

THE DEMISE OF THE INF TREATY AND INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY

Workshop Summary

July 23-24, 2019

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Background:

CGSR hosted a two-day workshop to discuss the implications of the demise of the INF treaty for Indo-Pacific security. The workshop brought together more than 70 policy, security, diplomatic, and technical experts from the U.S., Northeast Asia, and Europe. Discussion was at the unclassified level.

The following key questions guided the discussion:

- What impact will the demise of the INF Treaty have on the Indo-Pacific security environment?
- What new forms of competition and cooperation are likely to result?
- What should the United States and its allies do?
- What objectives should guide their actions?

Panel Topics:

1. The Current Context
2. The Potential Values of Intermediate-range Missiles for U.S. & Allied Security
3. The Potential Costs and Risks of Different Courses of Action
4. Potential Reactions in the Region to Different U.S. & Allied Courses of Action
5. The Future of “Dual Track”
6. Alternative Courses of Action for the United States and Its Allies

Executive Insights

1. The demise of the INF treaty will be felt first and foremost in Europe, not the Indo-Pacific. But the treaty affected the region by preventing Russia and the US from deploying intermediate range systems there. In combination with China's repeated rejection of legal restraints on its own intermediate-range systems, a significant imbalance has emerged, one that erodes strategic stability and the credibility of U.S. security guarantees. This instability is magnified by Russia's material breach of the treaty and its deployment of banned weapons. The demise of the treaty creates an opportunity to address this instability with new means.
2. As the United States and its allies begin to consider how best to seize this opportunity, they must account for the possibility that the demise may not be permanent. Russia has refused to admit that it is in violation of the treaty and has not taken demonstrable steps to return to compliance. But so long as the treaty remains in force, the United States has limited its research and development to treaty-compliant missiles in part with the intention to bring Russia back to the negotiating table. The administration has made clear that it continues to look for opportunities for effective and verifiable arms control. Thus, it is possible that a future deal will be struck which impacts the pathway forward in the Indo-Pacific. But this seems highly unlikely given Russian recalcitrance. Accordingly, it makes sense to define and proceed down pathways unconstrained by the INF.
3. The potential benefits to the United States and its allies in deploying intermediate-range missile systems are numerous. Such deployment would strengthen deterrence by significantly undermining China's confidence in its A2/AD strategy and posture. It would shift the regional military competition in an advantageous way by compelling China to direct resources to missile defense. It would also undermine the coercive value of missile-backed threats by various states in the region. It would send a clear message of resolve to both allies and adversaries and affirm the U.S. commitment to remain engaged in the region. These results would strengthen the assurance of U.S. allies. Put in a broader context, the demise of the treaty brings with it the opportunity to positively shift the debate in Asia about whether the region is going through "a great unwinding" (as America retreats, China rises, and the regional security order is re-made) or "a great awakening" (as America re-makes its grand strategy and strengthens its alliances to deal more effectively with the emerging challenge from China).
4. If the demise of the INF treaty is an opportunity for the United States, it is also a test. It is a test of the U.S. national willingness and capacity to move out rapidly and decisively. It is a test of the national willingness to remain militarily engaged in the region despite rising costs and risks. It is a test of the U.S. willingness to share burdens and risks with allies in new ways. It is a test of national and allied capacity to develop the needed strategic thought for a new era marked by new challenges.
5. Rapid and decisive movement will not come easily. There are many barriers. Some will seek more time for negotiations. Others will worry about the risks of new forms of military competition. Money is scarce. Some technologies are unproven. Public opinion is unformed.

Allies aren't ready to sign up to an un-defined pathway. There are many competing priorities for resources and leadership attention. Steady focus at the top level is essential.

6. In determining a pathway forward for capability development and deployment, the United States and its allies need to do more than "mind the gap." That is, they should do more than simply match the ranges and capabilities of the regional missiles of regional actors. Instead, the United States and its allies should field systems that support operational concepts for fighting in a contested environment that reinforce deterrence by stripping away adversary confidence in their ability to bear the costs and risks of war with America.
7. The United States and its allies must also do more than let technology development drive the acquisition decision. Numerous planning factors should guide the design of the future posture.
 - What basing options will be available? In allied countries? In US territories? Only deployable in time of crisis and war?
 - What types? All cruise? All ballistic? Some or all hypersonic? A mix over time?
 - How large a force? Scaled for which targets, scenarios, and operational concepts?
 - With what range? For coastal strike or interior strike?
 - How quickly? To support the "fight tomorrow?" To support "dominate in 2028?" Both?
 - Mobile or fixed?
8. New strike assets will supplement an existing and evolving portfolio of U.S. strike assets in the region, including sea-based and air-delivered systems. U.S. planners should think of a portfolio management approach. They should account for the fact that U.S. allies deploy and are developing strike assets of their own and thus may be able to contribute significantly to the portfolio. And the strike portfolio is but one part of a larger suite of capabilities that can be re-balanced as intermediate-range ground-based strike is introduced, including defensive and non-kinetic capabilities.
9. U.S. allies are both eager and wary. They are eager to be part of this project, to reap its stabilizing benefits, and to cooperate in system development and the associated Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR). They are eager also to share the risk that goes with an intensified competition for strike, as they see risk sharing as essential to the effectiveness of the deterrence posture and thus an appropriate form of burden sharing. But, to varying degrees, they are wary of being asked to precipitously deploy weapons that might generate public opposition. And they are wary of signing up to a major new U.S. project only to have the United States change course before crossing the finish line.
10. The U.S. affirmation that its R&D efforts are focused only on conventional and not nuclear systems does not entirely close the nuclear discussion in the Indo-Pacific. Discussions in Japan and South Korea on how to proceed post-INF are inextricably tied to discussions on emerging challenges to the credibility of U.S. extended nuclear deterrence in an era marked by China's increasing military assertiveness and North Korean nuclearization. Deterrence experts in both countries are heavily invested in the U.S. promise to maintain a globally deployable force of dual-capable fighter-bombers and the associated nuclear bombs, as they count on such deployment in the event of a regional nuclear crisis. Those experts also see the

United States as reluctant to provide nuclear guarantees in Asia that are as robust as those in Europe. None argue for U.S. deployment of nuclear-tipped intermediate-range missiles. There is broad acceptance that the weaknesses of deterrence of China are at the conventional level of war. But these allies seek a coherent, integrated approach to the management of escalation risks in the face of nuclear coercion and potential nuclear attack. And they seek partnership with their senior ally in undertaking the needed strategic thought.

11. China, North Korea, and Russia can all be expected to actively resist any U.S. post-INF pathway in the Indo-Pacific. They will use information campaigns to magnify public division and opposition, in part by threatening terrible consequences. They will underscore the risks of arms races, while saying nothing about the fact that they've long been engaged in their own one-sided races to advantage. China is likely to derive particular motivation from visions of its strategy failing to drive the U.S. military over the horizon and a weakening of its coercive potential. The net result of these words and deeds will again be to strengthen political cooperation among the United States, its allies, and other Indo-Pacific partners to counter regional belligerents.
12. As the United States and its allies pursue an armament track in the region, there is a logical and appropriate question about whether there is a parallel disarmament track. Is there a dual-track option? The short answer is no. Neither China nor North Korea are prepared to join in a ban on intermediate-range systems or other forms of negotiated restraint on their missile programs. Given their security circumstances, it would be unrealistic to expect them to do so. Moreover, both Beijing and Pyongyang may calculate that the political and financial obstacles on the U.S. INF pathway will prove insuperable (especially with a little help). But the short answer doesn't settle the issue. Domestic political support in the United States and allied countries for a major new arms program is likely to require a political and diplomatic strategy that holds out some prospect, however remote, of eliminating the underlying competition and danger. Moreover, it is possible that new arms control approaches may become feasible. Two factors will be critical. One will be the impact of INF deployments on China's calculus; if those deployments are seen as crippling to its A2/AD strategy, and Chinese countermeasures fail to strengthen regional cooperation against it, then Beijing may come to the negotiating table. The second will be the investment of new intellectual capital in regional risk reduction strategies; the United States and its allies need new thinking about how to apply collective risk reduction strategies to the new strategic landscape in the Indo-Pacific.

Panel 1: The Current Context

- How has the Trump administration defined the pathway forward?
- How have stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific reacted?
- What is the status of IRBM development and deployment in the region?

The pathway forward remains uncertain. Stakeholder reactions have been mixed. Missiles are proliferating and improving.

Before looking to the future, a look to the past is instructive. How did we get to this point? Blame for the demise of the INF Treaty clearly lies with Russia. Instead of being forthright and removing themselves from the treaty, the Russian government covertly initiated the development and deployment of INF-range missiles. Although some see the Trump administration's exit from the treaty as precipitous, it was only the last step of a multi-year evolution that began in the previous administration. China's use of intermediate range missiles to facilitate an A2/AD strategy in the Indo-Pacific changed the US calculus for remaining in the treaty. In balancing the political cost of leaving the INF Treaty and the military cost of not countering China's INF-range missiles in the Indo-Pacific, the Trump administration felt that the cost of remaining in the treaty exceeded the cost of leaving.

Although the pathway forward remains uncertain, three possible courses emerged in the discussion. The first is to put the focus on attempting to negotiate a new INF treaty that includes China. This course seems highly inauspicious, however, because China has shown little interest in entering into any arms control negotiations or in accepting constraints on any weapon systems they see as integral to their strategy.

The second course is to develop and deploy INF-range missiles in the Indo-Pacific. These conversations have only just begun and are focused on the development of conventional INF-Range missiles. The United States is constrained by institutional friction; it is prohibitively difficult to fund research on systems restrained by the INF until the United States is fully withdrawn from the treaty. Even then, it is unclear whether there is enough political will to fund new systems. Additionally, the question of where these new systems will be based will need to be settled by the U.S. and allies, potentially before political authorities are willing to fund development.

The third course is arms control negotiations on specific weapon capabilities rather than range or basing. Range and basing restrictions were sensible in the 1980s because each power was trying to prevent the deployment of specific systems. However, this is no longer a viable logic of arms control since prevailing concerns have little to do with missile range but rather with other capabilities including warhead type. Short-term facilitation of this third course requires letting the end of the INF give way to a normalization of intermediate range missile development while concurrently engaging allies and adversaries alike on questions of arms control.

Stakeholder reactions vary in the region. By and large, U.S. friends and allies in the region support the U.S. decision, although they also criticize the abrupt manner in which it was announced and the lack of a diplomatic strategy to seize and keep the initiative. In addition, allies see an opportunity to redress a force imbalance that is a source of instability. But they also see a

potential for an arms race that worsens security for all. Overall there is a heightened sense of trepidation that the strategic nuclear landscape is changing and that the Indo-Pacific security environment is deteriorating. Self-interest has increased the impetus and appetite for arms control negotiations applicable to one's adversaries, but it has also increased competition in the region. Regional stakeholders see the utility of a New INF, but are deeply skeptical about the willingness of regional actors (e.g. China, India, Pakistan) to give up their INF-range missiles. In an increasingly multipolar world and region, the need for arms control agreements to be conducted at the level of the United Nations is reflected in the sentiments of regional stakeholders. There is little appetite for arms control agreements that do not include all regional actors with ballistic missile interests.

Broadly, there are two types of IRBM development in the region. The first is the classical development of IRBMs (as in India, Pakistan, and North Korea) which are largely used as a stepping-stone to an ICBM. These systems will still be used in the event of a conflict, but it is unlikely that any of these states are going to build their force structure around steppingstone systems. However, it is important to keep in mind that ICBM technology can be stepped down to IRBMs. This can inform the second type of IRBM development: the deliberate advancement of modern IRBMs with ICMB technologies that increases their utility for specific strategic uses. China's DF-26 missile is an example of this type of modern development, especially its design as a road/rail mobile and survivable system. Mobility greatly increases their utility in a conflict as demonstrated by the difficulty of locating, targeting, and destroying mobile Scud missiles during the Gulf War .

Panel 2: The Potential Values of Intermediate-range Missiles for U.S. and Allied Security

- What can these capabilities contribute to countering China's A2/AD strategies?
- What can they contribute to deterrence of escalation by the DPRK?
- What can they contribute to assurance of allies?
- Do the answers depend on distinctions between different types of systems (cruise versus ballistic, conventional versus nuclear, U.S. versus allied, etc.)?
- What new forms of cooperation are possible to realize these gains?

In the assessment of this group, the addition of a ground-based component to the existing sea-based and air-deliverable strike systems would add a significant dimension to the regional deterrence architecture of the United States and its allies. Vis-à-vis China, the addition of the missiles would raise the expected price of launching a regional conventional war by making a larger number of Chinese assets vulnerable to missile strikes and by obliging China to strike the territories of U.S. allies in the region (a risky proposition). Vis-à-vis the DPRK, they would have similar benefits in making horizontal and vertical escalation look too risky rather than acceptably so.

China's A2/AD strategy relies in part on its ability to project force from airfields and garrisons on its mainland, both of which could be targeted en masse by IRBMs given a sufficiently (perhaps prohibitively) large force structure. While IRBMs could theoretically be used in an anti-ship role or as a counterforce capability against the PLA Rocket Forces (PLARF), there are non-IRBM

systems better suited for those uses given the aforementioned challenges of prosecuting mobile targets. An exception could be coastal defense applications where the weapons would have a limited space to maneuver. A more realistic employment would be “long range sniping”, i.e. using IRBMs to achieve effects against key locations and capabilities at precise times to enable other joint capabilities or maneuvers.

Practically speaking, consideration must be given to the cost effectiveness of these weapons versus other capabilities in relation to the desired objective. Rather than providing a decisive capability, deployed intermediate range missiles are more likely to contribute to the “blunt force” response to aggression while other capabilities are surged into the theater. Alternatively, the persistent development of IRBM and other intermediate range capabilities could be used as a cost-imposing or positioning strategy to push China into spending additional budgetary funds on missile defense or target hardening. However, the strategy could back-fire and instead push China to spend more on improving offensive system quality or quantity.

On assurance, “stickiness” is a key factor. The difficulties of deploying and re-deploying these systems from allied territory gives them a degree of “stickiness” that is useful for reinforcing the sense of U.S. commitment to the region. Additionally, the political obstacles to overseas basing or deployment mean that affirmative decisions to do so carry special weight in signaling resolve to China and North Korea. Conversely, U.S. hesitation in deploying intermediate range weapons for fear of provoking or aggravating China is a potential recipe for decoupling regional allies who may then feel compelled to develop their own military responses absent U.S. commitment. In doing so, the U.S. may lose its voice in the development, deployment, and purpose of those systems. If the U.S. seeks to facilitate development of allied nations’ capabilities, then adjustments to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) may be warranted to facilitate technology and knowledge transfers.

The answers to these questions do in fact depend on the nature of the system. For some allies, ballistic missiles are more attractive than cruise missiles (given their promptness) and for others the opposite seems true (as cruise missile deployments would be unlikely to stimulate further ballistic missile proliferation). All allies prefer deployments of non-nuclear systems as they fear the backlash that would follow the deployment of nuclear systems. But as discussed elsewhere, they want to see conventional strike deployments explained and justified with a logic about how to adapt and strengthen the regional deterrence architecture that integrates the nuclear and non-nuclear deterrence elements.

The opportunities for new forms of allied cooperation are numerous. Allies might (1) host deployed U.S. assets, (2) prepare for crisis and war time deployments, (3) acquire capabilities of their own and prepare to operate jointly with the United States, and (4) acquire strike capabilities that integrate into US-provided command and control systems and ISR capabilities. This fourth option would have the added benefit of bringing US capabilities to bear under a banner of cooperation rather than weapons deployment, thereby lessening the political risks of adversaries and allies alike. Host nation ownership of the physical weapon would also ensure control of the core elements of the system and ability to employ them with or without allied assistance or permission. However, it also raises challenges regarding political authority and whether either party may be able to veto a launch desired by the other. Whatever combination of capability

development and deployment moves forward, it is important that the U.S. increase the inclusion of regional allies in both strategic decisions (e.g., basing) and operational processes (e.g., targeting and the air tasking cycle). Lessons learned from developing and deploying U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) systems to the region may be helpful in navigating these challenges.

However, the United States and its allies proceed, they must do so with a narrative that fully and faithfully conveys the choices they've made. New systems should be linked to a strategic narrative of denying adversary objectives rather than punishment and be accompanied by signals to indicate that new capabilities are not intended for use in a decapitation strike (a concern particularly relevant to North Korea).

Panel 3: The Potential Costs and Risks of Different Courses of Action

- What goals should guide competition? Over-match? Strategic dominance? Second to none? How much is enough?
- What new forms of regional instability might emerge with more intense offense/defense competition?
- Are there second-order effects of competition that should be anticipated?
- Do the answers depend on distinctions between different types?

The question of post-INF goals is linked inextricably to the larger questions of what to do about China's rise and challenge to the United States and how to engage in a long-term strategic competition in a manner that improves our security. China's aggressive, and at times coercive, activities in the Indo-Pacific region are the principal motivator for calls for post-INF systems to support an active defensive posture in the Indo-Pacific. U.S. strategic goals include protecting freedom of maneuver (military and commercial), preserving the liberal international order and liberal trade order, and maintaining and extending the security interest of the U.S. and its allies. These goals have persisted across presidential administrations. In a new era of great power competition, a revisionist China and a nefarious Russia have increased the costs of reaching those goals. The Trump administration believes the costs of alliance are disproportionately and unfairly borne by the U.S. in both the European and Indo-Pacific theaters. Burden sharing is therefore essential to sustaining U.S. grand strategy and goals; it is also essential in ensuring the legitimacy of the international order in a multi-polar Indo-Pacific region.

The geo-strategic effect of China's weapon development could undermine extended deterrence commitments as the U.S.' power projection capabilities are outpaced by China's theater/ tactical level missiles (particularly ground based missiles) in their A2/AD strategy, consequently undermining allied regional security. China's counterforce posture and standoff capabilities could create high costs for US forces and upset the strategic balance in the Indo-Pacific region.

The U.S. and its allies should adopt a course of action that exploits all the elements of their collective power structure to include political/diplomatic, informational, military, and economic structures and institutions. The U.S. and its allies must maintain a combined arms mindset that creates dilemmas for the Chinese A2/AD strategy including integrating air defense systems; air,

sea, and land-based Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs); and conventional sea and land-based Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs).

Another course of action could be to use weapon development in dual-track negotiations (however unlikely in the Indo-Pacific context) that could produce a new multilateral INF treaty or an expanded New START Treaty. Such strategies signal resolve while permitting confidence building measures and enabling dialogue and diplomacy. However, the U.S. call for tri-party (i.e., U.S., Russia, and China) talks, could limit the success of the dual-track strategy.

The U.S. and its allies should expand the competitive space and strengthen its comparative advantages to ensure the existing order. Burden sharing must be a foundational principle in this course of action to decrease potential moral hazards and free riding by allies; the U.S. must assure its allies and foster allied capabilities including deep strike capabilities, C2, Integrated Air Defense Systems (IADS), and ISR to operate in highly contested environments. We must create a path to integrate capabilities in the most efficient/productive way possible. Enabling these capabilities requires a new security cooperation posture increasing strengths of the allies and identifying basing for ground-based intermediate range ballistic and cruise missiles to blunt Chinese capabilities and enable follow-on forces to win the decisive fight. However, threat perceptions of the U.S. and allies also may change over time.

A course of action that improves IADS structures, left of launch strike capabilities, increases allied interoperability, and strengthens overall defense postures could deter regional adversaries and assure U.S. and allied interests. Extending current air and sea cruise missile posture or increasing the number of dual use F-35s could also increase our comparative advantage without local political fallout.

The deployment of GLCMs in Japan or the proliferation of nuclear capabilities by an ally, however, could have high political costs, produce instability, or encourage arms races. Despite these challenges, dissolving the INF appears reasonable given Russia's non-compliance and China's mature development and deployment of ground based IRBMs. China and Russia will not sit still while Indo-Pacific nations react, so the U.S. and its allies must act to maintain strategic advantage in the region. In any case, political realities must be considered; and costs, risks, and benefits must be weighed before deploying IRBMs and GLCMs into the Indo-Pacific theater.

Panel 4: Potential Reactions in the Region to Different U.S. & Allied Courses of Action

- What reactions has China threatened, if any? What reactions can reasonably be anticipated?
- What reactions has Russia threatened, if any? What can be anticipated?
- What other regional actors might react in consequential ways? DPRK? Vietnam?

China views its intermediate range systems as integral to its strategy in the region—a strategy built on holding Taiwan at risk and imposing an A2/AD barrier across much of the Indo-Pacific. Consequently, the U.S. exit from the INF Treaty is seen as a major and very unwelcome development. Beijing fears that a force of intermediate range

conventional weapons could be used to target its nuclear command and control infrastructure. This first strike fear calls into question China's nuclear No First Use pledge and increases uncertainty of China's response to a conventional attack on its nuclear infrastructure, i.e. whether they would respond with nuclear escalation. If the U.S. deploys intermediate-range missiles, this may prompt China to invest more in their missile defense program; it could also prompt China to double down on its offensive weapons. China's prevailing concern is encirclement by NATO-like organizations; these concerns have deepened as India and the United States have prioritized strengthening their cooperation. All these factors are increasing pressure on China's "alert posture", lowering the threshold for a misunderstanding that could lead to conflict. While the United States and its allies have focused on the development of intermediate range conventional missiles, Chinese is also worried about nuclear variants.

Regional actor reactions to a post-INF Indo-Pacific will be largely determined by how they view the Chinese "problem". For many states in the region, the prospect of getting caught in the crossfire of great power conflict between the U.S. and China is more worrisome than fears of Chinese influence alone. Rather than military power, it is Beijing's economic leverage that they perceive as the coercive threat levied against them if they cooperate with the United States. This concern could be realized or exacerbated if the United States is indiscrete in identifying locations for post-INF systems explicitly meant to challenge Chinese capabilities.

Some regional actors believe that while the United States still holds conventional superiority to China, that superiority is decreasing, and regional actors are reacting to the rate of change rather than the current capability comparison. In order to combat these perceptions, the United States should highlight its pro-active engagement in the region (military and diplomatic) more often and more publicly. While Russian and China have found a shared interest in challenging the United States' freedom of action around the world, their cooperation has limits. Russia and China have fundamentally different objectives in the Indo-Pacific, and so their cooperation will eventually plateau or decline. The U.S. can take advantage of this in their public narrative as well as in their private engagement with regional allies and partners.

Panel 5: The Future of "Dual Track"

- Should there be a dual-track approach if and as the United States seeks to deploy missiles into the region? If so, what would it encompass?
- What if the dual-track approach in Europe proves partially or fully successful? What implications would that have in Asia?

Considerations of a dual-track approach often recall analogies from Europe; however, the considerations must assess differences between the Asian and European theatres. For example, North Korea is a uniquely imminent and volatile threat, especially for South Korea and Japan. It is important to frame this threat through a joint lens since Japanese and U.S. security are coupled and operate in concert with the security of South Korea. A recurring theme is risk sharing among the U.S. and its allies and partners. To that point,

tensions between Japan and South Korea, U.S.' two main allies in the region, must also be considered and reconciled. The implications of Japanese-South Korean friction remain a difficult seam in our alliance structure which our enemies can and will exploit.

Political engagement with China requires understanding Beijing's perception of these issues. China seeks to be a power on par with the United States, and thus view arms control as inhibiting them. For similar reasons, China is disinclined to agree to another aspect of arms control which it dislikes (e.g., transparency requirements). The U.S. could consider coercing China into an arms control regime; however, such a course is unlikely to succeed considering alliance politics in the region that could lead to an inconsistent application of coercive measures. On the other hand, alliance cooperation can be spurred by pursuits of common interest such as convincing China the U.S. does not seek to impose arms control as a strategic constraint. Allied engagement with China on North Korea could build key cooperation, political goodwill, and might open the door for future multi-lateral arms control. However, until such a relationship is established, multilateral arms control efforts are unlikely to succeed.

Arms control policy framed as an element of national security lens has eroded in the U.S. This is fueled by skepticism of the usefulness of arms control if signatories violate the terms as demonstrated by Russia's inflammatory violations of the INF. An "INF 2.0" may be conceptually plausible, but there is consensus that attempts at arms control are likely to fail under current conditions, with both sides (Russia and the U.S.) offering one-sided *pro forma* proposals that are anathema to the other's interest and perspective. Although a key takeaway is that reviving the previous success of dual-track is unrealistic, the possibility of U.S.-Chinese-Russian cooperation regarding the North Korean nuclear threat offers a potential beacon of hope.

Looking to the longer term, a different assessment may be possible. If presented with a build-up of regional missiles capable of damaging it significantly, China may see new incentives to explore new forms of reciprocal restraint. But it would only come to this conclusion if it believed that the build-up were otherwise unstoppable; that belief seems possible only with time and experience.

Panel 6: Alternative Courses of Action for the United States and Its Allies

- What are the main alternative courses of military and political action?
- What are their separate benefits, costs, and risks?
- In answering these questions, are there salient differences of view between the United States and its allies?

The military actions available could be broadly described as "to build, or not to build." On the one hand, developing intermediate range weapons would provide an operational capability and facilitate negotiating from a position of strength. If development is preferred, then a decision must be made on whether the new weapons will be nuclear-capable and whether we are ready to accept associated costs, risks, and repercussions in exchange for the capability benefits. The other option is to proceed as if the INF treaty is still in force and instead develop leap-ahead

alternatives like directed energy, hypersonic weapons, AI-enabled systems, etc. Under this option, one must recognize that there is no monopoly on those advances and their ability to offset intermediate range weapons will degrade as other countries advance. Additionally, since much of this technology is developmental or otherwise unproven, analysis and wisdom are needed to evaluate the financial and political costs and risks of development versus the possible capability benefits gained. These cost-benefit calculations and the fundamental feasibility will necessarily differ for each regional partner based on their technological capabilities, financial capacity, and political dynamics. A notable complement to the development of military capabilities is the need to also invest in newer, more effective treaty compliance and verification technology.

Diplomatically, the first and most ambitious option is to attempt to restore the existing INF Treaty with the added inclusion of China, or to otherwise negotiate a multilateral INF 2.0. Unfortunately, the lack of current incentives for either measure makes success unlikely. The second option is a phased approach to arms control, starting with confidence building and transparency measures as a foundation to build on. As long as adversaries are unwilling to participate in negotiations for either option, an incentive structure is more likely to emerge if weapon programs are pursued or threatened as part of a dual track approach. However, the dual track must be pursued with care in order to avoid stoking an arms race. Finally, gaining diplomatic leverage over China and Russia is reliant on a whole of government, whole of nation, and whole of alliance approach amongst the Indo-Pacific nations to minimize the opportunity for China or Russia to divide and conquer at the negotiating table.

Whatever is done to increase offensive capabilities or strengthen partnerships, it must be done with an eye toward managing the perceptions of adversaries, allies, partners, and outside observers. The narrative must communicate resolve and commitment without provocation or aggression. For China in particular, the unified message must also convey that these actions are a direct consequence of China's own misbehavior in violating international laws and norms. Any capability development in South Korea, especially if originating from or closely related to the U.S., must also take North Korea's perception/reaction into account. In proceeding ahead, the U.S. should pay particular attention to nuances in allies' political and economic factors such as variable perceptions of the Chinese threat, greater trade dependency on China, or domestic objections of U.S. basing requests.



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