

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

SAUL/ZILKHA ROOM

THE INTERMEDIATE-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES TREATY:  
DOES IT HAVE A FUTURE?

Washington, D.C.

Friday, December 8, 2017

PARTICIPANTS:

ALINA POLYAKOVA, Moderator  
David M. Rubenstein Fellow  
The Brookings Institution

OLGA OLIKER  
Senior Advisor and Director, Russia and Eurasia Program  
Center for Strategic & International Studies

STROBE TALBOTT  
Distinguished Fellow in Residence  
The Brookings Institution

STEVEN PIFER  
Nonresident Senior Fellow  
The Brookings Institution

\* \* \* \* \*

## P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. POLYAKOVA: Good morning. My name is Alina Polyakova. I am the David Rubenstein fellow in the Foreign Policy program here at The Brookings Institution. And it's my pleasure to moderate this important panel on an auspicious day.

Thirty years ago today, in 1987, President Reagan Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the INF Treaty. This treaty has resulted, at the time, in the elimination of over 2,700 U.S. and Soviet ground-launched, intermediate-range missiles. And we're here today because this treaty is under threat.

Most recently, in April this year, the U.S. charged Russia with violating the treaty by deploying a banned intermediate-range, ground-launched cruise missile. And in the months since, the Trump administration has said that addressing Russia's treaty violation is "a top priority" for the president. Of course, we've come to this quid pro quo where the U.S. accuses Russia of violations, Russia in return denies the violations, accuses the U.S. of violations, and this is where we find ourselves today, except that we have a very assertive U.S. Congress that has now been much more willing to legislate treaty violations. And, in fact, in the last National Defense Authorization Act, authorized the Defense Department to develop a new intermediate-range, ground-launched cruise missile of its own.

So we are here today to discuss the historical significance of this treaty, the present reality we face, and the future of arms control negotiation between the United States and Russia. But before I introduce my very distinguished panel, I'd like to take just a moment to acknowledge that we have a big contingent of INF negotiators here with us today, who were involved in the negotiations at the time in Geneva, at the State Department, and various other capacities, including Ambassador John Woodworth and Ambassador Allen Holmes. So thank you for joining us today for this conversation.

But first and foremost, to my immediate left I have Strobe Talbott, who, until very

recently, of course, was the president of The Brookings Institution. And he is now a distinguished fellow in the Foreign Policy program. I think all of you know Strobe, but I'll just quickly say that he has been I think the expert on this particular issue. He's the author of several books on U.S.-Soviet relations and nuclear arms control, two of which, "Deadly Gambits" and "The Master of the Game," traced the negotiations on behalf the INF Treaty. Thank you for joining us, Strobe.

To Strobe's left, Olga Oliker, who is the senior advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and also director of the Russia and Eurasia Program there. Before joining CSIS, Olga was the director of RAND's Center for Russia and Eurasia, and has many books and many articles, too many to list today, but I would say is the D.C. expert on Russia's military modernization plans, Russian defense, and security policy. Thanks for joining us, Olga.

And then last but certainly not least Ambassador Steve Pifer, who is now a nonresident senior fellow with the Arms Control and Nonproliferation Initiative, Center for the 21st Century Security and Intelligence, and the Center on the United States and Europe at The Brookings Institution. Steve is the author of most recently "The Eagle and the Trident," a book on U.S.-Ukraine relations in turbulent times, and the co-author of "The Opportunity: Next Steps in Reducing Nuclear Arms." I believe all these books are available in the Brookings store.

(Laughter)

MR. PIFER: Thanks for the plug.

MS. POLYAKOVA: You're welcome. But, Strobe, let me start with you. Given your historical perspective on this specific treaty, the INF, in hindsight it seems like the late '80s were a peak in U.S.-Russia cooperation on nuclear arms control. And the INF was perhaps one of the greatest accomplishments of that era and also a major steppingstone to ending the Cold War a few years later. Could you reflect on the significance of the treaty at the time and perhaps tell us some of the nuances behind those negotiations?

MR. TALBOTT: Thank you very much, Alina. As I look at the audience here, particularly in the front row, I feel as though I'm getting a little trip back to my own youth. I think enough time has passed that I could even say I can see some sources of mine once upon a time. (Laughter)

All of you who not only are conversant with this subject, but have lived it and made it happen do not need to hear from me or anybody else of the history. But there are perhaps others in the audience that would find it useful if I were to touch a little bit on the back story, and it's a back story with a happy ending to it, before we go into the not so happy current and prospective way in which this important enterprise is, we hope, going to go forward.

The way I would put the beginning of the story goes to Germany in the 1970s. I can remember from my own trips and interviews and backgrounders in that time when I was at Time magazine that there were basically three fears that many Germans had about the way in which they and their country would fit into the West's deterrence of the USSR.

One of them, and of course the one that we kept in mind all the time, was that at some point the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact might come roaring through the Fulda Gap and invade and occupy West Germany. But there were two other fears, as well.

The second one is that perhaps, depending on strategy and munitions, the NATO Alliance would use nuclear weapons on German soil, which, of course, was frightening to the Germans. But the third fear was that the United States and whoever was president at the time in the United States might, if the chips were down, if I can put it that way, might shy away from responding to a Warsaw Pact-Soviet Union attack on Germany by -- the U.S. would be shy about using central strategic weapons based in the United States, launched from the United States to punish and respond to what the Soviets had done. Because that would have perhaps led an American president to say we don't want to get into a war that is going to have mushroom clouds all over the United States.

So enter the picture Helmut Schmidt. He was particularly focused on the third -- well, he was focused on all three of them, but particularly the third, and that is that he felt that it was crucial, if deterrence was going to work, that the United States and NATO needed to have nuclear assets in Western Europe on the continent, so that there would be a balance between those weapons and those of the Soviet Union. And he was particularly concerned when the Soviets began to deploy the SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missile, which was a formidable weapon. It was MIRV, it was mobile, and it was a -- it took the Soviet threat up several notches and the U.S. and NATO had not figured out how to counter that.

This was, of course, during the Carter administration and President Carter came up with the idea or accepted the decision of many of his advisors that the counter to the SS-20 and Russian INF weapons would be the neutron bomb. We all remember that. It had a bad reputation as soon as it was unveiled in the press.

But one of the issues aside from the fact that it was a weapon that could kill people, but leave structures sitting there fine, what really concerned Schmidt was that if the United States and NATO used the neutron bomb, that would mean there would be mushroom clouds on German soil, stopping the invasion of tank divisions coming in through the Fulda Gap. But there was a huge uproar in Germany -- a number of you, I'm sure, were there at the time and saw it -- and in other parts of Europe, as well, against the neutron bomb.

Now, Schmidt, despite the political flack he was taking, stood firm on the neutron bomb decision, but Jimmy Carter did not. He basically pulled the rug out from under Schmidt and retracted his decision on the neutron bomb, which meant that there had to be a new fix.

And the new fix, which was put forward in 1979, was the dual track, which went -- it had a deployment track which featured quantitative and qualitative upgrades of the Pershing ballistic missile and then, of course, the Tomahawks, the ground-launched cruise missiles. But the second track would be while the West was building up in order to counter the SS-20s and

other Soviet assets, they would also go into negotiations to build down if they could get to a balance between the two sides.

The talks, of course, with a number of you very much involved, started in Geneva in 1980. The United States put forward a proposal for equal ceilings on both sides of the Iron Curtain. But that negotiation came to a halt when, in November 1980, Ronald Reagan won the presidency and, of course, that put the Carter administration as a lame duck and the negotiations went into recess.

Now, Ronald Reagan was already as he came into the White House thinking big about arms control. He was already thinking about how he could use his presidency to eradicate whole categories of nuclear weapons, starting with INF. The Reagan administration then came up with the Zero Option, which meant basically no INF weapons on either side and also a global zero, meaning that the Soviets in particular would have to take out of service their mobile SS-20s beyond the Urals and the Asian parts of the Soviet Union.

Not surprisingly, the Soviets rejected that proposal and a much more modest proposal that came in after the first rejection. But the NATO deployment decision was moving along and the actual Pershing II's and the Tomahawks did come into Germany and the UK in November of 1983. Now, this was still in the Soviet Union the Andropov era. Maybe it was a little too short perhaps to be called an era, but the Andropov interlude.

And by the way, there's a very beneficial irony in that story because Andropov, who knew he did not have long to live, was pushing very hard to have Mikhail Gorbachev be his successor. Gorbachev had to wait for one more non-era, Chernenko, but when Gorbachev came into the Kremlin he, quite a bit like Reagan himself, was aspiring to end the Cold War and end the arms race. And he even put forward early on in his tenure a plan for genuine nuclear disarmament by 2000. He, Gorbachev, also basically adopted the Reagan Zero Option and Global Zero.

So that takes us to December of 1987, when Reagan and Gorbachev signed a treaty banning all INF and short-range missiles in the theater and beyond. And that, I think, kicked up the momentum in arms as a whole. In 1991, there were sizable cuts in missiles and launchers on both sides and that, of course, was the last year of the existence of the USSR. And what this meant was that the superpowers, as the USSR dissolved, put forward a number of agreements and policies that meant a great leap forward towards genuine disarmament.

That, I think, as Alina said early at the beginning of our conversation, that was pretty much the acme of the whole venture of arms control. And here we are about a quarter of a century later and we are at the nadir. We're at the nadir in three respects. First, the unraveling of existing arms control agreements, very little hope for new ones anytime soon, and finally ramping up on the arms race itself.

So that's a good story with a happy ending. And maybe in the course of this conversation we can find a little bit of light for the future. But I'm going to put that onus on my colleagues. (Laughter) And you guys.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thank you, Strobe. So you're describing, and these are your words, by the way, not mine, a moment of nirvana for arms control. And now we're in a situation where we're sort of in the hell of arms control. So I guess the question is not only how did we get here --

MR. TALBOTT: I didn't want to bring the religion into it. (Laughter)

MS. POLYAKOVA: So I guess my question to you, Olga, is not only how did we get here, but, you know, what is presently the Russian view on the INF specifically? We're in this quid pro quo of accusations and denials. What is the Russian motivation and how do they think about the treaty and the future of it?

MS. OLIKER: Thank you, Alina. And thank you, everybody. I'm really pleased and honored to be here. It's a terrific panel and just the folks in the audience, it's really just

such a pleasure to have the opportunity to address you.

Look, I can't speak for the Russian government. I'm an American citizen, working for a U.S. think tank. And for any issue, right, it depends to some extent, just as with the Americans, it depends which Russians you ask what the Russian position is.

Having said that I would argue that the Russian government's position is a bit more consistent and unified than, say, the U.S. government's position on INF and arms control right now. And they don't want to jettison the treaty. Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin, have been very consistent saying that they don't think the treaty is a fair treaty, that they're open to ways of renegotiating it. They think that it puts Russia at a disadvantage. And there are Russians who would like to see the treaty gone. But the Kremlin, I think, given its druthers, would like to see it rethought.

And while you can poo-poo ideas like multilateralizing it, you know, there are now -- we talk about it as a bilateral treaty, but actually Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine are also technically bound by it. It's an artifact of how the treaty succession was negotiated at the time. But there are an awful lot of countries that aren't there. Right? China's not there or India's not there, Iran's not there, Pakistan's not there, Israel's not there, European countries aren't there.

Now, some of these you worry about more than others because some of these countries have the relevant capabilities and some don't, but you also have technological developments, unpiloted, remotely piloted vehicles. Basically you're dealing with a treaty that was responding to nuclear capabilities at a given time, but the way it was negotiated it constrains everything, nuclear and conventional. And the conventional issue wasn't much of an issue when it was negotiated, but it is one now. The same capabilities and conventional ranges have become important in a way that they weren't then.

So you can actually, you know, not even from a Russian perspective, you can make a decent case for rethinking the INF Treaty. The problem is that if you do that, and if you



do that first by getting rid of what you have, you're letting an awful lot of genies out of an awful lot of bottles to float around in the meantime.

So in Russia, again, there are voices that would like to be rid of the treaty, that would like to scrap it and start over. There is an understanding in our government, as there is, I would argue, in arms control circles, at least here, that preserving the INF Treaty is actually critical not so much because of INF as because it's critical to preserving the arms control framework as a whole and creating any hope of developing something on the basis of INF that might serve interests better.

So why is that? I mean, I think Strobe sort of talked about this, right? The U.S. pulled out of ABM. The Russians have stopped implementing CFE. There is a tremendous amount of distrust circulating. You almost have this binary decision of do you chuck it all and see what happens or do you try to build from what you have?

And, you know, it's a big risk to start over because, look, think about it this way, let's say we don't have a promise of New START renewal, or even we do. We agree to renew it, but just for the next five years. You're looking at a situation where everybody sees that framework, that constraint going away. So you start building your systems and developing your technologies with an eye to not having arms control. Even if you have it right now, you're thinking, okay, in five years maybe I'll have arms control, maybe I won't, and I need to hedge against both of these possibilities. That's not a comforting thought for me; other people feel differently.

So why do the Russians like the arms control framework? What's good in it for Russia? Well, it constrains the United States. It also constrains Russia. It constrains the domestic weapons industry, it constrains spending. You could spend an awful lot of rubles, and Russia doesn't have a huge -- they're willing to spend a lot on defense, but defense is expensive. So arms control lets you maintain parity without that huge out-of-pocket expense.

And that's why Russia is on track for New START and beyond. They're reducing in line with the New START limits. They're on-again, off-again rail-mobile missile program has been cancelled once again as of last week. And Putin asked Trump in one of the first conversations they had about New START renewal. That conversation did not go, I think, as Putin expected it to because Trump didn't expect it at all, so was not prepared, to put it mildly, but they would like to maintain it. It doesn't mean that they are going to always be perfectly well-behaved, but they don't want this lost.

They want to keep INF and they don't want to be the ones to withdraw. Right. I mean, the flip side of this is they've made it very clear that if the U.S. withdraws, they're not bound. In Putin's words, the response will be instantaneous and reciprocal or mirror-imaging response.

Okay, so I'd say another question that falls from that is if Russia cares, what's it willing to do about it? And here I would say, even before getting to INF, we have an experience of the Russians being faced with a U.S. administration that wasn't that interested in arms control, and that was the George W. Bush administration. The Russians didn't really do much to defend the framework other than rhetorically talk about how the United States was tearing it all apart. But they went along with things and complained.

This wasn't a win for Russia, though. I don't think that those years went well. Russia got back its ability, its right legally to develop MIRV-based land systems, but it lost constraints on U.S. missile defenses, which was a major loss for Russia.

And then the other question you want to ask then is if Russia is doing to defend the arms control framework what can it do? Now, one answer I imagine a few people are thinking is, hey, it could come into compliance with INF. That would help. But that's tough, right, because if you've denied that you're not in compliance and you've accused the other side of it, you can't just say, oh, okay, gosh, you were right. You're right, okay, yeah, that system.

Yeah, ew, okay, yeah, we'll take that off. We're good, right? We're good now.

So that's not what's going to happen. Right? The only way that you could see it going forward is at the negotiating table with arrangements being made that can allow one to say the Russians take some steps, the Americans take some steps. There's some give-and-take so that it looks like -- and then everybody can say that everyone's in compliance and you go forward.

There's a lot of desire not to weaken the negotiating stance. Right? Not to go in with a win for the United States. So the only way this works is if the United States is interested in negotiating, as well, and to find a way forward that gives Russia some space. And I don't know if this administration has an appetite for that. And while Russia can't win an arms race, I think it's got some room to maneuver and make things unpleasant for everybody in the near term.

If you look at their force development plans, yes, they're in line with New START, but they're also about what they've long complained about the United States having, which is upload potential. They may not want to have to upload. They may be perfectly happy keeping things within the limits. And as soon as you take away the constraints, the defense industry will have all sorts of clever new ideas for new things it can build. But in the meantime, you can just upload and you can just put more warheads on the systems you've got.

So the bottom line, Russia, Moscow, sees the treaty as important. It doesn't want to lose it. It does want to renegotiate it or find something else forward, but it's not going to admit noncompliance in order to save it. So if it's going to be saved, the United States has to be willing to come to the negotiating table.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thanks. That's actually a perfect segue to Steve. One thing you mentioned is that in a way the INF Treaty was designed and crafted from the historical moment in which it was negotiated. And that today, there are reasons to believe that perhaps

it's basically just out of date for the current security environment given all of the other countries that now have developed nuclear capacity or are developing nuclear capabilities.

But, Steve, given what Olga just laid out on the Russia view and Strobe's optimistic, but then very dark description of where we are today, do you think the INF Treaty is on its way out?

MR. PIFER: Well, I usually try to be optimistic, but I'm actually pretty pessimistic about the INF Treaty. The treaty is in trouble. You have a Russian violation of the treaty: testing and now deployment of a ground-launched cruise missile of prohibited intermediate-range. And the Russians don't acknowledge that, but say, no, instead the Americans are violating it in different ways.

And I can understand in the one sense the Russian concern, which is if you look at the development of intermediate-range missiles in Third countries, all of those countries are closer to Russia than to the United States. But I would also argue that Russia does not need to match those countries with intermediate-range capabilities because of Russian strategic nuclear forces and the panoply of other Russian military capabilities. So you have a Russian problem.

I fear we're in the process of creating an American problem, which is the National Defense Authorization Act tells the Pentagon to establish a program of record to build an American ground-launched cruise missile of intermediate-range. And this is taking place while the allies most affected in Europe and Asia are basically silent on the question.

Now, the good news is what the Trump administration has said several times is they want to find a path to bring Russia back into compliance with the treaty. And an administration official last week said they're looking for ways to give Russia concrete reasons to come back into compliance. Now, we're waiting to hear what those reasons are. I suspect that they will be some kind of a military response.

And the Trump administration has argued that the Obama administration did not

respond in an appropriate way, and I can kind of understand that. Because the Obama administration said our response to the Russian violation is basically a number of steps that the United States was taking in any event under the European Reassurance Initiative, which was geared to bolster NATO conventional capabilities in Central Europe following Russia's seizure of Crimea and Russian military aggression in Eastern Ukraine. So I think the Trump administration will be looking to do something different.

In terms of what we should do, let me say, first, we shouldn't do dumb things and there are two dumb things I think we should not do. One is the United States should not withdraw from the INF Treaty unless we have compelling evidence that we can share with allies, but also publicly, that demonstrates the nature of the Russian violation. If we can't do that, the likely impact will be the United States gets the blame for killing the treaty, Russia is then free to deploy missiles of intermediate-range. And that's a gift I think we ought not to bestow on the Kremlin.

The second thing that I think does not make sense is this idea that Congress has suggested about developing an American ground-launched cruise missile. First of all, there's no plan in the Defense Department for that, so you're talking about a new weapons system unfunded that's going to cost billions of dollars. Second, it would take three, five, seven years to develop this and, you know, the Russian violation is now, and do we really want to have an answer that doesn't take the field for five to seven years? But the third reason is I'm not sure we can get NATO to deploy this weapon. And I should acknowledge friends and former colleagues in the first row here. We all remember how much fun it was in the early 1980s to get those Pershing II's and ground-launched cruise missiles into Europe.

Ambassador Paul Nitze, who was the head of the U.S. negotiating delegation from 1981 to 1983, famously took a walk in the woods with his Soviet counterpart where he went rogue and completely ignored his instructions and tried to cut a deal with his Soviet

counterpart because Ambassador Nitze did not believe that NATO would be able to sustain the political commitment to deploy those missiles.

Now, in part due to the work of all these people, it happened. But I don't see any desire on the part of people who went through that in the early 1980s or on the part of NATO now to try that again. I think it would be hugely divisive within the alliance. And, quite frankly, ground-launched cruise missiles of intermediate-range that are deployed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, aren't going to bother the Russians very much.

So don't do dumb things, but I think there are some smart things that we could do to try to encourage Russia back into compliance. One step would be military, but it would be taking existing assets, conventionally armed cruise missiles, both sea- and air-launched, and moving them into the European theater. So, for example, the joint air-to-surface standoff missile, conventional cruise missile, let's move some stocks of those into Europe. Let's park some conventional B-1 bombers at RAF Fairford. This is a British air base that has been configured to support American strategic bombers so that we have additional air-launch conventional capability in the area.

Let's send some U.S. warships with sea-launched cruise missiles more often into Northern European waters. The USS Georgia and the USS Florida, these are Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines that have been converted. They no longer carry Trident ballistic missiles, but each can carry up to 154 conventional sea-launched cruise missiles. Send one of those on a two-month cruise of the Norwegian Sea, the North Sea, have it make some port calls. Do it in a very visible way to demonstrate to Moscow that there can be an American military response.

I think these things would get the Russians attention and they would demonstrate that there were reasons, concrete reasons, for Russia to come back into compliance or that there would be a readily available response should the Russian violation continue. And they

would have the advantage compared to the proposal for an American ground-launched because they would be cheaper, you could do it right now. It would be much more acceptable to NATO, I believe, and it would also be reversible if the Russians came back into compliance. So that's the military part.

Part 2 would be a political response and we have to find a way to get our allies to talk more about this. I mean, it's really been depressing to me, the silence one sees among NATO countries, in Japan, South Korea about a new Russian missile that can't reach the United States. It was designed and built to target NATO Europe, Japan, and South Korea, and we have to find a way to take this issue which is now a U.S.-Russia treaty compliance issue and make it a political issue between a bunch of European countries, Japan, South Korea, maybe even China and Russia.

Right now I don't think it has much impact when Foreign Minister Lavrov goes to President Putin and says the Americans are complaining again about the INF Treaty. I'd like to have Mr. Lavrov going to President Putin and saying I'm getting flack on this from the Germans and the French and the Italian and the Swedes and the Hungarians and the Japanese. You know, crank up the political pressure. And what that may require on the American government, which may be hard to do, is we may have to provide some more information from our intelligence channels about the nature of the violation because I'm not sure that we've succeeded in persuading all of our allies that, in fact, the violation is genuine.

And then the third thing I would argue is that if the Russians are prepared to respond and address this cruise missile in a serious way, which I think is still a very big issue, then I do believe the United States has to be prepared to address at least one of the Russian concerns about American violations.

The Russians have made three charges; two I think are pretty bogus. But I do think that Russian charge about Aegis Ashore, this is the SM-3 missile interceptor deployment

site in Romania, a second one to come online in 2018 in Poland, and the Russian charge is, look, you Americans use the vertical launch system for those SM-3 interceptors. That system when it's on board a U.S. Navy warship can hold not just SM-3 interceptors, but it can hold cruise missiles. And it's the kind of thing that I think if the Russians were doing, we might have some compliance issues.

Now, I think that's a fixable problem. But I think we ought to be prepared to address that and maybe that gets into some kind of give-and-take where both sides can say, well, we're fixing compliance issues.

But I guess those would be the three things, I think, that would allow the U.S. government to push harder to try to preserve the treaty. I'm not sure that they would suffice and that's where I worry. Because it seems to me that we are on a path where, in the next several years, one way or another the INF Treaty is going to collapse. If the INF Treaty collapses, it's hard for me to see the political ability here to extend the New START Treaty and that then opens up the possibility in 2021 that for the first time in nearly 50 years there are no negotiated limits constraining U.S. and Russian nuclear forces, and I'm not sure that that would be a more welcome world.

So I hope we can save this, but this gets back to I think the big question, which is -- and, Olga, you may have a different perception on this -- has Russia decided to move beyond the INF Treaty? And if they have, I think we're headed to a much more difficult arms control situation.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Steve, you mentioned that it would be a dumb thing to do for the U.S. to pull out of the INF without providing further evidence. I mean, so far this has been I think a consistent question. We have allegations and accusations by the U.S. government that the Russians are out of compliance, but what is the actual evidence that's being presented or is it more that we have to take our administration and our government at their word at this point?



MR. PIFER: Well, I should say first of all, I no longer have a security clearance, so I have not seen the intelligence. And my belief is somewhat faith-based, but I draw it on two things.

First, I know a lot of the career people who are still working the issue and I don't believe that they would lie on this. But second, it's more of a political judgment, which in 2014, when the Obama administration publicly announced its conclusion that Russia had violated the treaty by flight testing and producing a prohibited missile, I don't think the Obama administration wanted that problem. And so had there still been ambiguities with regards to the intelligence, my guess is that the Obama administration would have said we're still looking at it. The fact that they made that conclusion and they made that public I believe was because people said the evidence is so compelling we can't not say it.

Now, the problem we've had and the frustration for people like me and Darrell and Kingston out there is they haven't shared with us that information, so we can't see exactly what it is. They have said some things in the compliance report about what it's not. They say it's not an SSC-7 cruise missile. They say it's not a version of the RS-26.

I think last week they announced that the Russian designator for their prohibited missile was the 9M729. So there's a little bit more information coming out, but it's not something I think that allows people to make a compelling case publicly that would allow people to say, yes, we understand there's a Russian violation there. And that's what I worry that if we can't make that case to publics, but more importantly to allies and friends, and we were to withdraw from the treaty we would end up getting the blame, which I think would be a mistake.

MS. POLYAKOVA: I want to go back to this question in a moment that you brought up, Steve, about our allies and the fact that our European allies, who are under the greatest threat from these cruise missiles that the Russians have been developing, actually being very quiet on these issues. But before we go there, I wanted to go back to something

that, Olga, you had started to draw out, which is that, on the one hand, the INF is important to the Russians. They don't want to see it go away and they want to continue to negotiate based on that, on the treaty's existing agreements.

On the other hand, assuming that the U.S. evidence is correct, that they have been in violation, why do that? Because given the range of Russian nonstrategic capabilities and forces at this point what is the motivation to go out of compliance, to violate the treaty, even though it remains important to them?

MS. OLIKER: So that's a great question because it's actually a bit of a mystery, at least in regards to Europe. There's nothing that the Russians can do with ground-launched cruise missiles of that range that it can't do with sea-launched cruise missiles, and it can build those. Those don't violate INF. It has them. So if you're looking at Europe and start drawing circles on maps and so forth, there's not a strong military argument for a ground-launched cruise missile.

So, okay, if we accept that it's being developed, then what's the logic we could come up with for why it's being developed? You know, one possibility is that people develop capabilities without always checking on the treaties. Okay, maybe, but at some point somebody would have shut that down. Right?

Another is that from a bureaucratic standpoint the Russians don't like relying on air-launched and sea-launched systems entirely; that they want to have that same capability from the ground; that that's not a way that they feel safe and secure; and that there are bureaucracies and businesses that actually just want to have -- want to be able to build that, want to be able to have that. You know, I think that's more plausible.

The other thing you want to look at, though, is you want to go outside of Europe. And outside of Europe you have a different story. Now, you're not going to see Russian officials talk about China as a military concern. On the other hand, when they start talking about

neighbors and the capabilities they're developing, let's face it, it's not the Israelis they're worried about.

So I think especially given that China is a big part that drives some of the U.S. arguments for why the INF Treaty is not good for Americans, you have to understand that that also may be a factor in the Russian calculus.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Interesting. It is a bit of a mystery still, despite what you just said.

I think what's interesting about the current situation, one all of you have pointed to, is that this is not just about the INF as a treaty. This is really about the future of nuclear cooperation not just potentially between Russia and the United States, the bilateral level, but also at the international level. So if INF fails, what is going to happen to New START? What is going to happen to future negotiations?

I think what's fascinating about the historical moment that you described, Strobe, is that there was this deep inherent level of trust that seemed to emerge between all of the parties in all of these negotiations, and that's something that we very much seem to be missing today. And without that kind of basic assumption that both parties are willing to come to the table, it's hard to see a way forward.

So you started to talk a little bit about this, but if I could draw you out just a little bit, how concerned are you about this downturn of U.S.-Russian cooperation on arms control more generally beyond the INF? Do you think that given some of the ideas that Olga and Steve started to put on the table as to how to get both parties to take some baby steps, that there's still a potential for this to be resuscitated or revived?

MR. TALBOTT: Well, again, this is part of the chorus from the panel and I'm going to be interested to hear some voices from the audience, it's very hard to see a bright future, at least in the foreseeable future, because the trends include two particularly ominous

ones.

We haven't talked about the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But the Non-Proliferation Treaty has an organic connection with the haves, the nuclear haves, in the form of a some fine day we, those who have nuclear weapons, are going to eliminate those arsenals. And, of course, the trend is exactly in the other direction. It wasn't back when you guys were doing the treaty. You were actually bringing the --

SPEAKER: (off mic)

MR. TALBOTT: Pardon? Oh, sorry, a hearing aid went off. (Laughter) When you were doing your very important jobs, you were actually closing the gap between MAD and deterrence and all of that and a non-nuclear world. Now we're going the other way.

And by the way, I think if I got the years right, when you were in high gear there were five nuclear powers with a sixth that doesn't acknowledge it, and we know who that is and that's Israel. And now there are nine. And as other countries see both chaos and instability in their own regions, when they see Iran putting on the shelf perhaps for a while a nuclear capability, but may be going back to the shelf at some point, they are going to look not only at those trouble spots, but they're going to look at the two countries that have I think it's still about 90 percent of the nuclear weapons on the planet. And if that relationship and that enterprise goes moribund, it is going to be very dangerous.

The other thing is that it has to do with the political West. The political West came into being about 70 years ago and it had basically three very important aspirations and achievements. And the one that was really important for the other two was to have a defense security umbrella over Western Europe. And that allowed the European Project to get going and it also made it easier to operationalize our shared values.

And NATO is in bad shape right now. And I think going to something that Steve said, you're a little bit maybe curious and concerned about why our European allies are not

stepping up here. I think it's at least in part, and I'm taking a little of the blame against them on their end and putting it on us, they don't know whether the United States now is really the leader of the alliance. And you can see it back in the transition when it was pretty clear that Article 5 was not exactly at the top of the president-elect's beliefs and intentions. And it took quite a while into the administration for him to kind of grudgingly say, yes, Article 5 is for real.

And then look at this week with Jerusalem. It has nothing to do with nuclear weapons, at least we hope it doesn't. But it certainly right across the board in Europe made our allies back away not just because they don't agree with policies, but they don't think that there is any real strategy or plan in this government.

MR. PIFER: Can I just interrupt for a second?

MS. POLYAKOVA: Yes.

MR. PIFER: A news flash, I mean, I'm not sure this was related to the fact that we had our event here at 10:00 this morning, but at 10:02 the Department of State spokesman put out a statement entitled, "Trump Administration-INF Treaty Integrated Strategy."

MS. POLYAKOVA: Excellent.

MR. PIFER: Just a couple of points. "The United States remains firmly committed to the INF Treaty and continues to seek the Russian Federation's return to compliance. The administration firmly believes, however, that the United States cannot stand still while the Russian Federation continues to develop military systems in violation of the treaty. While the United States will continue to pursue a diplomatic solution, we are now pursuing economic and military measures intended to induce the Russian Federation to return to compliance. This includes a review of military concepts and options, including options for the conventional, ground-launched, intermediate-range missiles" -- they missed my part, I guess about that. (Laughter) -- "which would enable the United States to defend ourselves and our allies should the Russian Federation not return to compliance. This step will not violate our INF

Treaty obligations.”

And I should note they are correct. I mean, under the treaty you can do research and you can do development. It's only when you cross over into flight testing that you're in violation of the treaty. So this is a step, but I fear we're going to be hearing about this from Moscow now pointing at Washington as Washington doing the treaty.

MS. POLYAKOVA: So this news flash doesn't necessarily or exactly put us in a new era or takes us a step forward from what you just read.

MR. PIFER: It suggests that the administration is prepared to at least take the first steps down the path that the National Defense Authorization Act laid out.

MS. POLYAKOVA: And, of course, allies are mentioned there, which is a positive thing. Given what Strobe just said, though, I want to turn to the audience in just a minute, but what you outline, Strobe, is that the INF negotiations and all the arms negotiations were a great deal about alliance management, as you've said before. And are we in a political climate here in the United States where this administration's going to take that on and play that leadership role in managing our alliances, getting our allies on board, getting them to make more noise about the violations because it also should be of concern to them?

And then the other hand, I mean, Olga, if you want to take this, I mean, how willing would the Russians be, let's say if they give us an opening, how willing would they be to actually come back to the table given that, of course, there is a sanctions regime coordinated by the EU and the United States against Russia, of course, the Russians don't like? Can we actually look beyond that? Will the Russians be willing to look beyond that for the greater cause of arms negotiation?

So just your thoughts on that before we turn to the audience.

MR. TALBOTT: Well, maybe I can be a tiny bit more optimistic than I've been before and we have been before. I do think that there are significant people, officials in our

government right now who would nod their heads, maybe they wouldn't open their mouths, but they would nod their heads with a lot of what is being said here. And I think this news flash -- how did you get it, by the way?

MR. PIFER: Let's see, it was originally started from General Kimball to Maggie, who passed it up here. Modern technology here. (Laughter)

MR. TALBOTT: You didn't pull out your iPhone.

MR. PIFER: I was told to turn it off so it would not interfere with the microphone.

MR. TALBOTT: I'm thinking in particular about the Secretary of Defense. He is very, very occupied, preoccupied I would say, with one big problem, which, by the way, of course, is a proliferation problem, and that's the DPRK. But my guess is that he and others will over time and perhaps maybe rather soon see that the sinews of our transatlantic relationships, particularly with our allies, are getting a little bit stretched and maybe even harmed and that he and others and I would think if Mr. Tillerson keeps his job, he would have a voice in that, as well.

Before we came in here to the auditorium we were in the other room and we recalled that back in the 1980s, President Trump, who I don't know that anybody was thinking of him being a president at some point, took a real interest in arms control. You know, it's the art of the deal, right? So if there are parts of his let's call it governing personality and some of his closest advisors that might come together to restart, as it were, was something that now seems to be shutting down.

As for the Russians coming back, we've had a couple of very knowledgeable Russians who are not in the government in Moscow, but are very close to the government there. And this is stumbling block issue. A couple of them have said that Russia is not going to come back to the arms control table until sanctions are lifted.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Olga?

MS. OLIKER: Yeah, I mean, I think for --

MR. TALBOTT: Have you heard that?

MS. OLIKER: You hear different things from different people at different times, and I think it's a negotiating position to some extent. Right? First of all, they know that all sanctions won't be lifted because the Crimea sanctions are sticking around because nobody's returning Crimea to Ukraine any time soon and that's -- the Ukrainians don't even want it, but nobody's going to lift those sanctions. So even if you have (inaudible) out of Minsk and, therefore, strong reasons to lift the sanctions on Russia, those would be -- the sanctions lifted would not be all of the sanctions.

So, again, I think the Russians want to see progress in different areas, but they also want to see progress. And historically, arms control has been an area you could point to for progress. So saying this isn't worth doing because the Russians won't come to the table anyway, there are enough voices that want this stuff to go forward in Moscow that I think, yes, they could certainly in a fit of pique and depending on the state of their relationship at any given time refuse, but I think odds are they would come to the table.

The one thing that I would like to sort of add before we throw this to the audience, one of my big concerns here is when the ABM Treaty went away it was the United States followed the rules for saying we are withdrawing from this treaty. I mean, it didn't make people happy. There were all sorts of problems with it. Follow the rules. CFE, the Russians, made a clear statement of they were no longer going to be.

If INF breaks down under mutual accusations of violations this is going to do more harm to the arms control framework because why on Earth would you negotiate anything with somebody you think is violating the treaties that you already have? Who aren't going through the procedures to pull out, but are just violating the treaties? And I think that's a concern that is not getting quite enough attention is that -- if you can't get out of this mess, you are putting into question the logic of arms control in general.



MS. POLYAKOVA: Steve?

MR. PIFER: I'll just add, I mean, I think, too, if the Russians are saying or some Russians are saying we can't get back to an arms controls discussion while there are sanctions, that may be a negotiating ploy. Because at the end of the day, I do believe that Moscow, at a minimum, wants to have something like New START that has a series of constraints on U.S. strategic forces and also provides the sorts of transparency that you get from the notifications and the inspections and the data exchanges. So I think they want that.

And my guess is that if you're just talking about New START by itself, you would have a fairly easy agreement between the American military and the Russian military. This thing makes sense, let's extend it for another five years.

The question is, is the Russian interest in having New START so heavy that they would reconsider the violation of the INF Treaty? Because I fear politically here it's going to be the argument, Olga, that you just made. You're going to have people on Capitol Hill who are already saying this. Why would we extend New START for another five years with Russia, which is violating the INF Treaty?

And it didn't survive this time in the conference committee, but there was a proposal that the National Defense Authorization Act have a provision that would deny any funding to the U.S. government for extension of New START unless Russia was in full compliance with the INF Treaty. That went away this time, but my guess is if this problem persists, it's going to be back again next year.

MR. TALBOTT: Could I just put a question to both Olga and Alina about the Russian economic factor in Putin's calculations as he moves into this election year. If Russian strategic plans and futures are unfettered from arms control, it's going to be very, very expensive. Do you think that is a factor?

MS. OLIKER: Yeah, I think it's a factor. But you have to understand the

Russians will spend as much as they need to spend on defense. They'd like to spend less. You know, you want to constrain that, but, you know, it's a spending area if you have to. So I don't think we can count on that restraining them. We can count on it being an incentive to come to the table.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Right, but projections for Russian economic growth are really modest, but they're not horrible. It's about 1.5 to 2 percent growth over the next 5 years.

MS. OLIKER: Right, it's stagnation, it's not --

MS. POLYAKOVA: It's stagnation, which they can manage. And as Olga said, there's been some conversations about whether Russians are actually spending less on defense or not. A lot of that has to do with how their calculating what goes into defense versus not. But there hasn't been over the last years a sort of real decline in spending on defense in Russia. And they've embarked on this longstanding modernization plan which, of course, I think has profound consequences for Russia's engagement is its offshore wars, including in Syria, but also in Ukraine.

MS. OLIKER: Well, and the other thing that I would point out is when you look at Russian defense spending patterns using just MOD figures, right, I'm not getting creating with what I count as defense, Russian defense spending goes up when its economy starts to decline as a proportion of GDP and so forth. The entire time that Russia's doing better and better and better and has this incredible growth, defense spending stays very stable as a percentage of GDP. It's when you see the decline, kind of 2008, 2009-ish, that you start seeing defense spending go up as a percentage of GDP. So don't count on economic stagnation as a restraint.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Agreed. So let's take some questions from the audience. Sir, please. There's a mic coming around.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you. If I could start the discussion --

MS. POLYAKOVA: Sir, if you could introduce yourself briefly for everybody else.

MR. WOODWARD: John Woodward.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thank you.

MR. WOODWARD: The discussion, very good discussion, has caused me to think of a couple of historical what-ifs, one past, one contemporary.

INF was always, from the '80s onward, (inaudible) there was a heavy quotient of politics involved with it, both policy and strategy politics directed towards continued objectives. And it was a little up and down in terms of being about limits and weapons and that kind of thing. But in many instances during the whole saga of the INF negotiations, at many times and at many points politics were overriding, much more important than arms control as such.

The past historical what-if this caused me to think about is in the early negotiations. And the what-if is what if Gorbachev hadn't shown up? It's a hard -- you know, what-ifs are interesting, but never easy to answer and in a general sense impossible to answer. But if the leadership of the Soviet Union had continued along the lines of that that preceded Gorbachev, you can make a case that it probably would have been at best difficult, but perhaps impossible to ever have negotiated an INF Treaty, and certainly not one like -- that emerged out of the negotiations and it was signed in '87.

Okay, but we have remarkable historical things that happened. Gorbachev, I think, was at the center of this.

So now, fast forward into contemporary history, if you will. The question I ask myself, I agree with the general points that have been made that as we play this thing out, talks with Russia are going to have to be a part of it. Well, they may not be for various reasons, but in principle, any combined and integrated strategy, and apparently the administration is using words like this, will involve talks with the Russians.

The question that I have, though, is, in a historical contemporary what-if, what would be their purposes there? I mean, when you reflect about where Russia has come over

recent years, especially under Putin, and what they have been trying to do in Europe and with the United States and globally for that matter, and their objectives, it doesn't give you a lot of confidence about reaching useful or meaningful arms control agreements for sure.

That would not prevent them from entering into negotiations, but the question could be, the overriding question could be, how would they seek to use the negotiations to promote other non-arms control objectives, broader strategic objectives that in many cases today give us great concern?

MS. POLYAKOVA: Olga, do you want to take that one?

MS. OLIKER: Sure. So, I mean, I will not take the counterfactual of what if Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev had not come to power because I think that could last a while. (Laughter) A, why the Russians want arms control; B, the odds of them using it for other purposes.

Absolutely, everybody uses all negotiations to other purposes. The Russians want arms control for the sake of arms control because it constrains the United States and it lets them constrain their own spending accordingly. And they also know that they won't outspend the United States, right? So, yes, their economy isn't -- you know, a certain amount of economic stagnation isn't going to keep them from developing weapons programs, but the fact that there's only so much money and resources in the world and the way that their system works and the slowness of production and development and U.S. capabilities, they would lose an arms race. All sorts of horrible could happen in the midst of them losing that arms race that might make that moot, but they understand that arms control's a better way to attain parity than trying to fight it out.

In terms of other nefarious goals, look, we're in a state of tremendous historical change and the future of the U.S. role in the world is uncertain, but I have my suspicions about its general trajectory. The future of Russia is also uncertain and I have my suspicions about its

general trajectory. So as both of these countries jockey for position and try to prioritize in an environment where they can't do all the things they may want to do, I would certainly expect arms control with its capacity to constrain a potential adversary to be a useful way to go forward if you can get them to the table and if you can get them to agree.

I mean, the challenge, we come to this, if you think they're going to be violating, if we think they're going to be violating and they think we're going to be violating treaties, there's not much point to the treaty, except, you know, there is a certain we came to the table and they failed. But you can only run that game so many times.

I think absolutely, there will be political goals. There will be political interests. And sometimes you're going to have to take political hits because you want either the arms control goal or your own political goal. I mean, this is very amorphous, but I think it's to some extent it has to be very amorphous because we're talking about a situation that's in tremendous flux.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Do either of you want to jump in there? I'd like to take more questions.

MR. TALBOTT: That's a great answer and a great question.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Sir, please, in the red sweater. If you could please just introduce yourself and state your affiliation.

MR. DROZDIK: Bill Drozdiak, McClarty Associates. I wanted to pick up on Strobe's comments about the political West. Since there's no clear military rationale for what the Russians are doing, isn't this all part of Putin's grand scheme to try to divide the West? And it certainly seems in comments that have come out, say from Sergei Lavrov at the Munich Security Conference last February, that this is their overriding blueprint for a post-American Europe. So I'd like to hear the panel address the issue of what the Russians are doing at a time of weakness in the West to divide and perhaps destroy the alliance.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Gosh, Strobe, Steve?

MR. TALBOTT: You put the question better than my earlier answer, but I think that's very much part of it. And it's part of Putin's, how shall I call it, his world view and his shtick and his narrative is that Russia has been humiliated and taken advantage of for the last couple of decades and he's not going to let that happen. And that is going to, I would suspect, if we ever do get back to the table with the Russians, it's going to be, at least in the early stages, it is going to be very, very tough to actually make any progress.

MR. PIFER: I would just add, I mean, this is a case where I think actually Russian military actions may undercut that broader objective of dividing the West and sewing division in that I think if you look at Russia's seizure and its illegal annexation of Crimea, the heavy Russian military engagement in Eastern Ukraine, and these sorts of questions, I think that actually sort of pushes the West back together.

Now, I don't think it's going to necessarily outweigh the other Russian efforts. And my guess is we're not going to see 2019 dual track decision. But I think these particular activities may actually work against the broader Russian interest in trying to divide the West.

MS. OLIKER: If I can jump in. I mean, I think there is this dichotomy here, right? On the one hand, all the things Russia's doing are uniting the West. On the other hand, they're all designed to divide the West. So, it can't be both, right?

MR. PIFER: They're cutting each other, yeah.

MS. OLIKER: So, look, whatever this system is, I mean, I also have not seen, you know, proofs and so forth, I don't think it was developed with a clever, diabolical plan that, hey, we're going to develop a ground-launched cruise missile system and that's going to divide the West. I'm pretty sure that whatever the motivation for the system, that wasn't it.

Now, if you then see the conversations that go on about it being divisive of the West, huh, that's not a terrible thing. We'll go with that. If you see it uniting the West, then

that's a different situation.

And I think the Russians aren't that great at calibrating Western responses and we don't seem to be either. And enough of the things that the United States is doing I don't think the U.S. plans to develop its own GLCM are going to be particularly unifying of the West. So, again, you know, I think we do a pretty good job of dividing the West, too.

MR. PIFER: To your point, I think this is why I think the silence in places like Berlin and Rome and Brussels about this Russian violation is a problem. I mean, because if you had, in fact, had a public European criticism of the Russian violation, the scene with Moscow would be, hey, this is not dividing the West. We're, in fact, pushing them back together.

MS. OLIKER: Well, again, if the violation wasn't planned in order to divide the West, it might still be -- the violation probably would still be there, right? It has its own reasons.

MS. POLYAKOVA: I also think the bigger point here is that in everything that the Russians do on the military and non-military front it's very easy for us now, given the political environment we find ourselves, to read a conspiracy or some sort of strategic into it when, in fact, I think as, Olga, you're saying, that gives them a little too much credit in a way. I mean, we have to, I think, also remember the degree to which the Russian government is not so well coordinated and centralized. It's not --

MS. OLIKER: It's a government, you know.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Exactly. (Laughter) And maybe even more inefficient and conflict-abound government in some ways.

But more questions, please, sir.

MR. CROCKER: Yeah, Gary Crocker. I'm building off of John's remark and I'm listening to your proposals and I'm thinking as I look around this crowd do you know what it was like to go to work in the arms control days? I mean, interagency meetings, (inaudible) running

over to NATO talking with allies, the German foreign minister's in there to meet with the assistant secretary. I mean, that was your whole life and it was organized and a lot of enthusiasm, I mean, all kinds of things. I think of those days and how busy we were and the leadership: Shultz, Baker. We're talking about all the big guys that were involved in meeting and setting this up.

So my question is, you can sit there and make ideas about what we can do about this, but I don't think there's any infrastructure there. I happen to be kind of informed because my son-in-law is the head of the Deloitte organization that's reforming the State Department and part of the government, so I have a daily brief. (Laughter) so whatever you may be reading he's got a \$4 billion contract.

I don't see that kind of relationship. I don't see that. I don't see my knowing people in all the agencies and all my allies. I just don't see that thing we had that made arms control happen. And when I left in 2006, I didn't see it there either, so.

MR. PIFER: Well, there's no undersecretary of state for international security and arms control. There's no -- well, there is I guess now a nominee for assistant secretary for arms control. We just got an assistant secretary for European affairs in place. Yeah, the structure's been slow to come together.

MR. TALBOTT: Could I jump in with borrowing a phrase from Ike? I'm going to make the problem bigger. It's not just the infrastructure in our government. It's a generation. Now, we have two great exceptions to what I'm about to say.

MS. OLIKER: There's some in the audience.

MR. TALBOTT: Well, many more. We're lulled by the end of the Cold War. Russian stopped being in the curriculum of a lot of schools. People of our age, my age, of course, grew up under the cloud of the mushroom cloud. And, you know, we had to know who the enemy was. And that was very, very helpful when we were restricting the animosity and



making deals. And I just hope that there is a wake-up call in this country and in other countries to take Russia really seriously in all respects, the possible progress we can make and also the need to deal with them as a threat.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thank you. Yes?

MR. HOLMES: Howard Holmes. Wonderful discussion. I was reminded of what Marsha Arcobayev said to me during our negotiations with the Soviets: You have to understand what is motivating Gorbachev and everybody else. It's division of Chernobyl.

And I think that's an aspect of this discussion that's behind it. And what I think would be really important to do is to elevate the discussions with the Russians to get back into conversation with them on a serious basis using the INF restoration as a way of getting into a discussion, being willing to offer some compromises on our own part, maybe sanctions as part of it. But basically to appeal to them to join with us to be the two world powers, to lead the universe towards the promise of the INF Treaty, go get down to the promise of getting rid of nuclear weapons. And to lay out a panorama which would be useful for us, for Russia, our partnership would be good for their economy, would be less threatening. It's going to take a lot of work. This would take a tremendous amount of work, to begin with, with our Congress.

But I think that this -- there's no more important subject before us than nuclear weapons. Together we have 90 percent of the weapons in the world. We have complaints against each other. We're evenly matched to get into a serious negotiation not only about INF, but about the whole issue nuclear weapons.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Do you think given where we are today -- and also you mentioned sanctions, but, of course, sanctions aren't so easily removed because they're tied to what happens in Ukraine, they're tied to Russian interference in our elections, they cyber sanctions, so where do we go from there? Is there a breakthrough moment towards what's being described? Olga, Steve?

MS. OLIKER: I mean, my first worry about what you've laid out is actually at the core of the previous question: the capacity in the U.S. government to do something like this is a little bit insufficient, let's say. So, yes, I agree with you, these things are great and wonderful and would be helpful. But absent changes in the staffing of this administration I think the best we can hope for is low-level muddling through and status quo preservation and saving the big think until you've got the people in place who can do that.

Now, on the other hand, if I were in the Kremlin I would be thinking, huh, maybe I can take advantage of this and maybe this is a good time to get something done. On the other hand, I don't even think that would work because I think just the absence of people to pick up the phone, write the papers, and make the decisions is going to be a challenge.

MS. POLYAKOVA: And, Steve, is this where we are, muddling through for the next few years?

MR. PIFER: Yeah. No, I mean, if in 2020 the INF Treaty's still around and, in fact, we've extended New START, I think most arms controllers right now would say that's a pretty good outcome.

MS. OLIKER: Agreed.

MR. PIFER: I mean, to get to a deeper outcome there was an approach, but it was in the previous administration. In 2010, 2011, I think the Obama administration really wanted to go beyond New START. They talked about a treaty that a negotiation would cover all U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons, strategic, non-strategic, deployed, and non-deployed, which would have been for the first time that we'd ever had a conversation in Moscow about the entire arsenal.

What the Russians said was we don't want to do that or you've got to have certain other issues addressed first. One was missile defense. And missile defense is just a very charged issue. It's pretty clear to me that any agreement that goes to the Senate that

says "missile defense" and "limit" is dead on arrival. The question is, could we do some things less than missile -- a treaty?

The proposal I think in 2013 for an executive agreement on missile defense transparency, you know, could NATO come out? I mean, we've announced there are going to be two SM-3 missile defense interceptor sites in Romania and Poland, but we've never said how many missiles might be there. So maybe (inaudible) comes out, again, not (inaudible), but says the plan is no more than X missiles. There might be some things that we could do if we were -- in a creative way that would at least go part of the way to meeting some of the Russian concerns, which I think are half real and half inflated.

Other things that Russians say, they say they want to have a multilateral negotiation. Going back to 2000, they said the next negotiation on nuclear reductions has to be multilateral. Moscow has never, however, suggested what that negotiation would look like. And that's because you can't make it happen. I mean, the disparity numbers between the United States and Russia here and everybody down there is such that you could not get an agreement because China, France, Britain are not going to accept an agreement that says anything other than equality, and you can't make that happen. So you've got to find a way around that.

There might be some creative ways, but it's really hard to see given the current make of leadership both here in Washington, but also in Moscow that you could get to that point where that kind of creativity could do the sorts of things that the relationship between Gorbachev and Reagan back in the 1980s did with the INF Treaty and then laying the basis for START 1.

MS. POLYAKOVA: So I'm going to take three questions at a time now. I saw a question here and then -- ma'am, did you have a question? And then the lady in the green glasses. So please.

MR. TILLMAN: I'm Greg Tillman. What will be the impact of the revelations of

Russian meddling in the U.S. election on our ability to deal with INF Treaty compliance issues or the entire arms control enterprise? Because it seems like to the extent that there are positive instincts toward making a deal in this administration, they will be severely constrained in terms of Democratic reactions, in terms of congressional reactions to any deal that the Trump administration makes with Russia.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thank you. Ma'am?

MS. KENNEDY: Laura Kennedy, ex-State Department. I share the pessimism on the arms control agenda, but my question was on the multilateral arena. Mr. Talbott referred to the NPT. And to what extent do you think cooperation in this area might help the bilateral agenda since the NPT is so sensitive to strains in the bilateral agenda and I would argue it helped foment the nuclear ban treaty? So there's a shared, I think, interest at least in preserving the NPT and a shared interest possibly in cooperating perhaps within the multilateral arena, which then later might help the bilateral agenda.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thank you.

MS. SQUASSONI: Thank you. Sharon Squassoni from CSIS. And I'm going to try and inject a little more optimism, although it may be some cynicism. And maybe there's a different way or restating Greg's question.

The extent to which Russia has truly overplayed its hand in interfering with the election, might that give them an incentive to kind of throw a bone to Trump to give him a little bit of a win? Because honestly it suits their purposes to keep someone like Trump to keep unsettling American politics.

And then the other part, the question earlier about the divisive -- you know, maybe since there isn't a great military reason for these ground-launched cruise missiles that there might be a political reason. We're doing such a fantastic job of dividing ourselves between Trump and May that maybe they don't need this missile. And that's another reason

why they could give Trump a win if we can snatch victory from the jaws of defeat or defeat from the jaws of victory. Thanks.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thank you. This is a big of a lightning round. I'll give each of you 30 seconds to choose which part you want to respond to. So the question on is meddling a constraint or an opportunity and the question -- the multilateral question.

So, Steve, let's start with you.

MR. PIFER: On the meddling, I think it's bad. I mean, it just poisons the atmosphere. It will make Congress less receptive to looking at arms control ranges. But let me, though, then flip it around and say it seems to me that if the president's looking to do something with Russia, and right now because of the interference I think he's very constrained in what he can do with Russia, actually a New START extension would be a good candidate. Because I suspect that the endorsement from the uniformed military, from the head of strategic command of having this treaty would be such that that would give him political cover to do something with the Russians. So that actually might be something that would be good for arms control.

And then historically, we have seen in the last 50 years that progress in arms control sometimes gives a little bit of a boost to a better development in the broader relationship.

MS. POLYAKOVA: Thank you, Steve. Olga?

MS. OLIKER: So I agree with all of that. I think, you know, one of the challenges -- okay, one of the silver linings that I had hoped might come out of the mess we are currently in is that, to put it very bluntly and perhaps slightly offensively, that the European grow a spine and the Russians grow a sense of responsibility. So here we're talking about the Russians growing a sense of responsibility to some extent of kind of recognizing that they can do some broader good, even taking advantage of the situation.

I think it's really hard for them, though. I think the Russians have very mixed views on Trump. They did not expect him to win this election. When he did win, they expected

him to become a normal Republican. When he did not because a normal Republican, they still can't figure out if this is good or bad. In a lot of ways it's bad.

And so I think kind of this idea that they want to keep him around, I don't know, it might actually be better to have a U.S. government that behaves much more like it usually does and you can point your finger at it and say you've removed a democratically elected president. So I don't know that they want to give him a win that much.

I do think they have a real interest in arms control, though, which hopefully will be more useful than that.

MS. POLYAKOVA: And Strobe, on the multilateral point?

MR. TALBOTT: Maybe on NPT. Since we're coming to the end I'm sorry to hit a downer note again, but --

MR. PIFER: And we've been so optimistic up to this point. (Laughter)

MR. TALBOTT: Yeah, right. The NPT is not exactly robust itself. It's in jeopardy in and of itself because of the dynamics of proliferation. I mean, just looking at two parts of the world: the Middle East because of Iran and to some degree Israel, you've got at least Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Turkey kind of nosing around going nuclear; and in Asia, because of the DPRK issue, which has been exacerbated by the statements and policies, if you want to call them that, of this government, I can imagine that there is more contingency thinking in Seoul and in Tokyo than there was a year ago.

So I just don't see NPT coming to the rescue of superpower arms control.

MS. POLYAKOVA: So on that downer, I actually want to take a quick poll, given our discussion and given our skeptical conversation. Audience, please participate. If you think that the INF will be around in 2020, raise your hand.

That's pretty good, two out of three panelists, about --

MS. OLIKER: I mean, January 2020, right? (Laughter)

MS. POLYAKOVA: That was cheating. But I actually think that was a pretty good split. So maybe we haven't had as much of a cynical conversation as we thought we did.

So on that note, maybe that's the upside, please join me in thanking our panelists for this discussion. (Applause)

\* \* \* \* \*

## CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2020