<http://rt.com/news/russia-japan-first-talks-134/>>

49. Bill Gertz, "Ex-Russian Strategic Commander says New Chinese Missiles Threaten 1987 US-Russian Arms Treaty," *The Washington Free Beacon*, December 14, 2012, <<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/number-the-nukes/>>

50. Quoted in Alex Kerrigan, "Between a Rocket and a Hard Place: Difficult Decisions in US Arms Limitation Treaty Enforcement," *Cornell International Law Journal Online*, 2014, <<http://cornellilj.org/between-a-rocket-and-a-hard-place/>>

Moreover, since the United States is committed to provided extended nuclear deterrence to states like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, developing IRBMs and deploying them in these states could act as the best form of deterrence against the Chinese and also one of the best ways of guaranteeing the US its extended deterrent commitment. Some analysts also feel that if the treaty is not extended to states like China, North Korea and Iran which have a history of missile proliferation, it could lead to further proliferation of such missiles to other developing states. According to reports, Saudi Arabia has already acquired the DF-21 version of the missiles from China.

While the INF Treaty was able to remove the nuclear capable missiles of a particular category from Europe, it had nil effect on the tactical nuclear weapons deployed by the United States in the NATO territories and those deployed by the Soviet Union. Moreover, the treaty could not influence France and Britain, two NATO members which were also nuclear weapon states, to eliminate their nuclear weapons.

### MIXED REACTIONS

There have been mixed reactions amongst the Senate members in the United States regarding the Russian violations of the treaty. In fact, member of the US Senate Foreign Relations and Intelligence Committees, Marco Rubio had even concluded that the United States should not enter into any more arms control negotiations with the Russians.<sup>51</sup> The US Republicans also raised their concerns on the Russian violation of the treaty and claimed that the treaty is “the central arms control accord of the nuclear era.” Hence, any violation may be treated seriously.<sup>52</sup>

However, a former Pentagon official, Keith Payne, on the other hand, noted that non-compliance with the treaty was not “important” and that it was “unseemly to raise the issues at the expense of US-Russia relations.”<sup>53</sup> He further stressed on more arms control pacts which should be signed

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51. Rogin, n.45.

52. Diane Barnes and Elaine M. Grossman, “GOP Senators File Measure Protesting Alleged Russian Arms Control Breach,” *National Journal*, March 26, 2014, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/global-security-newswire/gop-senators-file-measure-protesting-alleged-russian-arms-control-breach-20140326>

53. Keith Payne is quoted in Rogin, n.45

**If the US withdraws from the INF Treaty, it could lead to serious strategic and political implications for the NATO states and also for the Southeast Asian states like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. It could result in tensions escalating between these states and China, and between NATO and Russia.**

between the United States and Russia.<sup>54</sup> A Russian arms control expert, Alexander Konovalov, also said that the INF Treaty is easy to violate when considered from a technical perspective. However, he also further stated, "Talks of violations reflect minor technical matters that could be quickly solved, if there was a political will to do so" and that the issue is about the political environment and not a problem in the military sphere.<sup>55</sup> Tom Collina of the Arms Control Association, on the other hand, stated that "even if there has been a violation, the Russians can make amends

for it (the INF Treaty)." He further stated that "the real question is whether they are going to go ahead and actually build and deploy this system."<sup>56</sup> According to Mark Schneider, the SS-25 does not violate the INF Treaty since the missile was declared an ICBM in the 2010 New START Treaty.<sup>57</sup> Kingston Reif also clarified that the Yars missile also falls under the New START Treaty and that "Russia could still fly the missile at a shorter range if it so chose, but that wouldn't violate the INF Treaty and it would still count as a delivery system under New START limits, so Moscow wouldn't gain any military significant advantage."<sup>58</sup>

## **IMPLICATIONS OF WITHDRAWING FROM THE TREATY**

Firstly, if the US withdraws from the INF Treaty, it could lead to serious

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54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Eric Auner quotes Tom Collina in "Russia, China Move to Catch up With US in Offensive Strike Technology," *World Politics Review*, February 4, 2014, <<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/13548/russia-china-move-to-catch-up-with-u-s-in-offensive-strike-technology>>

57. Bill Gertz, "New Russian ICBM Test Fuels Worries Over Violation of 1987 Missile Treaty," *Washington Free Beacon*, October 24, 2013, <<http://freebeacon.com/new-russian-icbm-test-fuels-worries-over-violation-of-1987-missile-treaty/>>

58. Kingston Reif, "Don't Blame Moscow," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, August 5, 2013, <<http://thebulletin.org/dont-blame-moscow>>

strategic and political implications for the NATO states and also for the Southeast Asian states like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. It could result in tensions escalating between these states and China, and between NATO and Russia. There is little doubt that if Russia develops an INF missile, it could have serious implications on its relations with its neighbours in Eastern and Central Europe and also with Beijing.<sup>59</sup> Such a move could also increase the chances of proliferation of missiles and, thus, affect the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Proliferation Security Initiatives.

Moreover, the withdrawal of the US and Russia from the INF Treaty could adversely affect arms control measures. One such example could be the FMCT. Till now, Pakistan has been opposing the treaty claiming that the scope of the treaty is discriminatory. Withdrawal from the INF Treaty by the United States and Russia could lead to further missile arms build-up by Beijing which, in turn, could result in India following suit. Hence, to keep up with this arms race, Pakistan would want to expand its nuclear arsenal and would find it further difficult to sign the FMCT.

#### **NATO AFTER THE INF TREATY**

The US withdrawal of the INF weapons from Europe as required by the INF Treaty, “substantially weakened the position” of the US allies in Europe vis-à-vis that of the Soviet Union when the treaty was implemented, thereby raising the risk of a conventional war in the continent.<sup>60</sup> In the early years, during the ratification process of the treaty, it was assumed that since the treaty banned development and deployment of both nuclear and non-nuclear

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59. As given by Steven Pifer, “The Moscow Missile Mystery: Is Russia Actually Violating the INF Treaty,” *Brookings*, January 31, 2014, <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/01/31-moscow-missile-mystery-russia-violating-inf-pifer>>

60. Editors, “After Russia’s INF Violations,” *National Review Online*, February 1, 2014, <<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/370092/after-russias-inf-violations-editors>>



ground launched cruise and ballistic missiles of the ranges of 500-5,500 km, it would have adversely affect NATO's strategy of follow on forces attack "which calls for deep interdiction strikes using conventional munitions on Soviet air bases, communications centers and westward-moving ground reinforcement echelons in Eastern Europe."<sup>61</sup> It was felt that the treaty would adversely affect NATO's strike capability against Soviet territory since NATO would be losing an essential part of its strike capacity. NATO would also lose a "reliable and decisive part of their escalation option."<sup>62</sup>

During the Cold War, the treaty would have increased NATO's reliance on conventional forces for deterrence against the Warsaw Pact, thereby reducing its options of "flexible response." Until the treaty came into existence, nuclear weapons played an integral part in NATO's "flexible response" option. Under flexible response, NATO outlined the stages of response: (i) direct defence in which NATO would employ the use of conventional forces against the Warsaw Pact; (ii) deliberate escalation under which selective nuclear weapons were to be employed to attain some military advantage. With the INF Treaty coming into force, there would have been a vacuum created in the choice of weapons to be used against the Warsaw Pact.<sup>63</sup> It also led to the decoupling<sup>64</sup> of the US strategic deterrent from Europe's defence "by eliminating equitable nuclear risk-sharing among alliance members."<sup>65</sup>

The INF Treaty also created a gap between the interests of the NATO allies and their military strategies. Turkey, for instance, shared 610 km of common border with the Soviet Union and was, hence, concerned about the effect of the treaty on its security.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the treaty was able to act as a stabilising factor for Europe: to an extent, it

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61. Jeffrey Record and David B. Rivkin, Jr., "Defending Post-INF Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1988.

62. As given by Captain Ricky Morris, "The Impact of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty on Turkey's Defense Requirements," *Air War College*, May 1989, <file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/caps/My%20Documents/Downloads/ADA217269.pdf>

63. Ibid.

64. Coupling meant that the United States would be engaged in a nuclear war in Europe in case of a nuclear escalation.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

prevented any nuclear escalation which could have been triggered from the intermediate range nuclear forces which were being deployed during the Cold War. However, some defence analysts believed that NATO could have retained sufficient nuclear forces like short range missiles, artillery shells, aircraft capable of delivering tactical nuclear weapons, Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) and also the French and British nuclear forces.<sup>67</sup> Hence, the INF Treaty was not believed by many to be a means to control nuclear escalation.

France and Britain did not become party to the treaty since they felt that the treaty could leave them vulnerable to Soviet attacks. For France, according to M. Roland Dumas, "The level of strict sufficiency at which France manages, at some cost to herself, to maintain her deterrent, leaves no room for limitations or constraints." Britain, on the other hand, felt the need more for nuclear weapons than for conventional forces.

Moreover, during the INF negotiations, the United States and NATO were following a 'dual track' approach. On the one hand, they were coercing the Soviet Union to reduce its nuclear forces while, on the other, they were deploying the Pershing and ground launched cruise missiles in Europe.<sup>68</sup> However, this treaty was logical since the INF missiles of both the Soviet Union and NATO had "high accuracy and short flight times" and, hence, could have adversely affected the "first strike stability" of both the Soviet Union and NATO.<sup>69</sup>

When in 2013 Russia was reported to be violating the INF Treaty, the United States did not even inform its NATO allies of such violations by the Russians. In fact, a GOP Senate aide said, "The INF Treaty is the backbone of protecting Europe from nuclear threats" and the fact that NATO was not briefed by the Administration about the violation is a clear indication of the fact that the US was placing a "higher priority on their relationship with

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67. Ibid.

68. Elli Louka, "Controlling Nuclear Weapons," *Nuclear Weapons Justice and The Law* (United Kingdom: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2011).

69. John A. Swegle and Douglas J. Tinch, "Reductions Without Regret: Avoiding Box Canyons, Roach Motels and Wrong Turns," *Savannah River National Laboratory*, September 2013.

Russia than with actual allies in Europe.”<sup>70</sup> In fact, this approach to dealing with arms control measures could seriously undermine Washington’s plans of stationing its missile defence systems in Europe.

### **A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK?**

With the end of the Cold War, as the developing states have started to build nuclear capable missiles of varied ranges, analysts have proposed a multilateral framework for the INF Treaty. This framework could include China, Pakistan, India, Iran and Israel. However, such a step may not be appealing to most of the states mentioned above.

An important issue that needs to be taken into consideration is that the INF Treaty already has a multilateral framework. Firstly, it involves the United States, NATO and Soviet Union. However, post Cold War, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the treaty further included those states of the former Soviet Union which were no longer a part of it. What remained bilateral was the verification process.

Inclusion of China, Israel, Iran and the other states developing medium and intermediate range missiles into the treaty could be a difficult task. Firstly, the threat perceptions of all these countries differ and they all suffer from the domino effect. Secondly, the range of missiles classified under the INF Treaty may not be appropriate for these states given the threat perceptions that arise from their immediate neighbours. Amidst such circumstances, the following paragraphs highlight the reasons that could prevent these states from joining the treaty and the measures to deal with the issue.

In 2011, during the Sino-American summit, there was a suggestion for the inclusion of China in the INF Treaty.<sup>71</sup> Not only is Beijing developing the intermediate range missiles which are nuclear and conventional capable,

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70. Josh Rogin, “US Reluctant to Disclose to All NATO Allies that Russia is Violating INF Treaty,” *Atlantic Council*, December 7, 2013, <<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/us-disclosed-to-some-but-not-all-nato-allies-that-russia-violated-inf-treaty>>

71. Mark Stokes and Dan Blumenthal, “Can a Treaty Contain China’s Missiles?,” *The Washington Post*, January 2, 2011, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2010/12/31/AR2010123104108.html>>

but the newest anti-ship ballistic missile, the DF-21D, has raised concerns in the United States, since its aircraft carriers could be at threat. Bringing Beijing to the table of the INF Treaty would be a difficult task. China has a missile-centric nuclear deterrence strategy for which it has been developing missiles of varied ranges: short range, medium range, intermediate range and intercontinental range. However, some of the threat perceptions of Beijing arise from its immediate neighbours like Taiwan, Japan and South Korea for which it could use its medium and intermediate range missiles. Hence, Beijing would be less enthusiastic about the INF Treaty. This is because, with a weaker air force vis-à-vis the United States, Beijing would be more dependent on its missile capabilities to counter threats from Taiwan, Japan and South Korea which are already under the nuclear umbrella of the United States. Moreover, elimination of intermediate range missile forces would coerce Beijing to concentrate on the enhancement of its ICBM capabilities. This could spur an ICBM arms race in the South Asian region too. Also, “by building a missile force second to none, China is increasing its capability to coerce its neighbours into resolving political disputes on its terms and the costs of a US response.”<sup>72</sup> Also, since Beijing would be left with an ICBM arsenal, the range of the missile systems in the future could be reduced by depressing the trajectory, or fitting more Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs), or by lofting the trajectory of the missile systems. Beijing is already working on such technologies in order to make its ballistic missiles invincible against a ballistic missile defence system.

A positive move with Iran is the P5+1 nuclear deal in which positive steps are being taken in order to curb Iran’s potential to develop nuclear weapons. Therefore, in the future, there could be scope to persuade Iran to eliminate its nuclear capable missiles of medium and intermediate ranges if Tehran follows the P5+1 nuclear deal diligently. At the same time, it must be noted that for Iran, the INF Treaty could eliminate its ability to deliver nuclear warheads, but not the ability to fire missiles *per se*. These missiles can carry conventional warheads and sub-munitions or even chemical warheads. Also,

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72. Ibid.

**In the South Asian context, it could be difficult to persuade India and Pakistan to eliminate their medium and intermediate range nuclear ballistic missiles since these missiles are the backbone of their nuclear deterrence.**

since the INF Treaty only bans missiles of the 500-5,500 km range, and not the warheads and guidance systems, such warheads and guidance could be used on ICBMs by Iran. Thus, while the treaty could ban the missiles which would be a threat to the United States, the threat *per se* would not be eliminated. Moreover, if Iran and Israel are brought to the table of the INF Treaty, several other states like Syria and Saudi Arabia that are capable of possessing nuclear capable missiles would also have to be brought to the table of the INF

Treaty. This could become a cumbersome task.

In 2012, the United States also allowed South Korea to defy the MTCR norms and extend the range of its ballistic missiles to 800 km, however, keeping the payload the same (500 kg). Such an exception on the United States' part could undermine the MTCR in the long run and thereby further prevent states like Iran and North Korea from entering such treaties. Such an exception could also prevent Beijing from considering this treaty.

In the South Asian context, it could be difficult to persuade India and Pakistan to eliminate their medium and intermediate range nuclear ballistic missiles since these missiles are the backbone of their nuclear deterrence. But the INF Treaty can act as an ideal treaty for India and Pakistan to emulate in order to eliminate those categories of missiles which are causes of destabilisation. For this, in the South Asian context, efforts should be made to eliminate very short range nuclear capable missiles, ranging from 0-500 km range. These missiles should be ground-launched, air-launched, and sea-launched (unlike the INF Treaty.). These include the Hatf 1, 2, 3, 9 for Pakistan and Prithvi I, II and III for India. As far as missiles like the Shaheen 1 and Agni 1 are concerned, these missiles would add to the stability in the region rather than destabilise it.

In the South Asian context, missiles ranging from 0-500 km can be considered as battlefield missiles and in times of crisis, their

command and control could be delegated at the battlefield level too. Hence, such missiles on both sides are destabilising. In case verification and compliance can be built into the treaty, it could serve as a useful confidence building measure. Missiles like the Agni I and Shaheen I are on de-alert status, unlike the Russian short range and medium range missiles. Hence, these missiles comprise a less destabilising factor. Moreover, these missiles, being solid propelled and mobile, have better chances of survivability and could, therefore, contribute positively to nuclear deterrence and stability in the South Asian context.

Intermediate range nuclear forces provide states like India, Pakistan, Iran and North Korea the capability to “project power at the regional level and, with access to nuclear warheads, serve as the central components of nuclear deterrent forces against their regional adversaries or perhaps conventionally superior military powers like the United States.”<sup>73</sup> Moreover, even if states like China, North Korea, Iran, Pakistan and India agree to abide by the INF Treaty, it would be difficult to make Israel a part of it. This is because Tel Aviv has not yet declared its nuclear status<sup>74</sup> and, hence, it could find the treaty to be imposing. This could, in turn, also jeopardise Israel’s relations with the United States. If reports of the United States using Israel as a proxy to develop its medium range, missile systems under the disguise of an Israeli missile defence system, are true, it could also seriously undermine the US efforts for developing the same.<sup>75</sup>

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73. Record and Rivkin, Jr., n.61, pp.33

74. Though it is a known fact that Israel possesses nuclear weapons.

75. It should be noted that the author has tried to highlight the repercussion of the INF Treaty on Israel’s missile capabilities. The author does not justify the above limitation to be a positive sign.

## CONCLUSION

The INF Treaty has served as the bedrock for arms control measures. It proved that it was possible to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapon systems. However, with the burgeoning pace at which short to intermediate range nuclear missiles are being developed by developing states, it remains to be seen how far Russia and the United States can adhere to this treaty. In case, they do not adhere to the obligations of the treaty and withdraw from it, it could be difficult to achieve a global zero at the broader level in the future. Hence, both the United States and Russia should progress with their arms control measures without letting the violations of the treaty affect them.