

ОРИГИНАЛЬНАЯ

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## Анализ политического поведения России после отмены договора о РСМД\*

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### АННОТАЦИЯ

«Договор о ликвидации ракет средней и меньшей дальности» между Советским Союзом и Соединенными Штатами Америки (далее – Договор о РСМД), заключенный во время холодной войны, более чем через три десятилетия прекратил свое действие. В нынешнем контексте конкуренции между великими державами его отмена влияет не только на военные планы двух стран, но и на реконструкцию региональных и глобальных стратегических планов, а также на будущее глобальной системы вооружений. На фоне значительных изменений в России после заключения Договора о РСМД ее политическое поведение демонстрирует сильную «ориентацию на безопасность»: на военном уровне она обновляет и модернизирует свои ядерные арсеналы и наращивает возможности сдерживания, а на дипломатическом прорвала западную блокаду, расширив партнерский круг. Объясняя причины появления у России ориентации на безопасность, автор статьи утверждает, что в формировании такого поведения играет роль геополитический нарратив. С другой стороны, инерция политического поведения России объясняется с точки зрения ее национальных особенностей. В конце статьи автор дает краткий прогноз поведения России относительно контроля над вооружениями.

**Ключевые слова:** неядерное сдерживание; Договор о РСМД; «Ориентация на безопасность»; геополитика; национальная идентичность

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ORIGINAL PAPER

## Analysis of Russia's Policy Behaviour after the Abolition of the INF Treaty\*\*

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### ABSTRACT

The “Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles” (after this referred to as the “Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces – INF Treaty”), was an arms control treaty. This Treaty was abandoned after being extended for more than three decades. In the current context of competition among great powers, its abolition not only affects the military designs of the two countries but also impacts the reconstruction of regional and global strategic layouts, as well as the future of the global armament system. Against the background of significant changes in Russia's strategic security environment during the post-INF Treaty period, Russia's policy behaviour has exhibited a strong “security orientation”. That is, at the military level, it updates and upgrades its nuclear arsenals and continuously expands its deterrence options; at the diplomatic level, it has broken through the Western blockade by expanding Russia's partner circle. In explanation of the reasons for the emergence of “security-oriented” behaviour characteristics in Russia, this paper argues that geopolitical narration plays a role in shaping Russia's behaviour. On the

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other hand, the inertia of Russia's policy behaviour is explained from the perspective of Russia's national characteristics, primarily as defined by its national identity. Finally, this paper gives a brief prediction of the future trend of Russia's behaviour and the arms control system in the post-INF Treaty period.

**Keywords:** non-nuclear deterrence; the INF Treaty; "security orientation"; geopolitics; national identity

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The signing of the INF Treaty was the result of the balanced strategic situation between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union achieved approximate strategic parity with the United States (<https://www.state.gov/inf>). During the late 1970s, the emergence and deployment of Soviet SS-20 medium-range missiles changed the security posture of the United States and the Soviet Union in Europe. Because the SS-20 missiles were mobile and with high-precision, they were able to be hidden and deployed quickly. They also had a numerical advantage over their SS-4 and SS-5 predecessors, that is, they could carry three independently aimed warheads, these weapons enhanced the deterrence posture of the Soviet Union in the European region and disrupted the strategic stability between the United States and the Soviet Union. Ground-launched ballistic missiles (GLBMs) and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) were acknowledged to be destabilising to Cold War Europe and Asia. They had the potential to precipitate and/or escalate a nuclear war between the East and West (<https://www.state.gov/inf-treaty-at-a-glanc>). The United States requested negotiations with the Soviet Union and signed another landmark treaty in the field of arms control in 1987 — the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty). In this Treaty the two parties stipulated the destruction of the U.S. and Soviet ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with a range capability between 500 and 5,500 kilometres, along with their associated launchers, support structures, and equipment, within three years after the Treaty entered into force in 1988 (<https://www.state.gov/inf-treaty-at-a-glanc>).

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABOLITION OF THE INF TREATY

As a legacy of the Cold War, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the Contracting States to the INF Treaty legally changed from bilateral treaties between the United States and the Soviet Union to multilateral obligations jointly undertaken

by the United States and six former Soviet Republics (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan). It would continue indefinitely. However, with the deterioration of US-Russian relations and the reality of the "new Cold War", the political role of the INF Treaty has been loathed by both the U.S. and Russia. Neither Russia nor the United States displayed much political will or persistence in seeking a compromise or taking unilateral steps to rescue the treaty [1].

The abolition of the INF Treaty, an arms control agreement that had been signed by two military powers, goes beyond the military security of the two countries and plays a role in promoting and restructuring the regional security situation and global arms control system.

### Accelerate the R&D and deployment of US-Russian medium-range weapons and new weapons

The INF Treaty is not a nuclear arms control treaty in a strict sense. It also restricts cruise missiles with conventional warheads in a defined mileage range. Therefore, the inclination of the United States and Russia to bolster the conventional forces that had been restricted in the Treaty will inevitably become the focus of the national defence. Besides, the United States plans to deploy ground-based missile systems banned by the INF Treaty in Europe. However, "NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has ruled out nuclear-armed intermediate-range missiles as a response to Russia's violation of the INF Treaty, but he has carefully left the door open for the deployment of conventionally armed missiles" [2].

### The security pattern in Europe presents a balanced defensive posture

After the abolition of the INF Treaty, the United States and Russia can now deploy ground-launched cruise missiles and ballistic missiles within 500 to 5500 kilometres. It implies that Russia's missile range is back within the range of countries in Western Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East that the SS-20 can reach. In contrast, the U.S. and European missile

forces can cover most of mainland Russia. Without the INF Treaty, the potential for a new intermediate-range missile arms race in Europe and beyond becomes increasingly real [3]. As the attitudes of both sides are still under control and mutual deterrence still plays a role, the security pattern in Europe presents both an unstable trend of confrontation and a sufficient defensive posture.

### **Disintegrate the US-Russian arms control system and influence the reconstruction of the global arms control system**

The abolition of the INF Treaty delivers the collective will of the United States and Russia to restrict the nuclear forces of other countries. However, whether these actions will inflict damage on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the only legally binding restriction on the two largest nuclear arsenals in the world, is related to the existence of the US-Russian arms control mechanism and the reconstruction of the global arms control system. We can see that the long-term stalemate between the United States and Russia over the future of the arms treaty will limit the space where the two sides can reach an agreement. The disappearance of the arms control mechanism between the United States and Russia is bound to reconstruct the global arms control system.

Against the background of intensified competition among major powers, a stalemate in US-Russian relations and the collapse of traditional arms control mechanisms, Russia's policy behaviour and its characteristics play a significant role in guiding the future trend of US-Russian relations and world security.

### **“SECURITY ORIENTATION” OF RUSSIA'S POLICY BEHAVIOUR**

The dispute over the INF Treaty has been deadlocked since the Obama administration declared Russia's violation in 2014. On the other hand, since 2014 the Putin government has put forward a series of strategic ideas, such as the “Military doctrine of the Russian Federation”, “National security strategies of the Russian Federation”, “Foreign policy conception of the Russian Federation 2016”, and “Information Security Theory of Russia”. All those documents offer insights and suggestions about its national security and development, thereby coping with the deteriorating geopolitical environment. In the face of the possible missile deployment and military operations of the United States after the abolition of the INF Treaty, the “security orientation” of Russia's policy behaviour in the post-INF Treaty era has erupted intensively.

### **In terms of military deterrence, non-nuclear deterrence has turned into a strategic military priority**

With the increasingly weak role of nuclear forces in exerting conventional deterrence and curbing conventional conflicts, Russia began to question the potential of nuclear weapons for safeguarding national security and providing “great power” status concerning its national strategic deterrence policy. One former chief of the General Staff even said that Russia's elevated focus on nuclear weapons in the 2000s was an inefficient deterrence strategy [4]. Since the likelihood of a future nuclear war is minimal, and the progress of science and technology has affected the change of the nature of the war, Putin stated that “as high-precision long-range conventional weapons become increasingly common, they will tend to become the means of achieving a decisive victory over an opponent, including in a global conflict” [5]. Since then, research on the deterrence effect of non-nuclear weapons has turned into the focus of Russia's military-strategic research, and the implications of Russia's strategic deterrence is continuously expanding.

In the “Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation” published in 2014, Russia formally introduced the concept of “non-nuclear containment” for the first time. “Nuclear containment” was a change in policy for meeting conventional threats with nuclear weapons, representing the first official declaration that Russia needed more deterrence options. Russian theorists defined the main purpose of non-nuclear deterrent tools to be the deterrence of conventional, small-scale and political threats [4].

After the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002, Russia did not sit still in the face of the deployment of the global missile defence system promoted by the United States. In his “State of the Union” address in March 2018, Putin indicated that Russia had been engaged in advanced technologies and weapons' modernisation, after the United States undermined the ABM Treaty. He said that “the potential of Russian armed forces we have shown will sober the minds of any aggressor, and Russia's new strategic weapon system is a response to the withdrawal of the United States from the ABM Treaty” (<http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0301/c418236-29842589.html>).

With NATO's eastward expansion and the implementation of the U.S. construction plan of a global missile defence system, two missile defence regions emerged in Eastern Europe, namely, Romania and Poland. In response, in his “State of the Union” address of March 2018, V. Putin also showed a high-

profile display of two new delivery systems and various high-tech weapons. It includes intercontinental nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed cruise missiles (e.g., “Sarmat”), ultralong-range nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed autonomous underwater vehicles (e.g., “Poseidon”), and hypersonic missiles (e.g., “Avangard” and “Dagger”). Conventional high-precision weapons constitute Russia’s offensive non-nuclear capabilities.

Russia’s limited nuclear deterrence and major non-nuclear deterrence constituted the general content of Russia’s military strategy in the post-INF Treaty period. The country’s attitude has undoubtedly toughened in the face of the military treaty vacuum and the collision of weapons deployments between the United States and Russia after the withdrawal of the arms control treaty. However, whether Russia’s deterrence plays a role is related not only to its military intentions and design but also to the response of the United States. At the very least, the Trump administration argued in its Nuclear Posture Review that a moderate U.S. replenishment of its military forces would enhance the diversity and flexibility of deterrence and undermine any false confidence — assuming that limited nuclear employment could provide a useful advantage over the United States and its allies — of potential enemies (<https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872877/-1/-1/1/EXECUTIVE-SUMMARY.pdf>).

### **On diplomacy, expanding diplomatic relations to break Western regulations**

After the abolition of the INF Treaty, facing the accusations and countermeasures of Western countries headed by the United States, Russia maintained a calm and pragmatic attitude and simultaneously conducted diplomatic activities to breakdown Western barriers and ease Russia’s deteriorating diplomatic situation.

First, Moscow has repeatedly expressed its willingness to dialogue with the West, even though Russia is dissatisfied with the United States’ withdrawal from the INF Treaty. On August 22, 2019, the United Nations Security Council held its 8602nd meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Polyansky, accused the United States of the negative impact on regional and world security after its withdrawal from the INF Treaty, stating that “For our part, we have always been ready to engage in any serious dialogue aimed at ensuring strategic stability and security” ([https://www.un.org/zh/documents/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.8602&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/zh/documents/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.8602&Lang=E)). Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov also indicated on September 5 that Moscow was willing to resume dialogue with Washing-

ton in a way with which the United States would feel comfortable at the present stage (<http://sputniknews.cn/politics/201909051029482117/>). However, the trend of domestic politics in the United States and the suspicion between the two countries will not be relaxed because one side makes advances, and the restoration of bilateral political relations will be a long and difficult process.

The significance of the Treaty lies not only in the combination of the deterrence scope of the United States and Russia in Europe but also in the fact that the security connotation and pattern constructed by its lasting existence will change significantly with the abolition of the Treaty. Despite Russia’s willingness to communicate, structural contradictions in security require political mutual trust as a prerequisite, and escalating conflicts, in reality, may not wait for the improvement of political relations.

Second, the export of military weapons and technologies has become an essential means for Russia to strengthen military and political ties with other countries and to ease Western diplomatic oppression.

For example, Russia and India have traditional ties of military cooperation as well as mutual support in geopolitical security. Although the United States strongly opposed the S-400 arms purchase agreement reached between Russia and India in 2018 and even persuaded India to abandon the arms purchase agreement by offering the F-35 stealth fighter (<http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2019/0610/c1011-31127511.html>), India still paid Russia in advance to purchase the S-400 air defence missile system in consideration of the stability of Russia-India arms sales cooperation and the integrity of its air defence missile system. Besides, it is worth noting that Serbia, which intends to join the E.U. but has maintained a cooperative attitude with NATO instead of joining, has also shown a certain willingness to cooperate with Russia on the arms purchase plan of the S-400 missile system.

Third, Russia strengthens competition with the West in the Middle East. With the deterioration of its relations with the West, the Middle East in the post-INF Treaty era has become a testing ground for the confrontation between Russia and the West. The crack in US-Turkish relations has become the fulcrum of Russia’s balance with the power of the United States and NATO in the Middle East during the post-INF Treaty period. As a reflection of the deteriorating relations and frequent geopolitical crises between the two countries, Turkey not only strongly opposed the “Jerusalem issue” supported by the United States on the Palestinian-Israeli is-

sue but also publicly denounced the United States for its withdrawal from the Iran Nuclear Agreement. Turkey's harsh geopolitical environment offered an important opportunity for Russia and Turkey to get closer. In the context of the abolition of the INF Treaty, the military ties between Russia and Turkey irked the United States. In July 2019, Turkey officially accepted the Russian S-400 air defence missile system, while the United States suspended the sale of F-35 fighters to Turkey and announced sanctions against that country as part of a strike against Russia-Turkey cooperation. Russian-Turkish arm sales deepened the cracks between the United States and Turkey and increased the variables related to the security situation and geopolitical pattern in the Middle East.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF "SAFETY ORIENTATION"**

There is no doubt that the withdrawal of the United States from the INF Treaty stimulated Russia's behaviour, leading to the intense outbreak of behavioural characteristics. It is worth noting that these behaviours and characteristics of Russia did not come into being after the abolition of the INF Treaty, or even when the United States announced its withdrawal from the Treaty. Therefore, to establish the analytical framework of Russia's behaviour, it is necessary to analyse not only the environment that shapes its behaviour but also the state characteristics that lead to the inertia of state behaviour.

#### **The shaping effect of geopolitical narration on policy behaviour**

Russia's geopolitical narrative has continued to play a role in its domestic policy behaviour. The geographical environment since the collapse of the Soviet Union has not only caused Russia's "fear" and "insecurity" but also become a key factor in the development path of Russia and other countries. It can be said that the development of Russia's geopolitical environment has strengthened the security value and force value in Russia's "great power" consciousness.

Geopolitical narratives since the collapse of the Soviet Union, such as the Kosovo War, NATO's eastward expansion, the Russia-Georgia War, and the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, have reinforced the concept of geopolitical confrontation in Russian society [6]. At the same time, the occurrence of these geopolitical events has shaped Russia's foreign behaviour patterns and its security connotation.

In March 1999, the United States and NATO bypassed the United Nations. They launched a 78-day

bombardment against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was an important step for Western countries headed by the United States to expand their sphere of influence and implement NATO's eastward expansion. For Russia, the outbreak of the Kosovo War showed that the new European security system was not based on the organisation for security and cooperation in Europe overall but only on the European Union and NATO [7]. This basis signified that Russia would not be able to participate in the important affairs of Eastern Europe, and the results of the Kosovo War led to the sharp withdrawal of Russian forces from the Balkans. After that, Russia introduced the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation in 2000, relinquishing the idea that the Russian security threats were mainly internal and that the nature of these threats was nonmilitary. It marked a fundamental change in Russia's judgment on war and peace as well as its concept of national security [8].

The outbreak of the Russia-Georgia conflict on August 8, 2008, led to Russia's first use of forces abroad since independence. For Russian countries, this war complicated relations between Russia and the CIS countries and triggered questions about the future development of the CIS and Russia's leadership [9]. The external environment that Russia faced after the Russo-Georgian War was not very favourable. The CIS suddenly raised its level of vigilance against Russia, the US-Russian relations once again cooled, and the E.U. launched the "Oriental Partnership" program. Subsequently, Russia adjusted its national policies. The "new look" military reform turned into a key measure for Russia to safeguard its national security.

The Ukrainian crisis in 2013 and Russia's resumption of control in Crimea in 2014 became turning points that affected US-Russian relations, which led to the complete cooling of relations between Russia and the West, as well as more severe sanctions against Russia and the constant upgrading of military defence by NATO. Ukraine became the biggest obstacle to Russia's influence in the CIS countries. The harsh geopolitical environment once again affected Russia's national policy. The promulgation of the "National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation" in 2015 reflected the connotation of Russia's geopolitical ideology. It clearly considered the United States and NATO as major threats to Russia's security and still regarded uniting the CIS countries as an important strategic direction for Russia. More importantly, as geopolitical thoughts are potential factors that stimulate nationalism, the Crimea inci-

dent led to the emergence of “post-Crimea consensus” in Russia. Russia’s patriotism and nationalism were continually rising in the face of economic sanctions, military threats and political propaganda of Western countries. They inspired the national will of Russia to support the resumption of its high power status.

In short, the geopolitical narrative of Russia has deepened the “insecurity” that naturally exists in the geopolitical characteristics of Russia. Whether it is the consistent toughness and innovation of the military or the ups and downs in political attitudes, Russia’s state behaviour and its characteristics are always conjoined with the eternal theme of “security”.

### **National attributes of Russia – Analysis from the Perspective of National Identity**

It is necessary to know what kind of country Russia is before we get to know where Russia’s interests lie [10]. Exploring the attributes of Russia regarding such a way of thinking, we can find the specific logic behind Russia’s behaviour.

“National identity” is formed in self-cognition and the definition of the role of “others” or the external world. The understanding of Russian national identity should be realised not only from the perspective of “how Russia views Russia” but also from the standpoint of “how Russia views the external world”.

First, the recognition of Russia’s self-contradiction is the result of the dual effects of history and reality. The Slavs who grew up under the orthodox civilisation were so convinced of the power of tradition that Putin defined Russia as “the largest Orthodox country”. However, the impact of modern civilisation has put Russia on an unfamiliar and awkward path, and democracy has been the direction of national development under Putin. In an interview with NBC in June 2017, Putin stressed that “Russia is developing along the path of democracy” [11]. Faced with the state of the country to be governed, Putin expressed his concern about the current situation of Russia in his article “Russia at the Turn of the Millennium” published in 1999, “Russia is no longer a country that represents the highest level of economic and social development in the contemporary world; Russia is in the most difficult historical period for hundreds of years. It is probably the first time in nearly 200 to 300 years that Russia is actually in danger of turning into a second or third rate country in the world” [10]. His desire for a strong country resonated with the emotions of the Russian people and became an important reason for Putin’s rise to power. Putin’s election in 2000 opened Russia’s road to high

strength, and the “great power strategy” became the core connotation of Putin’s governance of Russia. On February 11, 2019, Surkov, Putin’s prominent think tank, published the article “Putin’s Long-Term Country”, which summarised Putin’s governing ideas and measures as “Putinism”. The article unabashedly explained many core contents of Putinism and pointed out that the essence of “Putinism” was exogenous, military and popular ([https://www.guancha.cn/pangdapeng/2019\\_04\\_27\\_499387.shtml](https://www.guancha.cn/pangdapeng/2019_04_27_499387.shtml)). Russia has broken away from the state of disintegration since the collapse of the Soviet Union and becomes a “unique country” with “underlying people”, strong endogeneity and robust external policies.

Second, Russia’s view of the external world is subject to the conundrum of “how Russia fits into the world”, which is essentially a conflict between what the world is and what Russia thinks it should be. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia attained a deeper understanding that “the world is the unipolar hegemony dominated by the United States” and “national sovereignty” was endangered in the failure to pursue an equal partnership. Hard power has turned out to be an important means for Russia to gain respect from the West and defend national sovereignty. According to Bobo Lo, “any discussion on the ‘world in Moscow’s eyes’ will ultimately come down to the status of Russia in the international community at present and in the coming decades” [12]. Russia’s worldview has always been an extension of the core issue of national status. From the beginning of the Russia-Georgia War to the Ukrainian crisis, the interaction between Russia and Western countries not only improved the thinking on national status but also greatly influenced Russia’s external concept. Russia’s latest thought on the external world was summarised in the “Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation 2016” issued by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November 2016. Moscow believed that the world system had undergone the following changes and developments. First, the world was undergoing a series of profound changes, the essence of which was to form a multipolar international system, and the architecture of international relations was thus becoming more complex. The shift of leading global forces towards the Asia-Pacific region coincided with the decline of Western countries. Second, the development of diversity in the world had led to the intensification of contradictions, among which the competitive nature among different civilisations and different values was particularly prominent. “Against this background, the attempts to impose their own

values and standards on other countries have led to the rise of xenophobia and the growing impulse and contradictions in international affairs, which will eventually result in chaos and out of control in international relations.” The imposition of views and values by Western countries was a major cause of global and regional instability. Third, “with the increasing instability of the world political and economic system, the role of forces in state relations continues to increase as well” ([https://www.mid.ru/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/-/asset\\_publisher/CptlCkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248](https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248)). The risk of regional conflicts and crisis escalation was also increasing.

Russia’s understanding of its contradictions and negative perception of the external environment have shaped the national identity of Russia to be a “great power”. As the “imperial heritage” after the collapse of the Soviet Union, hard power and security have turned into the national characteristics of Russia.

## **RUSSIA AND ARMS CONTROL SYSTEM IN THE POST-INF TREATY ERA**

### **Russia’s Judgment on U.S. Strategic Intentions**

On the issue of the INF Treaty, Russia has three essential judgments about the United States, which affect Russia’s follow-up behaviours and future situation.

First, although views on the intention of the United States are divided in Russia, containment of China and Russia is the prevailing judgment. On October 20–22, 2019, at the 9th Beijing Xiangshan Forum, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu mentioned the reasons for the United States withdrawal from the INF Treaty: “we firmly believe that the real reason for Washington’s unilateral withdrawal from the INF Treaty is the containment of the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation” (<https://russian.rt.com/world/article/678977-shoigu-ssha-drsmd>). This view represents the prevailing view in Russia.

Second, the withdrawal of the United States from the INF Treaty has set off an arms race among the great powers. Russian President Putin stated on August 5, 2019, saying that the withdrawal of the United States from the INF Treaty meant the restart of an unstoppable arms race (<http://military.cctv.com/2019/08/06/ARTIpSK8IBq2zSP5t2oUrEk190806.shtml>). However, in the minutes released by the Kremlin on August 23, Putin indicated that Russia had never wanted and would not be involved in an expensive arms race that would be destructive to the Russian economy (<https://world.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnKmpF>). However, for its safety, Russia will take a “tit for tat” approach to U.S. actions.

Finally, Russia still needs to make efforts to restore trust and strengthen constructive dialogue on equality. At the Security Conference of the Russian Federation on August 23, Putin stated that Russia remained willing to engage in an equal and constructive dialogue with the United States to restore trust and strengthen international security. However, the rigid bilateral relations between Russia and the United States present significant difficulties in making this effort a reality.

Therefore, based on the above Russian judgment and follow-up actions on the INF Treaty, it can be predicted that there are two development trends of the arms control system. First, the old arms control system based on the United States and Russia will disintegrate; second, it is difficult to establish a new system of arms control on a multilateral basis. The security situation is highly uncertain under the influence of two factors, namely, the negotiation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the only bilateral Treaty regulating the world’s two largest nuclear stockpiles, and the new INF Treaty.

### **Russia’s policy and the prospect of its arms control system**

In the context of deteriorating US-Russian relations, the arms control system established by the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the 1970s is also in danger. For nearly three decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow and Washington have been struggling to find an alternative core, such as the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty [1]. However, the prospect of this old Treaty expiring in 2021 is not clear in the context of the collapse of the INF Treaty. On the Russian side, there is no lack of views that the withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty was intended to gain more initiative in the next negotiation of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. However, the reality is that the United States has expressed no interest in further negotiations. John Bolton, the former national security adviser to the president of the United States, argued that the extension of Russia’s last agreement on the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, to 2026 was not in the interests of the United States and was unlikely to be achieved [13]. Although Russia is adamantly opposed to the United States’ current attitude of not extending the Treaty, the trend of the Treaty is bound to be complicated and changeable in consideration of different positions within the United States on whether to extend the Treaty.

However, the mutual political suspicion between the United States and Russia has led to the collapse of the old system in the field of arms control. Because unrestricted arms control is dangerous to the entire world, the emergence of a new arms control mechanism not only conforms to the interests of all countries in the world but, more importantly, several development trends have proven that the emergence of a new arms control system is possible.

First, multilateral trends in the field of arms control will be considered. On February 5, 2019, Trump indicated in his State of the Union address defending the withdrawal of the United States from the INF Treaty that negotiations on the Treaty should be resumed and China and other countries should be included in the Treaty (<https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-china-russia-inf-20190206/4775601.html>). This trend is based on the proliferation and development of missile technology. Advances in technology have made the content of the Treaty less adaptable. As the basis for developing long-range missiles and launch vehicles, medium-range missile technology has been mastered by China, Pakistan, India, Israel, Iran, and North Korea, in addition to Russia and the United States. Since 2007, Russia has proposed promoting the multilateralisation of the INF Treaty, which has also been recommended by the United States. However, considering national security and political security, the response of other countries to this proposal is lukewarm. With the strengthening of its containment against China and the deepening of its confrontation with Russia, it has become a favourable choice for the United States to withdraw from the INF Treaty to consume Russia's strength and gain the initiative over China through the negotiation of a new INF Treaty.

Second, an arms control mechanism that focuses on quality rather than quantity is possible. This trend is based on the intellectual development of weapon technology. The development of new technologies has led to disputes between the United States and Russia over the types of weapons stipulated in the INF Treaty, such as Russia's objection to the technology of "UAV" used by the United States. This trend, however, complicates the conditions under which arms control can be achieved.

Although the envisioned future of the bilateral-based arms control field remains unclear, it is inevitable that international organisations and systems represented by the United Nations, including international public opinion, still play a role in the reconstruction of the global arms control system. International organisations such as the Conference

on Disarmament, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the global partnership against the proliferation of weapons and materials of mass destruction have made many efforts in promoting nuclear weapon reduction and arms control. Although the contradictions between non-nuclear states and nuclear-weapon states, as well as among nuclear-weapon states, will continue for a long time, and the future of the global arms control system is still uncertain, disarmament and arms control still occupy essential positions in international affairs. The reconstruction of the arms control system is not only an objective need of the current global situation but also a necessary measure to promote international political stability.

## **CONCLUSION**

International politics is in a period of significant change, development and turbulence, implying that in the short term, the international environment faced by Russia cannot provide a good foundation for its national development. This implication is an important reason for Russia's constant setbacks, but Russia still faces opportunities. The abolition of the INF Treaty has not only upgraded Russia's strategic power but also removed treaty restrictions on intermediate-range missile technology. The modernisation of Russian weapons is also increasing faster, and it also provides Russia with more strategic options. However, in the context of high power competition, the United States is also continually upgrading its strategic power. Although the old arms control system will collapse in the context of strategic imbalances, strengthening strategic stability with mutual fragility is still the theoretical premise for the realisation of arms control mechanisms, which means that to maintain strategic stability, arms control among major powers will still trend toward military power growth and confrontation in the short term. A new arms control mechanism will be a long and challenging task.

In other words, in the short term, the global arms race and the deployment of military operations are on the rise. Russia will not reduce its actions in military deployment and military exercises and will even give its military action more impetus through diplomatic activities. However, Russia is still ready for dialogue with the West. Behind these behaviours are not only Russia's "security" paradigm shaped by national characteristics and the geographical environment but also Russia's objective need to achieve national development and strive for the status of high power. The understanding of Russia can never be separated from the discussion of security.

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