

Oliver Bange

A Swan Song

The INF Treaty and Europe's Security Architecture, 1987–2019

The life-span of the INF Treaty is remarkable: it lasted for over three decades. When the Treaty was signed by U.S. President Ronald Reagan and CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, it was under a lucky star. Or so it seemed at the time. President Reagan's wife, Nancy, had her personal astrologist check on the date originally envisaged for the signature in late November 1987. The astrologist foresaw a much more promising constellation of stars several days later, so the Treaty was signed on December 8, 1987, at 13:45 hrs, in Washington D. C.¹

Over the following months and years the INF treaty did indeed prove to be a success. Both the U.S. and the USSR were quick to dismantle their INF systems—Cruise Missiles, Pershing II missiles, and SS-20 missiles²—according to the agreed timetable. The INF Treaty survived even when, first, the Warsaw Pact, and then the USSR dissolved in 1991. A control and inspection regime was installed which now also covered the successor states of the Soviet Union in addition to the Russian Federation, which remained in control of the former USSR's nuclear stockpile.³ Under the INF Treaty the Special Verification Commission (SVC) undertook arms control and verification missions in four of the twelve USSR successor states—Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus—while in both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan only one installation under the INF Treaty had existed anyway. On-site inspections ended only in 2001, when the means of control and verification changed to satellite information.

The years between 1986 and 1994 saw the formation of a new security architecture in Europe, and the bilateral INF Treaty became an integral part of this

- 1 See the memoirs of President Reagan's White House Chief of Staff about the influence of the Reagans' personal astrologer on the President's agenda: Donald Regan, *For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington*, San Diego 1988, for example pp. 3–5, 70–74, 300 f., 344, 367–370. For the anecdote above, see Joan Quigley, "What Does Joan Say?" *My Seven Years as White House Astrologer to Nancy and Ronald Reagan*, New York 1990; George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph My Years as Secretary of State*, New York 1993, p. 1005; Colin Powell, *Mein Weg*, Munich 1995, p. 376.
- 2 For the development and deployment history of these systems, see Oliver Bange, *SS-20 and Pershing II: Weapon Systems and the Dynamization of East–West relations*, in: Christoph Becker-Schaum, Philipp Gassert, Martin Klimke, Wilfried Mausbach, and Marianne Zepp (eds.), *The Nuclear Crisis. The Arms Race, Cold War Anxiety, and the German Peace Movement of the 1980s*, New York 2020, pp. 70–86.
- 3 Mariana Budjeryn and Steven E. Steiner, *Forgotten Parties to the INF*, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/forgotten-parties-to-the-inf> (accessed May 10, 2020).

predominantly multilateral framework. In 1986 the Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe triggered the so-called Stockholm process (so called because the agreement was signed in the Swedish capital).⁴ Its stipulations included: prior announcement of military maneuvers, a limitation on the number of soldiers participating in these exercises, an invitation for observers, to witness, a right for them to inspect military units of other signatories, and an obligation to exchange information on dislocation and doctrines. These were supported by many other instruments meant to create transparency, and thus confidence in the non-aggressive postures of either side.⁵

The years 1989–1991 were full of epochal events: the implosion of Communist rule in most Central and East European states in 1989, Germany's reunification in 1990, and then the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR in 1991. All these turns were accompanied by new instruments for arms control and disarmament. These included the various treaties regulating the long withdrawal of the Soviet (later Russian) armed forces from the territory of their former allies in the Warsaw Pact,⁶ the outcomes from the Summit of Paris, including the Charter of Paris for a New Europe⁷ and the Treaty on (the reduction of) Conventional Forces in Europe.⁸ Furthermore the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty on intercontinental nuclear systems⁹ was made, along with various directives from the U.S.

4 Oliver Bange and Karl-Heinz Lutz, Ohne Öffentlichkeit keine Vertrauensbildung. Deutsche Medien und deutsche Armeen im KVAE-Prozess, in: Heiner Möllers and Jörg Jacobs (eds.), *Bundeswehr und Medien. Ereignisse—Handlungsmuster—Mechanismen in jüngster Geschichte und heute*, Baden-Baden 2018, pp. 219–248. Josef Holik, *Die Rüstungskontrolle. Rückblick auf eine kurze Ära*, Berlin 2008, pp. 45 f. For the term itself, see for example West German reports and analyses of the Stockholm negotiations such as telegram No. 274, Stockholm, September 22, 1986, from Ambassador Citron; and the memorandum from Hartmann, head of the conventional Disarmament Unit in the German Foreign Office, Berlin, September 30, 1986. Both in: *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1986*, Munich 2017, Doc. 253 and 267.

5 For the far-reaching vision of Willy Brandt with regard to a new security structure in Europe, see Oliver Bange, Conceptualizing “Common Security”—Willy Brandt's Vision of Trans-bloc Security and Its International Perception, 1981–1990, in: Bernd Rother and Klaus Larres (eds.), *Willy Brandt and International Relations—Europe, the USA, and Latin America, 1974–1992*, London 2019, pp. 143–160. For a collection of contemporary personal experiences in arms control measures, see Guntram König (ed.), *Kontrollierte Feindschaft—Manöverbeobachtungen und Inspektionen 1987–1990*, Aachen 2011.

6 Oliver Bange, *Die Sicherheitspolitik Moskaus und der Stationierungsalltag in der DDR. Vorgeschichte und Beginn des Abzugs von 1983 bis 1991*, in: Museum Berlin-Karlshorst e. V. (ed.), *Der Abzug. Die letzten Jahre der russischen Truppen in Deutschland. Eine fotografische Dokumentation von Detlev Steinberg*, Berlin 2016, pp. 37–55.

7 For the Charter of Paris, November 21, 1990, see *Europa-Archiv* 1990, pp. D 656–664.

8 For the CFE Treaty of November 19, 1990, see <https://fas.org/nuke/control/cfe/text/index.html> (accessed June 20, 2020).

9 For the START I Treaty of July 31, 1991, see <https://fas.org/nuke/control/start1/text/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

President on tactical nuclear weapons, and the Treaty on Open Skies allowing for unarmed surveillance flights over the territories of signatory states.¹⁰

The capstone of this dynamic was the unanimous decision made in 1994 to institutionalize the so-called “Helsinki process.”¹¹ Back in 1975 in Finland’s capital, all the European states (with the exception of Albania) had, together with the U.S. and Canada, signed the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) in Europe. Its four “baskets” included instruments to improve economic exchange, human rights, and access to information; also measures for a peaceful solution to conflicts (including “peaceful change of frontiers,”¹² which would become the reference point for Germany’s reunification process) along with those for improving political relations. Military détente¹³ and cooperation received relatively little space in the final document, but several codes of behavior mentioned in the list of principles also applied to military policies, as did the call for Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). While back in 1975 these last were framed in rather general, non-obligatory language, the CBMs—or CSBMs (Confidence and Security Building Measures) as they were called later—took on a dynamic of their own within the Stockholm process.

This process was capped in 1994 by the decision of the CSCE conference in Budapest to turn the rather loose set of follow-up meetings into one permanent organization—the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Since then, the OSCE has formed the world’s largest security-oriented multilateral organization, mandated by its 57 participating and 11 partner states with arms control, the promotion of human rights, and monitoring the freedom of the press and fair elections. Almost 3,500 people work for the OSCE today at its various institutions and in its secretariat in Vienna. For most of the post-Cold War years the OSCE has formed an umbrella framework for the various aspects of Europe’s security architecture—sometimes inspecting and controlling the implementation of treaties, sometimes providing a useful platform for discussing wider issues at stake. As, for many years thereafter, security and military issues were widely seen as somewhat non-pressing items on the European agenda, the OSCE remained out of the spotlight of the public media until fairly recently.

With the crisis in Ukraine, Russia’s occupation of the Crimea 2014, and a new military buildup in Europe, the OSCE once again found itself in the center of the security–political dynamics of the continent and the ensuing efforts at pacification, arms control, and verification. On March 21, 2014, following a request by

10 For the Open Skies Treaty of March 24, 1992, see the FAS Fact Sheet, <https://fas.org/nuke/control/os/index.html> (accessed May 10, 2020).

11 Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect. International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism*, Princeton 2001.

12 Gottfried Niedhart and Oliver Bange (eds.), *Helsinki and the Transformation of Europe*, New York 2008; Gottfried Niedhart, *Ostpolitik. Transformation through Communication and the Quest for Peaceful Change*, in: *Cold War History* 18/3 (2016), pp. 14–59.

13 Stephan Kieninger, *Dynamic Détente. The United States and Europe, 1964–1975*, Lanham 2016, pp. 103–158.

the Ukraine government, and after agreement by the 57 participating states in the organization, the OSCE Council decided to send a Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) of unarmed civilian observers to Eastern Ukraine. At its height the SMM consisted of 700 unarmed civilian monitors from 40 OSCE member-states.¹⁴ The mission was intended to be an interlocutor between all parties in the conflict, and a neutral source of information about incidents on the ground. In January 2020, after the at least atmospherically successful readoption of the so-called “Normandy format” in Paris the previous December (consisting of the Ukrainian, Russian, German, and French heads of government),¹⁵ Kiev even asked the OSCE to expand its Monitoring Mission in Eastern Ukraine.¹⁶

However, the crisis in Ukraine also showed up the limitations of the OSCE instruments, originally geared towards the prevention of military crises in the region. Combined with the end of the INF Treaty, and in many ways linked to it, this might well herald the end of the security architecture of the Helsinki system. It is doubtful if the Helsinki system will be replaced by a “Yalta 2” system, dominated by Russia and the U.S., as has been repeatedly called for by Moscow.¹⁷

Precisely because many of the links between the INF Treaty and the Helsinki/OSCE system from the years 1987–1994 are still valid today, the end of the INF Treaty may well serve as a catalyst to trigger a negative domino effect amongst the other security and arms control treaties mentioned above. It therefore seems appropriate to consider in some detail the aspects that linked the INF Treaty to the wider, predominantly multilateral security issues in Europe.

14 OSCE (ed.), OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine: The Facts, Geneva, December 2016, <https://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/116879?download=true> (accessed May 10, 2020).

15 Ergebnisse bei Gipfel in Paris: Ukraine und Russland einigen sich auf Truppenabzug und Waffenstillstand, in: Der Tagesspiegel, December 10, 2020, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/ergebnisse-bei-gipfel-in-paris-ukraine-und-russland-einigen-sich-auf-truppen-abzug-und-waffenstillstand/25316996.html> (accessed May 10, 2020).

16 Kyiv Asks OSCE To Expand Ukraine Monitoring Mission, in: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 20, 2020, <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyiv-asks-osce-to-expand-ukraine-monitoring-mission/30387572.html> (accessed May 10, 2020). The first meeting in the “Normandy format” took place on June 6, 2016 on the occasion of the D-Day commemorations in Northern France. There have been nine meetings in this format since.

17 Pavel Felgenhauer, Russia Proposes a Yalta-2 Geopolitical Tradeoff to Solve the Ukrainian Crisis, in: Eurasia Daily Monitor 12/26 (February 26, 2015), <https://jamestown.org/program/russia-proposes-a-yalta-2-geopolitical-tradeoff-to-solve-the-ukrainian-crisis/> (accessed May 10, 2020). Frida Ghitis, Putin wants Yalta 2.0 and Trump may give it to him, in: CNN, January 27, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/25/opinions/putin-wants-yalta-2-0-and-trump-may-give-it-to-him-ghitis/index.html> (accessed May 10, 2020).

1. The INF Treaty: The Implementation Issue— and What it Meant for the Two Germanies as Non-Signatory States to the Treaty

The key to the impact of the INF Treaty on the course of events during the last years of the systemic conflict between East and West was the way in which it was implemented, and the stringency of that implementation. It meant the abolition of 846 missiles on the U. S. side and 1846 missiles on the Soviet side to be achieved by the end of May 1991. The dismantling and destruction of the missiles of either side was to be controlled by its opposite number.¹⁸

However, many U.S. INF-systems were stationed on West German territory and a sizeable portion of the Soviet systems were on East German soil. This armory included all 108 Pershing II missiles and 96 ground-launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs) in the Federal Republic of Germany and 54 SS-12 Scale-board and 53 SS-23 Spider in the German Democratic Republic.¹⁹ All in all, this amounted to almost one-third of American intermediate-range missiles (with a 1,000–5,500 km range) and nearly one-quarter of Soviet short medium-range missiles (with a 500–1,000 km range) deployed on West and East German soil.²⁰ It was therefore essential that American inspectors had the right to control missile sites in the German Democratic Republic, while Soviet inspectors could do the same on West German territory.²¹

A key element of the implementation procedures was the so-called “territorial principle.” This regulated that the state on whose territory the weapons were deployed had to make the provisions enabling the inspections to take place. The territorial principle was not a feature exclusively developed for the INF Treaty

18 Federation of American Scientists (FAS), Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces [INF], <https://fas.org/nuke/control/inf/> (accessed March 24, 2019). Lukas Trakimavičius, Why Europe needs to support the US–Russia INF Treaty, in: EurActiv, May 15, 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/opinion/why-europe-needs-to-support-the-us-russia-inf-treaty/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

19 Out of the 54 SS-12 missiles, 19 were stationed in Königsbrück, 8 in Bischofswerda, 22 in Waren, 5 in Wokuhl. Out of the 53 SS-23 missiles, 6 were stationed in Weißenfels and 47 in Jena-Forst.

20 The numbers are taken from the original INF Treaty, signed on December 8, 1987, and additional material to the Treaty as published online by the U.S. Department of State (no date of publication provided), <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/trtry/102360.htm> (accessed May 10, 2020).

21 For the Multilateral Basing Country Agreement (MBCA) between the U.S. and the deployment countries Belgium, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the UK of December 11, 1987, see *Bundesgesetzblatt* 1988, II, pp. 431–437. See also the essay by Wolfgang Richter in this volume.

but, rather, was modeled on a similar clause in the Stockholm agreement on conventional forces and weapons that had been signed one year earlier.²²

Accordingly, East Germany's Ministry for National Defense and West Germany's Federal Ministry of Defense had to provide the organizational set-up guaranteeing that U.S. and Soviet inspectors could fulfill their tasks within the guidelines and timespans defined in the INF Treaty. Arrangements included provision of landing rights, transport, communication, supporting personnel, and more. While the dismantling of U.S. nuclear devices in the FRG was coordinated with the West German authorities and was thus well known to them, this was not the case in the German Democratic Republic. Soviet information given to the Party and state leadership in East Berlin on nuclear (and also chemical) weapons on GDR territory remained rather meager throughout. But accompanying INF inspectors from the U.S. allowed East German military experts and politicians a rare glimpse into Soviet installations with nuclear INF equipment, and provided valuable technical/organizational knowledge beyond mere political consultation. This expertise was welcomed by the first democratic government of the GDR, elected in March 1990, and by the Federal German government after reunification, and it formed a valuable backdrop to the negotiations on Soviet troop withdrawals and the monitoring of these withdrawals thereafter. Indeed, officials from West Germany and the USSR had apparently agreed that the withdrawal of all Soviet nuclear weapons from GDR territory should be accomplished before German reunification in October 1990.²³ However, a sizable number of these weapons secretly remained in Altengrabow, probably because the limited number of special railway wagons²⁴ devised for the transport of nuclear weapons was insufficient when they were needed for the prioritized withdrawal from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the break-away Baltic states.²⁵

22 For the crucial role of the "territorial principle" for the enactment of the Stockholm agreement (Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures) between 1986 and 1990, see Bange and Lutz, *Ohne Öffentlichkeit keine Vertrauensbildung*, pp. 219–248.

23 For relevant literature and eye-witness accounts, see Oliver Bange, *Sicherheit und Staat. Die Bündnis und Militärpolitik der DDR im internationalen Kontext 1969 bis 1990*, Berlin 2017, pp. 491–494. As the U.S. inspections under the INF Treaty had shown, the nuclear warheads of the short medium-range missile systems stationed in the GDR (SS-12 and SS-3) had been removed before German reunification in October 1990. This is also confirmed by the memoirs of a West German intelligence officer of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND): Norbert Juretzko and Wilhelm Dietl, *Bedingt dienstbereit: Im Herzen des BND—die Abrechnung eines Aussteigers*, Berlin 2004, pp. 12–52. The commanding officer of those German military forces stationed after the reunification on the territory of the former GDR, Jörg Schönbohm, confided in several interviews with the author that he assumed in early 1991 that the Soviet military had concentrated its remaining nuclear artillery shells in Altengrabow until their final removal to the USSR was technically possible in the summer of 1991.

24 The railway wagons were concealed by a cover of lead.

25 This was confirmed to the author by László Borsits, the former Chief of Staff of the Hungarian Armed Forces, in Budapest on November 15, 2016.

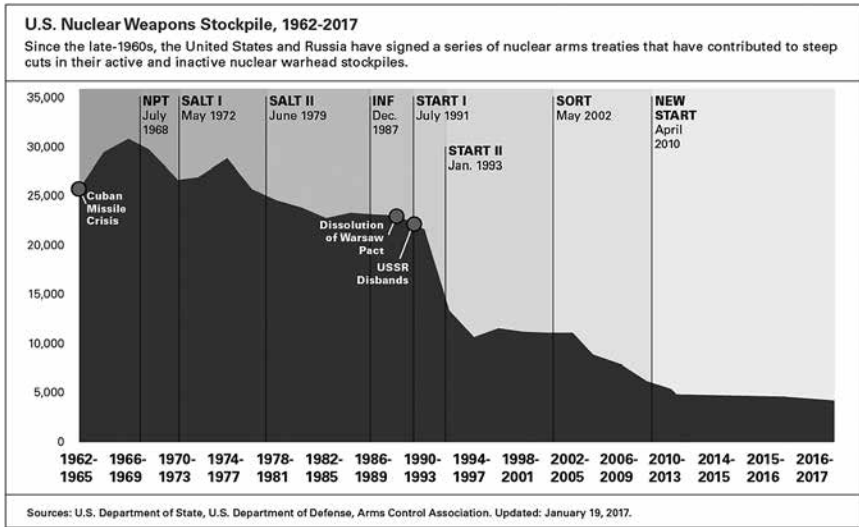


Fig. 1: Estimated Global Nuclear Warhead Inventories 1945–2017.

2. Remaining Nuclear Threats: ICBMs and Tactical Nuclear Weapons—and What This Meant for Those Most Affected

The withdrawal and scrapping of ground-launched INF systems left both German states still exposed to a huge number of remaining nuclear weapons. This store included a vast quantity of tactical nuclear devices intended for potential battlefields in Central Europe—either to blow a (nuclear) gap into enemy defenses in order to facilitate a break-through, or else, ironically, to block any similar advance by the enemy.²⁶ The armory included nuclear artillery, atomic demolition devices (ADM, or “atomic mines”), bombs, and short-range ballistic missiles.²⁷ Also remaining were the intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) of the two superpowers as well as their sea- and air-launched Cruise Missiles. And there were the French and British nuclear arsenals as well. The vast majority of these nuclear systems were still aimed at Central Europe, with the two German states at its heart.

While the nuclear threat against German territory and the German population thus remained almost unchanged, the only strategic deterrent against Soviet territory in case of a war in Central Europe had been abolished with the INF missiles.

26 For the evolving tactical and strategic planning in the USSR and the Warsaw Pact during these years, see Bange, *Sicherheit und Staat*, pp. 301–464.

27 Short-Range Ballistic Missiles (SRBMs) or Short-Range Theater Nuclear Forces (SRTNFs)—with “theater” serving as *chiffre* for Central Europe, or more precisely Germany and its adjacent regions.

The term “strategic” here is used in the classical sense, found in Clausewitz.²⁸ It describes a military means, operation or policy with the power to decide a conflict. “Punishing” an attacker either by causing “massive destruction” to its cities and industries or by “decapitating” its leadership (by pinpointing its headquarters) were the strategic nuclear options—and were therefore of central importance for a viable nuclear deterrence. Following this logic, between 1983 and 1987, any attack against NATO in West Germany would immediately have led to the launch of Pershing II missiles and Gryphon Cruise Missiles against key military and political installations sited within the member-states of the Warsaw Pact.²⁹ The CPSU leadership in Moscow, in all likelihood, would have answered with an equally strategic counter- or pre-emptive nuclear strike, using ICBMs against U.S. territory. The INFs therefore linked West Germany’s security to that of both superpowers. From a West German perspective, following the logic of nuclear gamery, these weapons therefore constituted a viable deterrent.

Hence the abolition of the ground-launched INFs was tantamount to a step back in time—to the years before 1983. As German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt had explained in his speech at the International Institute for Security Studies in London in 1977, the absence of this class of weapons meant that an aggressor could use (and face the usage of) nuclear weapons on the German battlefield without having to fear an automatic nuclear response against his own territory.³⁰ In all likelihood, the first use—or at latest the follow-on use—of nuclear weapons on the battlefield would be followed by a telephone call between the American President and the Chairman of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and the next step would have meant intercontinental nuclear disaster for both the U.S. and the USSR. Without the INFs, the two superpowers were once again “de-coupled”³¹ from a conventional tactical nuclear response in Central Europe.

28 According to the definition by Clausewitz, tactics describe “the theory of the use” (planful use) “of military forces in combat,” while strategy is “the theory of the use of *combat for the object of the war*.” The difference is that tactics aim at victory in a specific combat operation while strategy aims at ultimate victory in the war itself. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, New York 2004, p. 71.

29 Bange, SS-20 and Pershing II, in: Gassert et al. (eds.), *Nuclear Crisis*, pp. 79f. See also the essay by Tim Geiger in this volume.

30 Helmut Schmidt’s remarks were closely connected to the public debate over the deployment of U.S. Cruise Missiles armed with neutron-bomb warheads in Europe and especially in Germany. His fears reflected the public debate in West Germany and were mirrored by the concerns of the East German head of state, Erich Honecker. See Bange, *Sicherheit und Staat*, pp. 124–143.

31 Helmut Schmidt’s speech at the IISS in London was published eleven days later in the West German government journal: *Vortrag des Bundeskanzlers in London am 28.10.1977*, in: *Bulletin Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung*, No. 112, p. 1013, Bonn, November 8, 1977. For the impact of this speech, see Oliver Thränert, Helmut Schmidt. In der nuklearen Grauzone: Londoner Rede tritt Nachrüstung los, in: *Die Neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Hefte*, 1–2 (2001), pp. 57–60.

The well known German proverb, “The shorter the nukes’ range, the deadlier for the Germans” was true once again. However aptly the proverb described the geostrategic nuclear position of both West and East Germany, it seems that it was only coined in early 1987, a mere half year before the signing of the INF Treaty.³² On April 18, 1987 the parliamentary leader of the ruling conservative parties, the CDU and CSU, demanded in public that the two superpowers should also include all nuclear weapons with a reach between 150 and 500 kilometers in any feasible nuclear deal. Like most of the INF missiles, this class of nuclear weaponry was aimed at German territory, both in the East and the West. Seen from a German perspective (from whatever side of the Iron Curtain), the abolition of the INF systems merely obliterated the threat of nuclear disaster. In his article in West Germany’s prominent conservative daily newspaper *Die Welt*, Alfred Dregger summarized the situation: “The shorter the reach, the more threatening they [these missiles] are for our country.”³³ Only a few days later, on May 7, 1987, while speaking before West Germany’s parliament, Dregger compressed the rather complex message even further: “The shorter the reach, the more German the destruction.”³⁴ Although Dregger was still arguing from an exclusively security-political perspective in the spring of 1987 (trying to maintain West German security interests), his catch-phrase was soon claimed by other, rather different actors. West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher seized on it in support of his own line, of “voluntarily” abolishing the FRG’s Pershing IA missiles (a Soviet prerequisite for signing the INF Treaty with the U.S.); and West Germany’s peace movement used it throughout as apparent proof of the irrationality of nuclear deterrence in Central Europe.

Whoever may have been right in retrospect, in December 1987 the signing of the INF Treaty by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev left the Germans with the problem of hundreds of short-range nuclear systems, all directed more or less exclusively at their own territory. Within a few months, Dregger’s fears had indeed come true. While West Germany’s liberal Foreign Minister was willing to accept, at least temporarily, increased nuclear exposure in order to make the best play with the East–West détente dynamics that were unfolding in 1988, Chancellor Helmut Kohl was in two minds. Kohl was acutely aware of the INF Treaty’s consequences for the military and nuclear security of his state; at the same time he was desperate to avoid yet another split in the West German public over the issue. While discussions within the German government and with the German peace movement dragged on, the issue soon enough took

32 The author is indebted to Tim Geiger for his helpful remarks concerning the historical genesis of this clause.

33 Alfred Dregger, Konventionelle Abrüstung ist das wichtigste Ziel, in: *Die Welt*, April 18, 1987, p. 4.

34 Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages, Stenographische Berichte, 11th Legislation Period, 10th Session, May 7, 1987, p. 538, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/11/11010.pdf>.

second place and was overtaken by East–West events unfolding between 1988 and 1990.³⁵

Furthermore, while the INF Treaty may have de-coupled the superpowers from nuclear war in Central Europe, they still threatened each other's territories with ICBMs and SLCMs and their forces in Central Europe with SNFs, just as they had before. It was therefore hardly surprising when the U. S. Administration tried to obtain the consent of its NATO partners in Europe to modernize the Lance short-range nuclear missile system in the remaining months of the East–West conflict. It was equally unsurprising that this triggered a serious dispute within the coalition government in Bonn and a major crisis within NATO in early 1989.

3. Germany's Reunification: Security from Germany through Security with Germany. On the Importance of Conventional and Nuclear Safeguards

Though the “2+4” Treaty of September 12, 1990—involving West and East Germany plus France, Great Britain, the U. S., and the USSR—became the central document on German reunification, many other documents were signed during the crucial months in the fall of 1990 and in early 1991. And all of them dealt with security from a reunified Germany: limitation of German conventional forces, an assurance that German forces in former Eastern Germany would not come under NATO command until Soviet withdrawal, a guarantee of Germany's final borders (especially with regard to Poland), a reconfirmation of Germany's renunciation of force in international affairs and, last but not least, confirmation that the new Germany would honour the FRG's signature on the Nonproliferation Treaty (and thus be a final confirmation of its abstention from nuclear weapons).³⁶

A crucial stepping stone in this overall construction related both to Germany's reunification and to Europe's future security architecture. This was the interconnection between the question of eventual NATO membership for the future Germany and the proposed limits on conventional forces in Europe. In 1990, both issues were negotiated in parallel, but while Germany's reunification was settled in the 2+4 Treaty, the conventional forces issue was codified in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). Considering the importance of security from and with Germany for Europe's future, and thus the importance

35 Michael Broer, *Die nuklearen Kurzstreckenwaffen in Europa: Eine Analyse des deutsch-amerikanischen Streits über die Einbeziehung der SRINF in den INF-Vertrag und die SNF-Kontroverse*, Frankfurt am Main 1991.

36 A helpful overview is provided in Heike Amos and Tim Geiger, *Die Einheit. Das Auswärtige Amt, das DDR-Außenministerium und der Zwei-plus-Vier-Prozess*, Göttingen 2014, pp. 45–48; Heike Amos and Tim Geiger, *Das Auswärtige Amt und die Wiedervereinigung 1989/90*, in: Michael Gehler und Maximilian Graf (eds.), *Europa und die deutsche Einheit. Beobachtungen, Entscheidungen und Folgen*, Göttingen 2017, pp. 65–90.

of the interconnection between the two issues, it is somewhat surprising to find that the CFE Treaty is both under-researched and under-estimated in the bulk of historiographical publications that have come out on 1989/1990.³⁷

4. Dealing with the Deterrence Gap: The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE)

The CFE Treaty was signed on November 19, 1990 in Paris and formed a crucial part of the new political and security structure in Europe—or so it was thought at the time. It reduced conventional arms to a critical minimum, thus creating a “structural inability for offensive action,” while maintaining viable defense capabilities. As such, it served a vital function within the logic of deterrence. If strategic nuclear weapons were reduced and if tactical nuclear weapons were to be withdrawn (as was the case with Soviet withdrawal from the GDR, Poland, Hungary, the ČSSR, and the Baltic states) then the likelihood of an armed conflict fought with conventional weapons alone appeared to rise. The CFE negotiations started in early 1989 and were meant to stabilize a potentially asymmetric military situation before Germany’s unification, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet withdrawal could become feasible.³⁸

Like the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, the CFE negotiations were initiated on a mandate from the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna (1986–1989). The CFE negotiations could build on the experiences gained during the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions Talks (MBFR) held between 1973 and 1989, but several crucial stumbling blocks in the MBFR talks were avoided.³⁹ Thus the CFE negotiations differed from the MBFR talks in significant ways: (i) the territorial scope of CFE was not limited to Central Europe, so that it could include military forces relevant for the area, but deployed in areas from the Atlantic to the Urals;

37 For the partial or complete absence of the CFE Treaty in the historiography on Germany’s reunification see the above-mentioned publications which at least recognize the CFE’s importance, but offer no “parallel historiography” on the unification and the CFE processes. For examples see Charles S. Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany*, Princeton 1997; the various contributions in two recently published edited volumes: Frédéric Bozo, Andreas Rödder, and Mary Elise Sarotte (eds.), *German Reunification: A Multinational History*, London 2016; Bernhard Blumenau, Jussi M. Hanhimäki, and Barbara Zanchetta (eds.), *New Perspectives on the End of the Cold War: Unexpected Transformations?*, London 2018. However, clear hints at the importance of this interrelation between German unification and the CFE Treaty had already been provided a few years after the events by two protagonists: Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*, Harvard 1995.

38 Federation of American Scientists (FAS), *A Chronology: CFE Treaty Negotiations and Implementation, 1972–1996*, no date, <https://fas.org/nuke/control/cfe/cfebook/chrono.html> (accessed May 10, 2020).

39 Author’s conversations with Philip Zelikow in 2007 and 2008.

(ii) participation in the CFE negotiations was limited to NATO and Warsaw Pact member-states (excluding all so-called neutral and non-aligned countries); (iii) the negotiations were designed to result in a legally binding treaty (and not a mere political agreement). But a fourth difference was the most important one.

This fourth difference was that the CFE negotiations, at least initially, worked on weapons systems (and military units to serve them) and not on overall numbers of military personnel. In the end the CFE Treaty provided upper ceilings for each alliance for the entire region (20,000 tanks, 20,000 pieces of artillery, 30,000 armored combat vehicles, 6,800 combat aircraft, 2,000 helicopters) as well as national and regional limits. Thus the CFE aimed at equal numbers in defined key areas of armament and key regions, and sought to prevent any national superiority in each class of armament. No single country was meant to possess more than one-third of the total number of each item of armament or equipment. This in turn necessitated a comprehensive and rather complex verification system, including notifications about the holdings of weapon systems and their locations, on-site inspections of both notified and suspected arms locations, and close monitoring of the arms-destruction process (weapon systems beyond the above mentioned limits had to be destroyed within 40 months after the enactment of the CFE Treaty). The Joint Consultative Group (JCG) consisted of representatives from all participating states, and was envisaged as a regular forum for consultations,⁴⁰ which would provide a lasting institutionalized process of arms control. This complicated balance of weapons systems kept at low levels, and particularly in crucial regions, was meant to hinder any possible offensive military action—at least in the dimensions necessary for waging and winning a war.

However, once the CFE Treaty was signed in November 1990, new efforts started up, now with the aim of including limits on the numbers of military personnel (which had been the focus of the fruitless MBFR talks). This resulted in the Concluding Act of the Negotiation on Personnel Strength of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which was signed at the CSCE Summit in Helsinki in July 1992.⁴¹ However, this so-called “CFE-1A” agreement did not contain limits for sea-based naval forces, internal security forces, or forces serving under UN command.

40 With regular meeting sessions twice a year, allowing for additional sessions if necessary. Each session was meant to last no longer than four weeks. Protocol on the Joint Consultative Group of the CFE, https://fas.org/nuke/control/cfe/text/prot_jointcons.htm (accessed May 10, 2020).

41 For the various strains of thought and historical developments leading to the arms control decisions at the CSCE conference in Helsinki in 1992, see the contributions to Alexander Moens and Christopher Anstis (eds.), *Disconcerted Europe. The Search for a New Security Architecture*, New York 1994. For the contemporary optimism about this, see the following two articles: Victor-Yves Ghebali, *Towards an Operational Institution for Comprehensive Security*; Pertti Torstila, *The Helsinki Process: A Success Story and New Challenges*, both in: *Disarmament* 15/4 (1992), pp. 1–12, 26–37. For a contemporary (and equally over-optimistic) overview: Jenonne Walker, *Security and Arms Control in Post-Confrontation Europe*, Oxford 1994.

5. Dealing with the Remaining Nuclear Weapons: The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START)

While the ground-launched INFs were removed from Europe and the number of conventional forces was dramatically reduced and their offensive capabilities curbed, it remained up to Washington and Moscow, as the only proprietors at the time,⁴² to deal with the vast number of intercontinental nuclear systems. With the systemic conflict between liberalism/capitalism and socialism quickly evaporating at least in its power-political dimension, maintaining an overly large number of intercontinental systems—missiles and aircraft—appeared to be an increasingly obsolete posture.

Already in their SALT I and SALT II Treaties of 1972 and 1979 the U.S. and the USSR under Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter and CPSU General Secretary Brezhnev had tried to define limits for their intercontinental nuclear arsenals. Both sides recognized the other's interest in a viable nuclear deterrence. As a result, in the ABM Treaty, anti-ballistic missile defences were limited to two sites each, merely protecting the two capitals; in the Interim Agreement (SALT I), ICBM numbers were limited to 1,054 U.S. and 1,618 Soviet missiles, of which only 1,000 U.S. and 1,408 Soviet missiles were allowed to be armed with multiple nuclear warheads (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles, MIRVs). Similar restrictions were laid down for nuclear submarines. SALT II, which was not ratified by the U.S. Senate after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, also featured limits to long-range nuclear bombers, air-launched Cruise Missiles (ALCMs) and air-to-surface ballistic missiles (ASBMs).⁴³ However, as both trea-

42 It should be noted however that the first Trident II missiles started their operational life on British submarines in December 1994. The Trident II has a reach of about 12,000 km. Its predecessor system was the Polaris missile with a reach of up to 4,600 km. With Trident II therefore an intercontinental system replaced an intermediate-range nuclear missile system. The French S3 and M2 missiles, in service at the time, had a reach of 3,500 and 3,100 km respectively, and are intermediate-range nuclear systems. Suzanne Doyle, *The United States Sale of Trident to Britain, 1977–1982: Deal Making in the Anglo–American Nuclear Relationship*, in: *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 28/3 (2017), pp. 477–493; Robert S. Norris, William M. Arkin, Hans M. Kristensen, and Joshua Handler, *French Nuclear Forces*, in: *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July 1, 2001.

43 For SALT I and SALT II, see <https://fas.org/nuke/control/salt1/text/index.html> and <https://fas.org/nuke/control/salt2/text/index.html> (accessed May 10, 2020). See also Matthew J. Ambrose, *The Control Agenda. A History of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks*, Ithaca/London 2018; David Tal, *U.S. Strategic Arms Policy in the Cold War. Negotiations and Confrontation over SALT, 1969–1979*, London/New York 2017; Arvid Schors, *Doppelter Boden. Die SALT-Verhandlungen 1963–1979*, Göttingen 2016; Stephan Kiener, “Diverting the Arms Race into the Permitted Channels.” *The Nixon Administration, the MIRV-Mistake, and the SALT Negotiations*, in: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, *Nuclear Proliferation International History Project*, Working Paper No. 9, Washington, D.C. 2016; Francis J. Gavin, *Nuclear Statecraft. History and Strategy in America’s Atomic Age*, Ithaca/London 2012.

ties primarily only defined numerical limits to the number of delivery systems, but not to the number of nuclear warheads carried by them, the actual number of warheads quadrupled between 1970 and 1983.⁴⁴

When the societies in Central and Eastern Europe began to put an end to the conflict of ideologies, and the bipolarism in political and military affairs evaporated, it was once again time to deal with the intercontinental nuclear systems. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) was signed in July 1991 and put into force in December 1994. It allowed 6,000 warheads on 1,600 ICBMs and bombers on each side. As a consequence, 80 per cent of all strategic nuclear weapons were dismantled by 2001, the treaty itself expiring at the end of 2009.⁴⁵ With START II Presidents George H. W. Bush and Boris Yeltsin set out to go even further and abolish the use of MIRVs altogether, in what became known as the “de-MIRV-ing agreement.”⁴⁶ However, START II—though ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1996 and the Russian parliament in 2000—never came into effect. The U.S. withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002 and Russia reacted by withdrawing from START II.

Only three weeks before this, on May 24, 2002, Presidents George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin had signed a treaty—the “Moscow Treaty”—which is widely held to have been the peak of post-Cold War nuclear rapprochement between the U.S. and Russia.⁴⁷ The Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), as it is properly named, was meant to reduce the operationally active strategic nuclear warheads of each of the two states to an overall number between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012. In order to obtain this treaty, Moscow gave up its earlier demands for the guaranteed destruction of warheads, while Washington maintained a free hand over the fate of its decommissioned warheads and strategic nuclear weapons systems. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 9, 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell gave an assurance that “the treaty will allow you to have as many warheads as you want.”⁴⁸ The treaty’s innovative focus on operational nuclear warheads rather than on the destruction of delivery vehicles and equipment was also its biggest disadvantage: non-operational warheads could be placed in storage with an option of redeploying them at a later stage. Furthermore, the ceiling of operational warheads had only to be reached at the actual expiry date of the treaty: December 31, 2012. What is more, apart from

44 Wichard Woyke (ed.), *Handwörterbuch Internationale Politik*, Bonn 2000, p. 349.

45 For the START I Treaty of July 31, 1991, see <https://fas.org/nuke/control/start1/text/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

46 For the START II Treaty of January 3, 1993, see <https://fas.org/nuke/control/start2/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

47 Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT)*, <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/strategic-offensive-reductions-treaty-sort/> (accessed May 15, 2020).

48 Daryl Kimball and Kingston Reif, *The Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) at a Glance*, Arms Control Association Fact Sheet, Washington, September 2006, <https://www.armscontrol.org/system/files/SORT-AtAGlance.pdf> (accessed May 15, 2020).

bi-annual consultations, no verification regime was established.⁴⁹ Even before its delivery and expiry date, SORT was superseded by NEW START on February 5, 2011. Thus many thousands of operationally inactive warheads still remain in U.S. and Russian inventories.

Under the NEW START treaty—the “Prague Treaty”—signed by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry A. Medvedev in April 2010, the limit for deployed missiles and bombers is 700, for deployed warheads 1,550, and for ICBM launch-systems (including submarines and bombers) 800. Both sides acted on the treaty and these number requirements were met by September 2018.⁵⁰ The treaty expires in 2021 and it was criticised by President Trump in a telephone call with Vladimir Putin as “one of several bad deals negotiated by the Obama administration.”⁵¹

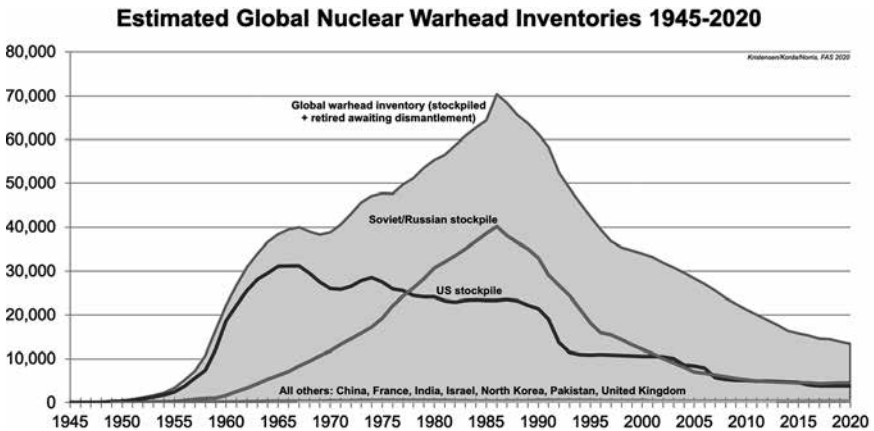


Fig. 2: U.S. Nuclear Weapon Stockpile 1962–2017.

6. Dealing with the Remaining Tactical Nuclear Weapons

When the Warsaw Pact disbanded, on March 31, 1991, Soviet (and then Russian) tactical nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the territory of the USSR’s former allies in Central and Eastern Europe and from the territory of the former

49 For the SORT Treaty of May 24, 2002, see <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/isn/10527.htm> (accessed May 10, 2020).

50 Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, New START Treaty Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Arms—Fact Sheet, September 1, 2018.

51 Jonathan Landy and David Rohde, Exclusive: In Call with Putin, Trump Denounced Obama-era Nuclear Arms Treaty—Sources, Reuters World News, February 9, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-putin/exclusive-in-call-with-putin-trump-denounced-obama-era-nuclear-arms-treaty-sources-idUSKBN15O2A5>.

Soviet republics, particularly from the newly independent Baltic states. With much smaller Russian forces around, diminishing NATO forces, a long distance between NATO and Russian troops (during these years before NATO's enlargement in the East), and an apparent end to military confrontations, there seemed to be little reason to have tactical nuclear weapons on the European continent.⁵²

The withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet tactical nuclear weapons from Europe (outside the USSR) was therefore based on unilateral decisions by the superpower leaders, taking account of this new situation. In his Presidential Nuclear Initiative (PNI) of September 27, 1991, President George H. W. Bush announced the unilateral withdrawal of all ground-launched short-range nuclear forces (SNFs), the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons on U.S. warships (i. e. Cruise Missiles not covered by the INF) and the reduction of U.S. nuclear stockpiles in Europe (leaving a few hundred rather than thousands of nuclear warheads in Europe).⁵³ In 1994, this was complemented by President Clinton's Presidential Review Directive 34.⁵⁴ This PRD provided the framework for the U.S. Nuclear Policy Review finalized in the same year. According to its terms, the U.S. would retain 450 nuclear weapons in Europe—enough to deter an attack on U.S. Allies, target 2,500 sites in Russia in case of all-out war, and deploy more accurate missiles on four additional nuclear submarines (which were not covered by the INF Treaty).⁵⁵

52 The continent appeared so firmly to be at peace with itself, that a well known U.S. academic even revived and scrutinized the Marxist idea of “the end of history”—predicted for an eventual victory of Socialism (which had clearly failed to achieve this objective). Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York 1992. The book was based on a far-sighted article published in the summer of 1989: Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?*, in: *The National Interest* 16 (summer 1989), pp. 3–18.

53 Presidential Nuclear Initiative, September 27, 1991. The Text of the Presidential Nuclear Initiative Announcement is published in Annex A of Susan J. Koch, *The Presidential Nuclear Initiatives of 1991–1992*, Washington, D. C. 2012, <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a577537.pdf> (accessed May 10, 2020). Relevant background material can be found in the George Bush Presidential Library: Bush Presidential Records, Staff and Office Files, National Security Council, John A. Gordon Files, Subject File PNI. On the following day, September 28, 1991, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell explained at a press conference that this involved three types of nuclear artillery warheads (W-33, W-79, and W-48 for 8 inch and 155 mm artillery pieces respectively). All in all, this amounted to the removal from Europe of about 1,000 artillery rounds and 700 Lance missile warheads, which were to be destroyed, together with another 400 nuclear artillery and Lance warheads in the U.S.

54 For the history of Presidential Review Directive 34, initiating the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review of 1994, see Tom Sauer, *Nuclear Inertia. US Nuclear Weapons Policy After the Cold War*, London 2005, pp. 102–114.

55 Arthur J. Laffin and Anne Montgomery (eds.), *Swords into Plowshares. Nonviolent Direct Action for Disarmament, Peace, Social Justice*, Eugene, OR 2010, p. 263. See also Janne E. Nolan, *An Elusive Consensus. Nuclear Weapons and American Security after the Cold War*, Washington, D. C. 1999.

7. The Demise of the INF Treaty, 2014–2019

The present book represents the proceedings of a conference of historians held in Berlin in late 2017. When this conference reflected on the INF Treaty at that time, the INF issue seemed to have withdrawn from major public attention since the jubilant earlier days. But already dark clouds were looming on the security–political horizon and the INF Treaty was moving back into the political spotlight. Back then—almost two years before the U.S. withdrawal from the Treaty—it seemed appropriate to consider the relevance of the INF Treaty for the larger security architecture in Europe.

Over the preceding thirty years, both Russia and the U.S. had found ways and means of dealing with the gap in nuclear deterrence posed by the Treaty, and from 2013 on, the numerous possibilities for circumventing or even breaking the Treaty came under increasing discussion by the interested public.

The malaise of the INF Treaty began with the American withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty (ABM) in June 2002. The ABM Treaty had been agreed upon between Washington and Moscow in the early 1970s, and it formed an integral part of the SALT agreement of 1972. While all the treaties on nuclear weapons mentioned so far dealt with the limitation, withdrawal, and destruction of weapons systems and nuclear warheads, the ABM treaty ruled that neither of the two contemporary superpowers should produce or deploy technological systems capable of destroying attacking nuclear missiles launched by their opponent. The ABM Treaty precluded defensive systems of this kind in order to establish and maintain a balanced nuclear deterrent. The underlying principle assumed that if both the U.S. and the USSR possessed the capability to respond in kind to a nuclear attack from the other—in “mutually assured destruction” (MAD)—then neither side would dare to wage nuclear war. Two aspects were of central importance to this concept: firstly, both sides had to maintain comparable numbers of nuclear weapons (mirrored in the ceilings codified in the SALT, START, SORT and INF agreements); and, secondly, both sides had to accept their own national vulnerability to nuclear war.⁵⁶

This second pillar of MAD (and with it the entire concept) became obsolete, when the U.S. stepped away from the treaty as a consequence of the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, arguing that it needed ABM systems in order to provide more protection against this new kind of threat. The Press Secretary of the White House stressed at the time that “Russia is not an enemy,” and Russia’s President

56 For the ABM logic, see for example: James M. Lindsay and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Defending America*. Updated: *The Case for Limited National Missile Defense*, Washington, D. C. 2002. Alexander T.J. Lennon, *Contemporary Nuclear Debates: Missile Defenses, Arms Control, and Arms Races in the Twenty-First Century*, Boston (MIT) 2002. Coit D. Blacker and Gloria Duffy, *International Arms Control: Issues and Agreements (Studies in International Security & Arms Control)*, Stanford 1984.

Vladimir Putin declared in turn that his country's security interests would not be concerned.⁵⁷

However, Putin's perception of U. S. intentions was soon to change. The reason was to be found in American plans to deploy the new ABM systems (SM-3 block-IIA missiles and far-reaching X-Band radar systems in their support) not only in the U. S., but also in the Czech Republic and in Poland.⁵⁸ Washington explained this as an effort to defend Europe against possible missile attacks or blackmail from Iran, but Russia did not see it that way. Rather, it perceived a strategic threat to itself at its own doorstep, a next logical step, following on from the withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, in a bid to undercut the established nuclear balance. As early as 2004, Minister of Defence Sergei Ivanov was therefore voicing the case for Russia to leave the INF Treaty.⁵⁹ This idea was followed by further soundings over the succeeding years until, on February 10, 2007, President Putin declared before the Munich Security Conference that the INF Treaty no longer satisfied Russia's security interests.⁶⁰ Putin's argument was that since 1987 a whole number of additional states—North and South Korea, India, Iran, Pakistan, and Israel—had obtained INF systems capable of carrying nuclear warheads; but the real reason for his statement was clearly that the American ABM systems were to be stationed in Europe. Only four days later, on February 14, the Chief of the Russian General Staff, Yury Baluyevsky, made it clear that “the European shield” of future American ABMs “would destroy the strategic balance of forces and threaten Russia's national interests.”⁶¹ A few months later, Russian officials

57 ABM Treaty Fact Sheet, Statement by the White House Press Secretary, announcing the U.S. decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, Washington, December 13, 2001, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/12/20011213-2.html> (accessed May 10, 2020). For Putin's statement see the U.S. response, also by the White House Press Secretary on December 13, 2001, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/ac/rls/prsrl/2001/6849.htm> (accessed May 10, 2020).

58 While the deployment of the radar system in the Czech Republic was eventually cancelled, an additional deployment in Romania was decided upon. At present, in 2020, the Aegis Ashore site in Poland is not yet completed, but SM-3 Block IB missiles for Poland are already on-site and the Romanian site for the same missile-type is operational. Paul McLeary, Stalled Polish Missile Defense Site Needs Extra \$96M, 2 Years—Getting Problem-Plagued Ballistic Missile Defense Site Online is an Ever-Higher-Priority for the Pentagon as Iran and Russia Move Out on New Missiles, in: *Breaking Defense*, December 12, 2020, <https://breakingdefense.com/2020/02/stalled-polish-missile-defense-site-needs-extra-96-million-two-years/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

59 Nikolai Zlobin, A Close Look at Russia's Leaders: Meeting Putin and Ivanov, in: *The Defense Monitor—Newsletter of the Center for Defense Information* (Washington, D. C.) 33/5 (September/October 2004), pp. 3 f., 6 f. (on the INF issue see p. 7).

60 For President Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference on February 10, 2007, and the ensuing discussion, see the official Russian record online, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034> (accessed May 10, 2020).

61 Cited in: Russia to compensate for INF losses with Iskander missile system, in: *Sputnik International*, November 14, 2007, <https://sputniknews.com/russia/2007111488066432/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

publicly warned that, after leaving the INF Treaty, Russia might deploy a new version of the Iskander missile in Belarus to make up for the anticipated imbalance. This was a missile with a much enhanced reach.

Ten years later—at the time of the “INF Treaty” history conference in 2017, and still before the U. S. decision to withdraw from the Treaty—Russian missile boats (corvettes with Kalibr missiles) had been transferred from Russia’s Pacific coast to the Black Sea and to Kaliningrad. It was widely alleged that these navy units carried a version of the Kalibr that had a reach exceeding 1,500 kilometres. This posed (and still poses) an imminent threat to Denmark, its capital Copenhagen, the Danish Straits, and even London. However, neither this nor the modernization of Russia’s air-launched Cruise Missiles were in violation of the INF Treaty. Even though the corvettes remained almost stationary in the vicinity of Kaliningrad, their missiles were by definition “sea-launched” ones. However, this exemption does not apply to a new version of the Iskander ballistic missile (the Iskander-K or SSC-8 R-500), which U. S. sources have claimed have the capability to reach well over 500 kilometers, perhaps even more than 1,000.⁶²

The political linkage between the INF Treaty and other multilateral treaties established by the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives does show clearly that the INF Treaty was deeply embedded in Europe’s security architecture, and therefore that its destruction could potentially cause considerable harm to the overall structure. Already in 2017, there were members of the U. S. Congress who called for retaliatory measures if Russia did not cease its violations of the INF Treaty. They called for a renunciation of the Open Skies Treaty (OST) and raised the possibility of refusing to continue with the NEW START Treaty beyond 2021.

Subsequently, there were numerous public accusations that Russia was violating the OST, which had been negotiated between 1990 and 1992 and came into force in 2002. The OST allows all its current 34 signatories “mutual aerial observation” of each others’ military activities.⁶³ But there seems to be more behind the strident voices in Congress than just a retaliatory measure for Russian breaches of the INF Treaty. In late 2018 Aaron Mehta, a well known defense analyst, drew attention to Russia’s new digital electro-optical sensors which “would give Russia an informational edge over what can be gathered by the equipment used by the U. S.”⁶⁴ Pulling out of existing agreements means crossing the threshold between U. S.–Russian bilateral treaties and Europe’s multilateral security architecture with as yet unpredictable effects. For example,

62 Hans M. Kristensen, *Russia Declared in Violation of INF Treaty—New Cruise Missile May Be Deploying*, July 30, 2014, <http://fas.org/blogs/security/2014/07/russia-inf> (accessed March 17, 2019).

63 Alexandra Bell and Anthony Wier, *Open Skies Treaty—A Quiet Legacy Under Threat*, in: *Arms Control Today* 49/1 (2019), <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-01/features/open-skies-treaty-quiet-legacy-under-threat> (accessed March 2019).

64 Aaron Mehta, *US, Russia Remain at ‘Impasse’ Over Open Skies Treaty Flights*, in: *Defense News*, September 14, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/air/2018/09/14/us-russia-remain-at-impasse-over-nuclear-treaty-flights/> (accessed March 2019).

the Open Skies Treaty and the OSCE's Vienna Document of 1994 on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBMs) complement each other. As another American analyst warned: "Tearing up the Open Skies Treaty means killing the confidence-building regime between Russia and NATO. With the treaty in force, transparency is enhanced and the risk of war and miscalculation is reduced."⁶⁵ Without these complementary treaties, and after the domino-effect across arms control treaties that would ensue, Europe could become an increasingly insecure place.

8. The INF's Swan Song: An Argument for Reinventing and Enlarging the Treaty

When U.S. President Trump announced the withdrawal of his country from the INF Treaty during an election campaign rally in October 2018⁶⁶ and proceeded to enact this withdrawal on February 1, 2019, there was a remarkable initial outcry amongst the public in Europe. One of Germany's most influential daily papers, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, wrote of the "full portfolio of fears" raised by Trump's decision.⁶⁷ But the end of the bilateral INF Treaty between Russia and the U.S. has important repercussions not only for Europe but also for the states in East Asia—above all China, North and South Korea, and Japan.

Trump informed the European Allies of the U.S. a few days after his initial announcement, during a NATO meeting held in October 2018. Politicians, security experts, and the media in Europe (particularly in Germany) were shocked. A new nuclear arms race appeared to be looming, and Horst Teltschik, former Security Advisor to Chancellor Kohl, publicly described Trump's planned pullout as "a catastrophe."⁶⁸ Europe's political leadership and elites looked for options to save the Treaty. One of the most discussed options was the possibility of enlarging the Treaty and getting other European states to join it. Thus, at a press conference following a meeting with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on January 18, 2019, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas proposed expanding the INF Treaty

65 Alex Gorka, US Takes New Steps to Dismantle Open Skies Treaty, in: Online Journal of the Strategic Culture Foundation, <https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2017/09/30/us-takes-new-steps-to-dismantle-open-skies-treaty/> (accessed March 2019).

66 USA kündigen INF-Vertrag: 'Das Spiel ist ausgespielt' (The Game is Over), in: Hannoversche Allgemeine, February 1, 2019.

67 For example: Trump kündigt INF-Vertrag—Pralles Angstportfolio, in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, October 24, 2018. Exemplary for reactions in the academic world: Wolfgang Richter, Der INF-Vertrag vor dem Aus—Ein neuer nuklearer Rüstungswettlauf könnte dennoch verhindert werden, in: SWP-Aktuell 2018/A 63, November 2018.

68 Teltschik in an interview with Deutschlandfunk (DLF), October 22, 2018, https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/reaktion-auf-fall-khashoggi-es-braucht-eine-grundsuetzliche.694.de.html?dram:article_id=431151 (accessed May 10, 2020).

by means of a new document which could be signed by other countries, including China.⁶⁹

However, the Trump Administration's decision to curb the INF Treaty might well be aimed beyond Russia, precisely at this rising superpower. Like all nuclear weapon states other than the U.S. and Russia, China is not a signatory to the INF Treaty. This is what has allowed the Chinese to make a substantial buildup of nuclear forces over the past decades. The current goal of China's political leadership is the creation of a nuclear triad with a second-strike capability in all circumstances.⁷⁰ China's armed forces possess 200 older and 150 new missile systems with a reach between 1,500 and 4,000 kilometers. This puts the U.S. military base in Guam within the reach of ground-launched Chinese missiles. The overall number of Chinese nuclear warheads is still only around 5 per cent of the U.S. and Russian stockpiles (320 Chinese warheads as against 6,370 Russian and 5,800 U.S. ones).⁷¹ According to the numbers provided by the London-based International Institute for Security Studies and experts like Taylor Fravel,⁷² up to 80 per cent of China's nuclear arsenal could fall into the category of ground-launched intermediate nuclear forces as defined by the INF Treaty. However, it is especially the prospect of a rapid diversification of Chinese delivery vehicles for these warheads that matters. These delivery vehicles have become increasingly diversified, mobile, and resilient. The Chinese also have nuclear capabilities at sea and in the air. So despite the rather limited number of warheads in its possession, China is about to enter the exclusive club of states possessing a nuclear triad.⁷³

The idea of including China in an extended NEW START treaty does appear to be an adequate starting point. While NEW START (or a similar successor treaty) contains an arms control regime over a variety of classes of nuclear

69 Maas calls for expanding INF Treaty, in: *Vestnik Kavkaza*, January 18, 2019, <https://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/Maas-calls-for-expanding-INF-Treaty.html> (accessed May 10, 2020). See also: Maas' Appell an Russland. Mit Abrüstung den INF-Vertrag retten, in: *ARD Tagesschau* (German TV news), January 18, 2019, <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/maas-russland-109.html> (accessed May 10, 2020).

70 On China's nuclear deterrence, see Office of the Secretary of Defense (ed.), *Annual Report to Congress—Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2017*, Washington, D. C., May 2017, p. 61. Eric Heginbotham et al., *China's Evolving Nuclear Deterrent. Major Drivers and Issues for the United States*, Santa Monica (Rand) 2017, p. 112.

71 Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, *Status of World Nuclear Forces*. Report from the Federation of American Scientists, Washington, D. C., April 2020, <https://fas.org/issues/nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

72 IISS, *The Military Balance 2018*, London, February 2018. M. Taylor Fravel, *Active Defense: China's Military Strategy since 1949*, Princeton 2019, pp. 236–269.

73 A 'World-Class Military': Assessing China's Global Military Ambitions, testimony by David Santoro, Director and Senior Fellow for Nuclear Policy at the Pacific Forum International, before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission of the United States Senate on June 20, 2019, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=826699> (accessed May 10 2020).

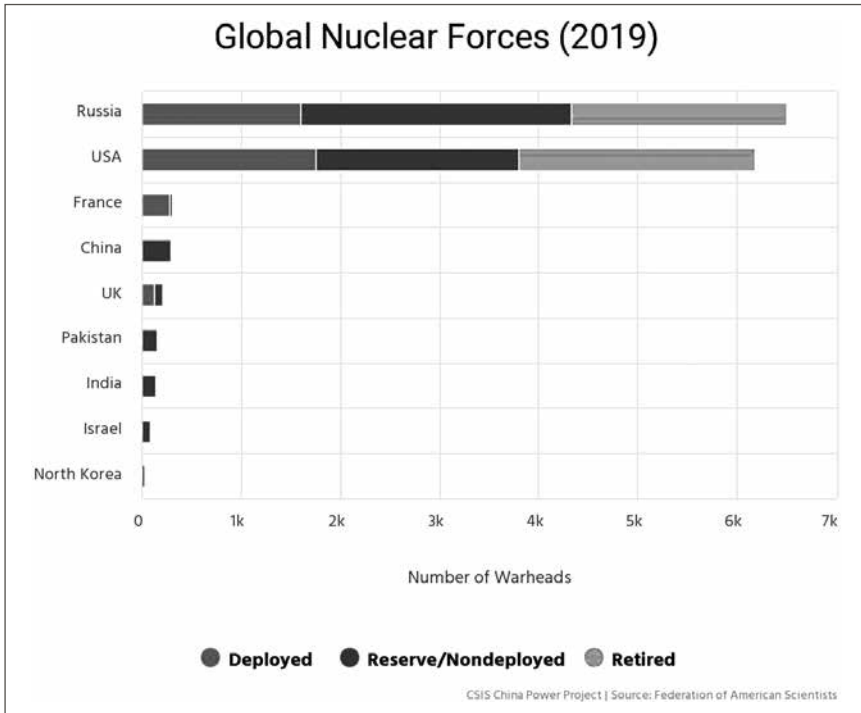


Fig. 3: Global Nuclear Forces, 2019.

weapon systems, a new multilateral and global INF Treaty and/or the deployment of U.S. INFs in the East Asian region (Japan, South Korea, Palau, or Guam)⁷⁴ would diminish the relative Chinese advantage in the field of intermediate-range nuclear forces deployed in its orbit. Many observers in Washington therefore saw China, and not so much Russia, as the real addressee of Trump's announcement in October 2018. Official reactions in Beijing stressed that the country had no

74 Opinions about the probabilities, likely locations, and possible reactions of U.S. Allies in East and South-East Asia differ widely, however. For example: Evan Karlik, Where Will the U.S. Base Intermediate-Range Missiles in the Pacific? Japan's Ryukyu Islands and Palau Are the Most Probable Contenders for New U.S. Intermediate-Range Missiles, in: *The Diplomat*, August 30, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/where-will-the-us-base-intermediate-range-missiles-in-the-pacific/> (accessed May 10, 2020). Steven Stashwick, US Intermediate-Range Missiles in East Asia: Critical Deterrent or Needless Provocation? It Isn't Clear That the United States Necessarily Needs Land-Based Intermediate Missiles to Achieve the Missions They Are Envisioned For, in: *The Diplomat*, November 15, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/u-s-intermediate-range-missiles-in-east-asia-critical-deterrent-or-needless-provocation/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

part in the INF controversy as it was not a signatory state.⁷⁵ Other observers in South-East Asia, however, claim that the Chinese authorities perceive Trump's INF decision as yet another means to limit their country's military influence in the region and to drive it into a destructive arms race, just as the U. S. had done with the USSR in the 1980s.⁷⁶

When, in the spring of 2020, President Trump proposed that China might join trilateral negotiations with the U. S. and Russia on a new NEW START agreement, Beijing smelt a rat, suspecting that Trump might use China again as a pretext to leave the treaty. Though the Chinese government immediately rejected the invitation, Chinese academics and academics with Chinese expertise began arguing for a different framework. Future nuclear arms negotiations with China, they proposed, should be international (rather than multi-national), based on mutual vulnerability (necessitating limits on missile defense), and come up with serious no-first-use-policies.⁷⁷

It seems that U. S. Administrations under both Presidents Obama and Trump came to see the INF Treaty as basically worthless because of the numerous circumventions and breaks on the Russian side. This made withdrawal from the Treaty merely a matter of timing. However, the current threat, that there could be a renewal of the nuclear arms race, has sent strong signals of deterrence to both Russia and China. In time, this might persuade China that it would be wise to participate in multilateral negotiations on global INFs or collaborate on an extended NEW START.

If the renunciation of the old INF Treaty is not to be followed up by a new multilateral INF Treaty in due time, however, then a kind of domino effect might well put Europe's entire security architecture into question. On May 21, 2020, President Trump announced that the U.S. would be leaving the Open

75 For the consistency of this theme in Chinese press conferences and public statements since November 2018, see Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on November 5, 2018 (on the webpage of the Chinese Foreign Ministry), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1610459.shtml (accessed May 10, 2020); Spokesperson of the Chinese Mission to the EU Speaks on a Question Concerning the INF Treaty, July 27, 2019 (on the webpage of China's Mission to the EU), <http://www.chinamission.be/eng/fyrjh/t1683870.htm> (accessed May 10, 2020). China reiterates opposition to multilateralization of INF Treaty, in: Xinhua press agency, July 30, 2019 (http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/30/c_138270534.htm (accessed May 10, 2020)).

76 Vijay Prashad, US military hellbent on trying to overpower China. While some in China are urging against an arms race, relentless US saber-rattling makes a global peace movement crucial, in: Asia Times, May 13, 2020.

77 See Tong Zhao (senior fellow at the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy in Beijing), Opportunities for Nuclear Arms Control Engagement With China, in: Arms Control Today 50/1 (2020), (<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-01/features/opportunities-nuclear-arms-control-engagement-china> (accessed May 10, 2020)). Gregory Kulacki, China is Willing to Negotiate on Nuclear Arms, But Not on Trump's Terms, in: Defense One, March 30, 2020, <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/03/china-willing-negotiate-nuclear-arms-not-trumps-terms/164204/> (accessed May 10, 2020).

Skies Treaty.⁷⁸ According to treaty regulations, this will take place six months later. With this announcement, it would appear that the first European domino following the abandonment of the INF Treaty might indeed be about to fall. Trump's announcement came only days after the renowned American and Russian diplomats Rose Gottemoeller (former Deputy Secretary General of NATO) and Anatoly Antonov (Russian Ambassador to the U.S.) had published their appeal for a prolongation of the NEW START agreement beyond 2021.⁷⁹ Both authors called NEW START the "gold standard" of nuclear arms control, without which the world would slip into a phase of intransparency and unpredictability.

The states of East Asia perceive the security system of Europe as a shining example in their own search for a meaningful regional security structure. The irony of history is that, with the entire process now unraveling, this European exemplar could collapse. With the INF Treaty, the "lucky star" prediction of Nancy Reagan's astrologist proved true for its time, but now we see its temporal limitations.

78 President Trump claimed that Russia was violating OST by limiting observation over Kaliningrad and over the Russian–Georgian border. "Open Skies"-Flüge—Trump kündigt weiteres Abkommen, in: ARD Tagesschau, May 21, 2020, <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/openskies-trump-usa-101.html> (accessed May 22, 2020).

79 Anatoly Antonov and Rose Gottemoeller, Keeping Peace in the Nuclear Age. Why Washington and Moscow Must Extend the New START Treaty, in both: *Foreign Affairs*, April 29, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-04-29/keeping-peace-nuclear-age> (accessed May 22, 2020); and *Kommersant*, April 20, 2020, https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4109694 (accessed May 22, 2020).