RENEWED ARMS RACE, THE NPT, AND THE NEW START TREATY AFTER THE END OF THE INF TREATY

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The U.S. decision to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty left the world observing about what might happen next. Indeed, the demise of the INF Treaty points out to an uncertainty on arms control and it brings new questions regarding international security. In the light of recent developments on the INF Treaty, this study attempts to make an analysis on the possible impacts of the end of the INF Treaty on international security. This study argues that the collapse of the INF Treaty raise concerns for renewed arms race and the withdrawal from the INF Treaty inevitably brings other treaties such as the NPT and the New START into close consideration.

Introduction

The collapse of The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty signals the end of a Cold War era bilateral treaty. Tensions between two states started to increase with the U.S. decision to withdraw from the historical arms control treaty. The renewed arms race between the U.S. and Russia came to surface again and the coming period for arms control is now in a fragile state. This paper aims to discuss the possible impacts of the end of the INF Treaty on international security. An overview of the background of the INF Treaty is needed in order to understand the current developments about the treaty. The first section of this paper focuses on the background of the INF treaty, the second part discusses the possibility of renewed arms race, later passage examines other treaties such as the NPT and the New START, and lastly this paper provides concluding remarks.

The background of the INF Treaty

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which was signed on December 8, 1987 and entered into force on June 1, 1988 between United States and Soviet Union in Washington, came in the last years of the Cold War period. U.S. request for the check of intermediate-range missiles came as a consequence of the Soviet Union’s internal “deployment of SS-20 intermediate-

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range missiles in the mid-1970s.” The Cold War consisted two super powers with different ideologies, which were United States and the Soviet Union. The era itself had experienced an arms competition and a rivalry between U.S. and Soviet Union. The danger, which nuclear weapons represent for humanity and for the entire world, and the constant fear of a nuclear war deepened during the Cold War era, as the competition and the tension between two powers increased. Evolving through the Cold War security environment, bilateral arms control agreement between these major powers represented a historic move. The INF Treaty required “...the destruction of U.S. and Soviet ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles (“GLBMs” and “GLCMs”) with a range capability between 500 and 5,500 kilometers, and their associated launchers, support structures, and equipment, within three years after the Treaty entered into force in 1988”. According to U.S. Department of State, “a total of 2,692 missiles were eliminated”.

The U.S. President Donald Trump stated in October that U.S. will withdraw from the INF Treaty and said that Russia “violated” the Treaty. Following the 60-day compliance, on February 2 Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo announced that the United States is suspending its obligations under the INF Treaty as a result of Russia’s material breach, and in his statements he also informed that “the United States provided Russia and other Treaty Parties with formal notice that the United States will withdraw from the INF Treaty in six months, pursuant to Article XV of the Treaty”. After U.S. announcement on withdrawal from the Treaty, Russia suspended the INF Treaty, Russia rejects violating the treaty, and President Putin also said that Russia “will start work on creating new missiles, including hypersonic ones”. The latest events refer to a bigger question of what will be the future of arms control. Following part discusses the possibility of a renewed arms race after the demise of the INF Treaty.

**Renewed Arms Race**

The current state of the INF Treaty and the long-term results of the withdrawal raise concerns on various areas, and the debate on the arms race is one of them. As I previously argued in another

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4 Ibid.


article, this paper highlights again that; “greater challenges to disarmament progress, concerns about a renewed arms race, and the emergence of global pessimism” could be the effect of the collapse of the INF Treaty on the global nuclear order. Pranay Vaddi and George Perkovich pointed out “U.S. withdrawal will exacerbate missile proliferation in Asia...” and also argued that leaving from the INF Treaty will release a new missile rivalry between the United States and Russia. The withdrawal from the INF Treaty brings concerns on renewed arms race between the U.S. and Russia. Daryl G. Kimball argues that, already the U.S. and Russia is quickening their quest of new intermediate-range, ground-based missiles in Europe and past. On February, Russian President Vladimir Putin said, “Russia will respond to any deployment of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe...”. It is necessary to remember the percentage of nuclear warheads, which both Russia and the U.S. have. According to Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, Russia and the United States possess almost 93% of entire nuclear warheads. Considering this percentage, the possibility for a renewed arms race is adding more concerns. Rather than an arms race between world’s two major nuclear states, what is fundamentally needed is to set a practical agenda in order to achieve nuclear weapons reduction as a necessary step.

The possibility of a new arms race between U.S. and Russia also brings the question of how this can influence other areas. It could be argued that the U.S. and Russia’s competition has a bigger geopolitical and security impact. For instance, how the arms race between U.S. and Russia will affect the security dimensions in Europe? Certainly the end of the arms control agreement constitutes an important strategic issue for the European security. For Europeans the treaty was seen as a main factor of European security. Therefore, it is vital to observe the effect of the collapse of the treaty on Europe. There are reactions about the withdrawal from the INF Treaty. For instance, Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel at the 2019 Munich Security Conference stated “…a treaty that was essentially designed for Europe, an arms reduction treaty that directly

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affects our security, has been cancelled by the United States of America and Russia (the legal successor to the Soviet Union). And we are left sitting there. Given our elemental interest we will obviously make every attempt to facilitate further arms reduction...”  

Moreover on INF Treaty, the EU foreign policy Chief Federica Mogherini highlighted that, “it is a fundamental pillar of our security architecture in Europe and we want to see this preserved and fully implemented.”

The impact of the possibility of a new arms race can also be observed from Turkey’s perspective. It could be argued that the possibility of an arms race between U.S. and Russia as a result of the end of the INF Treaty is also concerning for Turkey and Turkey should consider the impact of this rivalry. Turkey is a NATO member and ally, a member of the NPT Treaty, and it has rooted relations with the U.S. Despite the fact that, Turkey has deepening diplomatic relations with Russia, still Russia’s work on its weapons can be seen as a concerning factor for Turkey. Therefore regarding Russia’s development of its weapons, Turkey needs to measure how this might affect its security in the long-term. Like for other NATO member states and allied countries, prevention of the possibility of an arms race between U.S. and Russia, finding a solution to tackle further challenges, and non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are vital and it will be beneficial for Turkey. Following section makes an analysis on other key treaties such as the NPT and the New START Treaty in the light of the INF withdrawal.

The impact on other treaties: The NPT and New START

The aftermath of the INF Treaty brings the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) into consideration. To start with the NPT, the treaty represents the foundation of the nonproliferation regime and it has a strategic place. The NPT opened for signature in 1968 and entered into force in 1970, it has 191 state Parties including five nuclear-weapon states (NWS), and the NPT Treaty extended indefinitely in 1995. In itself the NPT consists nuclear-weapon states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS). The NPT Treaty’s text defines NWS as; “one which has manufactured and exploded a

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nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967”. In every five years, the NPT Review Conference takes place in order to review the treaty. 2010 NPT Review Conference was successful whereas, 2015 NPT Review Conference couldn’t reach a final document, which led to more frustration. The results of the previous Review Conferences will have a considerable factor for the 2020 Review Conference. Tariq Rauf emphasizes that the NPT Treaty is under danger on many sides, which needs “bold and concerted action”.

There are expectations of NNWS from NWS for the coming 2020 NPT Review Conference and the NPT is experiencing a lack of patience and increasing frustration among its member states. Article VI of the NPT is one of the critical areas, which a progress is expected by member states. Article VI of the Treaty states that, “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control”. The third Preparatory Committee for the coming 2020 NPT Review Conference was held in New York between April 29 and May 10, 2019. Statements were delivered during the 2019 Preparatory Committee. For instance, the working paper, which was submitted by Brazil on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, pointed out “…progress on nuclear disarmament over the past decades has been unacceptably slow…” There is an apparent frustration in the NPT. Regarding the number of nuclear weapons in the world, according to Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, the number decreased considerably since the Cold War, from a highest of almost 70,300 in 1986 to a calculated 13,890 in the beginning of 2019…“the pace of reduction has slowed significantly compared with the 1990s”.

The fact that nuclear disarmament is slower that before, is a critical issue.

The current situation of the INF Treaty brings the question of will the withdrawal from INF Treaty effect the NPT? Considering the circumstances, which the NPT is experiencing at the moment, it could be argued that the possible impacts of the withdrawal from the INF Treaty on the NPT is concerning. There are challenges that world is experiencing at the moment. The demise of the INF Treaty can be observed as “taking an even greater step back, weakening existing efforts to at least limit global nuclear arms.”²² About the NPT, it is necessary to prevent obstacles that might negatively affect the efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation, as the NPT is a cornerstone treaty in this area. Especially preventing the deepening of frustration in the NPT will be vital.

Moreover, in the light of recent developments on the INF Treaty, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) is another important subject. On April 2009, former U.S. President Barack Obama delivered a speech in Prague, which brought hope during that time for world free nuclear weapons. In his speech, former U.S. President Barack Obama stated that, “…if we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then in some way we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable.”²³ A year after the Prague speech, the New START Treaty was signed in Prague between U.S. and Russia on April 8, 2010 and entered into force on February 5, 2011. The New START Treaty “sets limits on strategic arms”²⁴. According to Arms Control Association, “Russia and the United States announced that they met New START limitations by February 5, 2018”, the period of the treaty is ten years from its entry into force “…unless it is superseded by a subsequent agreement”, and the treaty can be extended for five years.²⁵ The New START is a remaining arms control Treaty between the U.S. and Russia and it expires on February 2021, if U.S. and Russia don’t extend it. Both states’ decision on the Treaty will be important and the uncertainty remains as it is currently unknown whether there will be an extension of the treaty. Without an extension, then the situation will be even more concerning for international security as there will be no restriction on the U.S. and Russia, who are world’s biggest nuclear weapon states. The future of the New START is indeed one of the key issues in the aftermath of the INF Treaty.

Recently, the U.S. President Donald Trump said he discussed with Russian President Vladimir Putin about a possibility of a new nuclear accord, which can include China.\textsuperscript{26} Later on, China said, “it would not take part”.\textsuperscript{27} While there are not enough details about the possibility of a new nuclear accord, however this could be seen as another factor to observe in coming period.

Conclusion

The end of the arms control Treaty, brought uncertainties for the future of arms control. It could be argued that the possible effect of the post-INF environment on international security might be broad. This paper has argued that the collapse of the INF Treaty leads to concerns on the possibility of renewed arms race and it brings the question of what will be the possible effects of the withdrawal on the NPT Treaty and the New START. In this regard, the end of the INF Treaty directs international community to contemplate about what is expecting these two treaties. Despite the fact that, the withdrawal is concerning and its long-term effects on arms control are unclear, still it is important to maintain optimism. In the light of these developments, this paper recommends that first, considering the current security environment, a cautious approach is needed between the U.S. and Russia and working on ways to prevent further problems. Certainly, the decision on the New START Treaty will be important in the coming period. Second, both the U.S. and Russia are also members of the NPT Treaty therefore; a promising step by two countries in order to strengthen the productivity of the NPT and for the success of the coming 2020 NPT Review Conference will be significant.


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